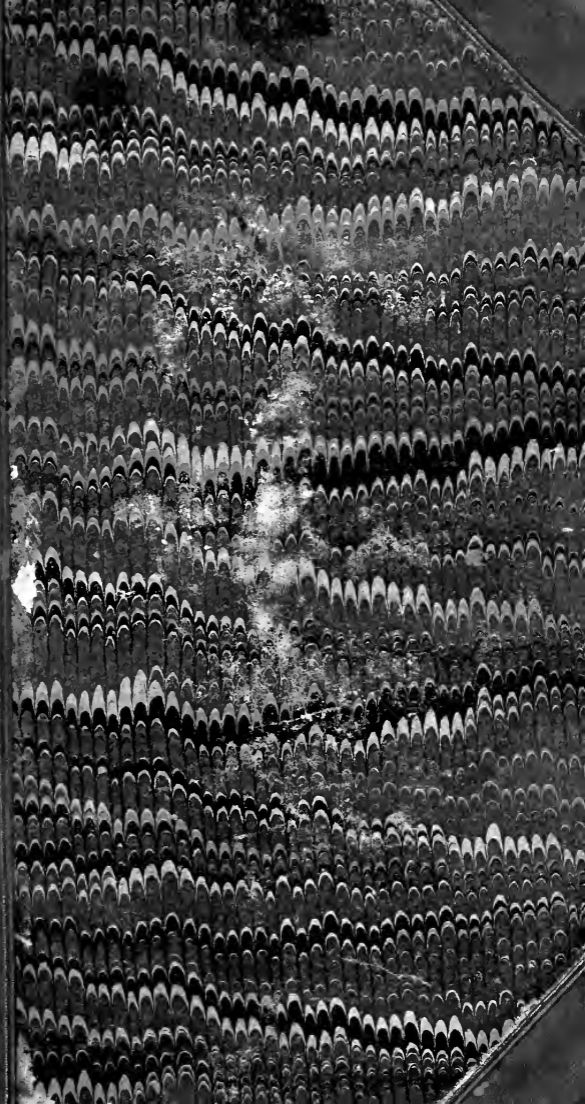


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Sir Henry P. de Bathurst Bart





MEMOIRS  
OF  
THE LATE WAR.  
VOL. I.

# The United Service Journal

AND

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# MEMOIRS

OF

# THE LATE WAR :

COMPRISING

THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF

CAPTAIN COOKE,

OF THE 43RD REGIMENT LIGHT INFANTRY ;

THE HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1809

IN PORTUGAL,

BY THE EARL OF MUNSTER ;

AND A NARRATIVE OF

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814 IN HOLLAND,

BY LIEUT. T. W. D. MOODIE, H. P. 21ST FUSILEERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PERSONAL NARRATIVE

OF

CAPTAIN COOKE.





# MEMOIRS

OF

## CAPTAIN COOKE,

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### CHAPTER I.

Initiation into military life—State of the militia force—Preparations against the expected invasion from Boulogne—French prisoners—An accident—The author occupies a dull post near Grimsby—An enlivening incident connected with the tender passion—Love cooled by aqueous immersion, and rekindled by bright eyes—Earl Fitzwilliam—Quarters in Bristol—A fatal affray—Clifton—The author engaged in an affair of honour—Anecdote—The author enters the line—Return of the British army from the Peninsula—Severe drilling.

ON the 24th of January, 1805, I made my *début* on the parade as ensign in the first West York, powdered and equipped in full uniform, with an artificial tail of considerable length tied round my neck, a cocked hat square to the front and a sword five inches shorter than the regulation,

made in proportion to my height, being only four feet eleven inches, and within one month of attaining my fourteenth year.

My diminutive figure soon attracted the attention of the leading company of the regiment, composed of gigantic Yorkshire grenadiers\*, and excited so much merriment among them, and so increased my previous confusion, that my eyes became dim and my feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground. However, some kind expressions from the officers who came forward and surrounded me, and their gay appearance soon dispelled my inquietude.

