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Sommario/riassunto

A masterful, epic account of the Spanish Ulcer that drained Napoleon's resources and played a pivotal role in the end of his domination of Europe.The author served with distinction in the actions of the Light Division, such as the epic march to Talavera, the battles of Fuentes d'Onoro, Salamanca, Nivelle, Orthes and Toulouse. He left the service a General and Knight Commander of the Order of Bath. Napier's History would rank as the most important history to be written by an actual participant, and was as controversial with his countrymen as amoung his contemporaries on the Continent. In this third volume (Mid-1810 to Sept 1811), covers the third French invasion of Portugal under Massena, although he outnumbers his British and Portuguese opponents is beset by problems, not the least of which are his subordinates who are loath to obey him. As he drives into Portugal he is given a bloody nose at the battle of Busaco, and a horrible surprise at the lines of Torres Vedras, which are impregnable. Forced to retire through devastated countryside, culminating in the battle of Fuentes D'Onoro as he tries to relieve the garrison of Almeida, which had been left behind. All in all the French would never set foot in force again in Portugal and Wellington's strategies would be vindicated.However Napier put these events in their proper context, the seemingly inexorable march to an Allied victory is far from the reality of the situation; an expedition to Fuengirola under Lord Blayney is routed, British expeditions along the Eastern coast of Spain are foiled and in the case of Taragona, it falls in sight of the force sent to aid it. The Regency of Portugal and the court in Brazil intrigue and cause trouble and strife, the Spanish troops start to rack up some small scale victories but are handled and led badly in most cases. The detached corps of Marshal Beresford fights the bloody battle Albuera, Napier is none too kind in his criticisms of his actions.