A short time proved sufficient to instruct me in the duties required; and the varied amusements caused the early months of my career to glide rapidly on. Our uniform was plain, faced with green, but suddenly altered owing to an officer of expensive habits, who ordered a new coat to be made and covered with a profusion of gold lace, in which he appeared at the mess table, and so captivated his companions by his rich display, that a unanimous burst of admiration broke forth. Although the lieutenant colonel was as much averse from any thing of the sort as it was

\* The grenadier company was composed of more than one hundred men, and only contained *eleven men* so short as five feet eleven inches.

possible for any one to be, the new pattern was carried by acclamation, and a tacit consent wrung from the commanding officer, intermixed with his hearty execrations. Frequently, after the alteration, he used to wear his old coat at the mess table by way of a treat, when, to his extreme mortification, the very officer who caused the change would throw out hints about officers being unregimentally dressed.

Such was the ingenuity of this individual, that on being refused leave of absence, he waited personally on a general, and afterwards declared that he had represented the necessity of his appearance at home in such moving words, that he not only obtained double the time originally asked for, but also drew tears of sympathy from the general's eyes.

In the early part of the summer, General Sir John Moore inspected us on our parade ground, and was pleased to pass his high encomiums on the very fine appearance and steadiness of the men while under arms. Indeed the militia at large were equal to the line\*, in the execution of

\* Their code of military law, their pay, provisions, arms and accoutrements were the same as in the line; and they often marched three or four hundred miles at a sweep! In summer they went into camp, or did garrison duty; and each company possessed a *bat-horse* with a pack-saddle, to carry the *iron camp kettles*.

their evolutions and discipline, and were well adapted for the defence of their native shores, at this epoch threatened with invasion by the French. Had their services been required to repel such an aggression,—led on by experienced generals, without doubt they would have proved themselves equal to cope with any troops in the world; and those who had an opportunity of judging at that time, will, I am confident, fully coincide with me and join in just admiration at the high state of perfection that national force had been brought to.

During the summer the troops in the numerous towns and camps in Kent were reviewed. Our brigade left Ashford and joined two battalions of the rifle corps, 95th\*, at Bradbourne Lees and manœuvred before the Duke of York. The 43rd and 52nd light infantry regiments were organised under the immediate superintendence of Sir John Moore† (assisted by Major General Mc. Kenzie) at Hythe, and Shorncliff camp, in the most

\* Now the rifle-brigade.

† Sir John Moore offered commissions to Lieutenants Booth, Temple, and myself of the York. The two former joined the 52nd; but, as my brother fancied that I was too young and as I was not my own master, I was obliged to submit to his decision. Lieut. O'Reilly also entered the rifle-corps and was subsequently killed on the river Coa in Portugal; and Lieut. Booth was killed at the storming of Badajoz in Spain.

exemplary manner. Those corps were indeed the admiration of all, for their discipline, and the rapidity of their light movements, all of which being executed on the moveable pivot, by divisions, or sextions, formed columns, squares, lines, and echelon, without a halt, by merely marking time.

The moveable pivot preserved a regular cadence, handsome to the sight, and of great utility. In course of time these useful evolutions extended throughout the army, and, for aught I know, are still called "NEW!" with perhaps a few alterations.

The officers of these regiments wore a neat soldier-like uniform of scarlet, facings white and buff, with a pair of small silver epaulettes; and such was the similarity of costume of the two corps, that, at a short distance, it was hardly possible to distinguish one from the other; and, when formed in a line on the green sod at Shorncliff, they presented a fine coup d'œil. The rifle corps wore dark green with black lace, helmets and long green feathers\*.

It is a strange coincidence, that these corps

\* The pelisse was subsequently introduced, and a soldier clad in (green tartan) the highland costume, carried a small standard. The three light regiments increased to seven battalions during the war; 43rd *two*; 52nd *two*; rifles *three*.

should have been so near each other, (almost within sight of Napoleon's grand camp at Boulogne) for the purpose of joining their efforts to repel the threatened attack on the coast, and that, in after years, they should be united in a series of brilliant victories gained over the French legions, during a period of service, which, in future ages, will create wonder at the extraordinary rise and fall of Napoleon in the centre of civilised Europe; whose legions like an overwhelming lava spread death and destruction far and wide; drove all nature into mourning, and converted Europe into an hospital.

Napoleon at this period had formed at Boulogne and its vicinity a powerful army, which he hoped to be enabled to throw across the channel by the end of August and effect a landing in England under the protection of the combined French and Spanish fleets, commanded by Admiral Villeneuve, who was expected from the West Indies about that time to concentrate the different fleets in the French and Spanish ports, to be composed of sixty ships of war destined to cover the numerous flotilla which was also to be crowded with soldiers inured to war.

Every effort on the part of this country was made to frustrate such a design. Martello

towers had been erected along the coast of Kent at certain distances, and thousands of navigators and soldiers were hard at work cutting the military canal twenty yards wide across Romney Marsh. Beacons were placed on the tops of the highest hills, to light up, and alarm the country in case of a sudden descent of the enemy. Fortunately however the hostile movements of the Austrians obliged Napoleon to break up his camp at Boulogne, and march to oppose them. The latter part of this year produced extraordinary events; Napoleon was again overwhelming the continent by his military achievements, and Nelson in a like manner, by his naval exploits, was clearing all before him. These great commanders seemed striving to outvie each other on their peculiar elements, and each won a great battle\*, and within a few months of each other.

During the autumn, the regiment to which I belonged marched to Chelmsford in Essex, and was stationed there a few weeks with other corps, previously to our proceeding to Norman Cross for the purpose of guarding some thousands of unhappy Frenchmen, cooped up at that place, and clothed in yellow (the prison dress) to expiate

\* Trafalgar and Austerlitz.

their revolutionary sins by many years' captivity and exile in a loathsome prison, cut off from their relatives and friends.

Their necessities forced them to exert their ingenuity in making various curious toys, which they disposed of at a very low rate to enable them to procure a few comforts, to alleviate their extreme wretchedness, which was beyond description; for want of clothes many of them suffered every privation rather than be clad in a conspicuous and humiliating colour; others were in rags and almost in a state of nudity, having lost their all by gambling; and to so great an extent did the vice grow, that many would even stake their rations, and every trifle given to them by strangers, until, by their half famished looks, they bore a resemblance to skeletons.

The exterior of the prison was enclosed by strong wooden railings, as well as the four interior quadrangles, in the centre of which stood a circular block house bristled with three pounders on swivels, their muzzles peeping out of square apertures (similar to the ports of a ship) to play on the prisoners in case of their becoming refractory. Generals Boyer and Rochambeau were, for some reason or other, in close confinement; one of them played and sang most delightfully on the guitar.



The barracks stood about east and west, occupied by two regiments, with two field pieces always placed at the gates, in readiness to fire if necessary. The high north road ran within about two hundred yards of the west barrack. A troop of the 7th light dragoons\* were quartered near at hand to pursue those Frenchmen who might attempt to effect their escape, which many accomplished by the utmost danger, and the most unaccountable perseverance; sometimes by working under ground for months, to excavate a way out of prison. One man, absolutely wrapped in straw bands, dropped himself into a night cart, (which he was aware would be drawn away that night) and he was pitched out with the soil at the usual place on the slope of a hill; but, in his haste to extricate himself, he was discovered, and brought back half suffocated.

Many of the poor prisoners gave lessons in fencing; and while I was once displaying the proficiency I had made in that art to an amateur by placing him in a defensive position to ward off my rapid attack, he unfortunately guided the point of my cane up his own nostrils which caused him forthwith to ungrasp his sword, and apply both hands to the wounded part. Being much alarmed at

\* Now hussars.

the accident, I stood at a respectful distance from my friend, until the pain had subsided; fearing that, under such torment, he might take signal vengeance on my slender frame.

The winter passed heavily enough at this dull spot, and without doubt the best hour of the day was that when the drum struck up the "Roast Beef of old England," the certain announcement of a well supplied board, covered with massive plate, and groaning under the weight of the choicest viands the season afforded.

Early in the spring the long wished for *route* arrived for Hull in Yorkshire. When we were on the march through Lincolnshire, a sudden thunder storm came on, accompanied by heavy rain, and we saw a poor girl at work in an adjoining field; but, before she was able to gain a place of shelter from the rain, a flash of lightning struck her on the forehead and killed her on the spot. Her lifeless body was conveyed to the nearest town, to her unhappy relatives. After the expiration of a few days we arrived at Barton, where we crossed the Humber (seven miles down the river) in the regular passage-boats to the place of our destination, having experienced the usual comforts of a march in England: such as good breakfasts, dinners, and a comfortable feather bed every night.

Soon after our arrival a detachment was ordered to take charge of some batteries on the right bank of the Humber in Lincolnshire, no great distance from Grimsby; and, for the good of my morals, I was selected for that duty, it being considered by excellent judges that so populous a town as Hull afforded too many temptations for one so young as myself. Every movement to me was a source of pleasure; already my new abode was anticipated, and some highly romantic spot pictured to my imagination. A fancied governor too, surrounded by the inhabitants of the adjacent country looking up with that respect so flattering to one placed in so responsible a situation!

The hour of my departure was hailed with joy, and I eagerly jumped on board a small packet procured for the transport of myself and party. The sails being spread out, I felt a secret wish that my brother and another officer had not been on board, so that I might have entered into my important avocations without further delay. We had glided a short way on our course, when the wind changed, and became adverse, and, after a few tacks, I lost my vivacity, my countenance turned pale, and my brother remarked that I was sea-sick. "How can that be," faintly replied I, "when we are only in a river;" although it

must be acknowledged that, owing to its proximity to the sea, the water was sufficiently agitated to cause some derangement in the stomach of a landsman.

At the expiration of a few hours' tossing, we anchored off a solitary habitation, three sides of which were encompassed by a dreary marsh of considerable extent, intersected with dykes. On landing, my companions surveyed the surrounding prospect, casting significant looks towards each other; and a half stifled laugh followed at my dejectedamazement, as I contemplated the prospect before me, wondering how the coming six months were to be employed, or myself to be amused, in this swamp, whitened by innumerable flocks of sea gulls. On entering the boat house I sat down with little appetite to partake of some eggs and bacon, that being the best fare to be procured. My companions made a hearty meal, and, having swallowed a couple of tumblers of brandy and water, took their departure with a fair wind, leaving me to make the best of my way, over a pathless waste, in the direction of a small wooden building rearing its chimnies just above an earth entrenchment decorated by four heavy cannons mounted *en barbette*, and a bare pole in the centre by way of a flag staff. The soldiers preceding me were a short way in front. In vain

I strained my eyes in search of a second habitation, to cheer this monotonous scene; night was fast drawing to a close, and the disagreeable Humber and its muddy banks disappearing from my view, amidst a drizzling rain.

On entering the room allotted for my use, I seated myself on my baggage in no very cheerful mood, waiting the delivery of coals and candles, while my servant was busily employed mopping the floor. In the morning the men were placed at the guns, armed with rammers and handspikes, to learn to load, elevate, and traverse, so as to fire in case any French ships might enter the river, to disturb the whalers anchored off Hull.

A printed board of orders nailed to the wall at the extremity of my room shewed me the necessity of visiting another battery under my charge (at stated periods) distant six miles up the river. I was also informed that I had a horse at my service; but, when the animal was brought forward, all hopes of a ride vanished, he proving lame of a leg, very old, and his coat sticking up like the bristles of a porcupine.

My instructions also specified that every Sunday the detachment was to attend divine service, at a church situated inland on a gentle rise, shrouded by trees, about two miles from the battery, which was to be left in charge of a corporal's guard.

The sixth day happened to be the sabbath ; the weather was propitious. I therefore decorated myself in hopes of getting a glimpse of some flowing drapery at the distant hamlet. On our arrival the bell was tolling, and a few infirm individuals were creeping into the old church. As the service had not begun, I squatted myself on a hay-cock—for the grass of this church yard was turned to account, and, as far as I could judge, was as fine a crop as any around.

At length the bell ceased to reverberate, and I was about to enter the decayed doors of the church, when on raising my eyes I beheld a young lady of lovely face and form, stationary, with one foot placed on the top of the style (leading into the church-yard) and with her eyes apparently fixed in the direction of where I stood. She evinced an animation, which I shall long remember ; for my heart began to beat with the most joyful anticipations. She passed close to me, while I remained fixed, and gazing on her with transported admiration. I soon followed, and was placed in a pew exactly opposite to her. Her raven tresses hung carelessly from under a little blue silk hat. Her cheeks vied with the roses, and the lustre of her sparkling black eyes pierced the inmost recesses of my beating heart. Before the service was concluded, we were both holding down our

heads laughing ; and the only excuse for such indecorous conduct, (if any can be offered), was our youth—for she was only sixteen, and I was half a year younger.

Two days after, I wandered towards the village; the peasants had gone forth to their daily labour. On looking about, I could see but one house likely to contain the object of my secret regard. It was a large old building encompassed by an extensive field in the shape of a park. However, I fancied this was not her dwelling, as she had entered the church yard from quite a contrary direction. Having wandered some time without encountering a single person of whom I could make any inquiries, I at last felt convinced that the fair object of my search had come from a distant village, and that I should not again behold her fascinating smiles.

In retracing my steps from thence, the marsh became doubly odious to my sight ; however, on the following Sunday, I placed myself on the same spot in the church yard, with my eyes steadfastly fixed on the style. The bell ceased to toll, the church doors closed, the service had begun, but my *belle* did not appear; and I now in real earnest began to consider myself a perfect exile, not having exchanged a syllable with any one save my servant (or when giving some trifling orders) for thirteen days. The next morning I started on foot

to visit the other fort (mounting two guns, with a garrison of one serjeant, a gunner, and fourteen men,) to be assured that the lame horse had safely carried their provisions, and to see that the defences had not been washed away during the last spring tide. After a toilsome walk of no inconsiderable distance, along a dyke, overrun with long grass nearly up to my middle, I returned, well tired, and perfectly cooled in my governorship.

The next day I made towards the hamlet, being determined to summon up resolution, and make inquiries at some cottage, or to endeavour to find out from whence came the sole object of my thoughts. On my accosting an old woman, who very civilly answered all my inquiries, she communicated that the young lady was a gentleman farmer's daughter; expatiating upon her beauty and amiability, and concluded by remarking, that she supposed by this time she must have returned to school beyond Lincoln, as she had not seen her for some days. She then informed me that, when at home, the young lady resided in the large mansion already described. Having now gained the long wished information, I wandered towards the spot, and espied a figure clad in white standing at the door of a cottage, at no great distance from the large house.

I instantly made my way across the field, full of



doubts and fears, and when, within a short distance, I could distinguish the same figure, and the charming countenance I was in quest of,—I hesitated, being fearful that the object of my search might vanish. At length with a palpitating heart, and extremely confused, I found myself opposite the *brunette*. I attempted to speak, but, alas! my words were unintelligible; she smiled, and I was rooted to the spot,—she retreated backwards; her eyes, acting like load stars, drew me forward. I stumbled over the door-sill, and found myself in a small room in the interior of the cottage. At the extremity of it sat an ancient dame at her spinning wheel, who, looking through her spectacles at me, regarded so small a figure, in a rich scarlet uniform, with a degree of good-natured surprise.

Some moments elapsed before any one of this trio broke silence. My *incognita* blushed and cast the kindest regards towards her old nurse, who looked alternately towards us for some explanation; but, finding little chance of any from our confusion, she broke the awkward silence by requesting to know my pleasure? In reply, I stammered out, that I had lost my way; she instantly arose, and offered the assistance of her son, to conduct me into the right road; but my *chère amie* now found her voice, and stopped her short, by offering her

services to point out the way for me herself; and, almost in the same breath, asked me if I did not feel considerably fatigued after so long a walk? Then, entering into conversation, the hours flew away imperceptibly, until the old dame reminded her of her unusually long absence from home, which might induce her mamma to send some one in search of her; we thereupon parted seemingly equally pleased with each other, and with an agreement to continue our acquaintance. To my eyes the marsh now no longer presented a dreary waste; my heart was as light as a feather; I bounded over planks and ditches, for hedges there were none. Even the odious twenty-four pounders I could have turned to use, by loading them up to the muzzles with grape shot, against all pirates or rivals; and I do verily believe that had it not been for the presence of an old steady gunner, I should really have fired a salute on the occasion.

I ordered tea to be prepared, and my fire made up. I then opened a box filled with books that day forwarded to me from Hull with a note from my brother, saying, that according to my wishes he had sent some novels, and also a few volumes of the *Roman History*, with his strict injunctions not to neglect the perusal of the latter in particular.

The first book I extracted was a deep romance;

and the pages were eagerly devoured with all those transports so natural to youthful minds. It was soon conveyed for the perusal of my *chère amie* ; for in truth the *Roman History* had never entered my head.

A fresh supply being soon necessary, the box was returned, and the history kept as a reserve, and, like many other reserves, it was never brought into action. After a short acquaintance, my little *belle* intimated to me, that I might expect an invitation when her papa (who abominated the red coats, great and small) should make his annual excursion. It struck me that a dark lantern might be of great utility during such parties as I might chance to attend. I therefore begged of my brother that one might be purchased for me, which was accordingly done, although such a request somewhat excited his surprise ; however, on reflection, the extensive prospect he had previously surveyed the day he conducted me to my lonely abode, soon convinced him that a nightly tramp would be out of the question, and he set my request down to the effect of the romances I had recently perused. At length the time of papa's departure was announced to me, with an invitation from mamma to take tea with her : and, on the appointed night, having secured my barrack room door, I walked a short distance, and turned my

dark lantern, to enable me to explore my way over a path intersected by numerous ditches.

On my arrival near the gate at the end of an enclosure, leading to the house, the rays of my lantern fell on a figure all in white. I made a sudden stop, and opened my eyes to their full extent, to satisfy myself what so strange an appearance could be, so late, and at so lonely a spot; for various confused ideas crossed my mind, my fancy was worked up to the highest state of excitement, and a cold chill ran through my veins,—when suddenly the ground gave way, and I was immersed above my middle in water in a ditch, the edge of which had given way. During my alarm, while I was endeavouring to extricate myself from my awkward situation, the figure moved towards me and I scrambled out of the ditch, covered with duck weed. As a last resort I summoned up my remaining courage, and demanded in a loud voice, or rather screech, “What are you?” when a plaintive voice answered, “It is I;” and the speaker instantly vanished.

After looking cautiously around, in apprehension of making another false step and getting a second ducking, I explored my way with considerable difficulty to the house, absolutely following the direction of the supposed phantom. There I found my new friend waiting for me at the

door much alarmed, who informed me she had seen the light of my lantern gradually approaching, and had ventured to meet me ; but the hearing the souse, and such a strange salute in total darkness, had so terrified her, that a hasty flight had been the consequence.

Her mamma had waited tea some time, and on entering the room I perceived that she was in full dress and highly rouged ; I was introduced to her, wet through, and covered with a green weed, like some sea monster. She laughed immoderately. What was to be done? A change was necessary : the husband's clothes would not do. A huge country girl being called in, while divesting me of my coat, suggested that I should be attired in one of her young lady's dresses. This proposal afforded mamma much diversion, who agreed to the proposal, and I was led into the kitchen, to a rousing wood fire, blazing on the hearth, under a spacious chimney. Here I was unceremoniously stripped by the maid, who appropriated so much time to the adjustment of my female attire, that her *jeune maîtresse* demanded the reason of my person being kept so long in custody by this Amazonian wench. My toilette being arranged, tea and coffee were served up, and the time passed in the most agreeable conversation. The night had far advanced, when an unexpected rapping

was heard, with the butt end of a riding whip, heavily applied to the oaken doors, while a hoarse voice demanded admittance in the well known key of papa: but to my ears the notes were like the roaring of a lion. All lights were instantly extinguished, and the back door was thrown open, out of which I was led into a poultry yard, and from thence into a loft, where, seating myself on a truss of hay, I waited in much suspense, while the heavy bars were removed from the gate of the farm yard, to admit the squire and his horse. His gruff voice soon died away; the gates were again closed and all became quiet. Shortly afterwards a rustling noise and gentle footsteps struck on my ear, when my *belle* again made her appearance accompanied by the before mentioned Amazonian *fille de chambre*, with my dried *paraphernalia* under her arm.

Meanwhile mamma was left to conduct her bloated spouse grunting to bed, quite overcome, after his devotions to Bacchus and the malt tub. Soon after I had assumed the attire of my own sex, the crowing of the feathered tribe announced the time for my departure, when, bidding tender adieus, I rapidly stole across the meadow, and just before the sun arose, I found myself once more within my camp bed—*minus* my dark lantern.

I often bended my steps during these May days

towards the peaceful hamlet far removed from any neighbouring village, from whence a green sod, hedged on each side, was the sole outlet or vestige of a road winding into the interior, through a rich pasturage country; it was in these rural shades, and unbeaten tracks, that my blooming companion and I rambled at large, and, when fatigued, her old nurse would place before us her best China service, and seem to participate in our happiness. The summer months flew away, and my indescribable departure was announced. I presented the hospitable old dame with a new pair of spectacles, and she wiped her eyes. The Yorkshire-men buckled on their knapsacks, the wind was fair, the bark cut through the water, the old church vanished from my sight, and I again landed at the busy and trafficking town of Hull.

Here the merchants entertained the military with turtle, and such feasts as their rapidly accumulated wealth enabled them to spread out in gorgeous abundance. The card parties were crowded to excess, and very high stakes played for; more particularly as many of the officers were possessed of large landed property, and also displayed most splendid equipages.

The venerable Earl Fitzwilliam, who was the Colonel of the regiment, was there, and when I was introduced to him, he asked me whether I

did not find the colours very heavy in my hands? My face instantly coloured up; the fact was, I had been blown down, colours and all, while at a field day at Ashford in Kent. The amiable nobleman, with his characteristic kindness, took care that I should see my name in the next gazette as a Lieutenant.

After a very short stay at Hull, we were ordered to Whitby, Burlington, and Scarborough, situated on the sea coast. I had the good fortune to march to the latter town, with which I was much struck on entering. It is compact, and situated in a valley, with the fine old castle rising abruptly and commanding a bird's eye view of the town, and the beautiful and extensive sands, which become so hard, that at low water horse racing used to take place, and with great safety, as there is hardly a pebble to be seen.

This was a grand place of resort, where the healthy dames and their daughters from the North, came to sip the spa, to flounder in the sea, to see and be seen, and to listen to the mild sayings of strangers from the south, while hurrying down fifty couple at Donna's rooms, with rosy cheeks, and hair somewhat out of curl. One whole year passed at this place in a continual round of amusements, such as balls, parties, pic nic excursions, gay promenades, and horse-racing.



The band was magnificently attired in green and gold ; in fact, Earl Fitzwilliam gave up the whole or the greater part of his pay for the benefit of the regiment.—The volunteering into the line continued from time to time ; the greater portion of the men, being of large stature, entered the foot guards, the artillery, and marines.

The *route* at length arrived ; and on the morning of our departure the band struck up, the bass drum beating the marching time, a signal for windows to be hastily thrown open by many fair ladies *en déshabille*, waving their white handkerchiefs and delicate hands, until a wind of the road concealed them from our admiration. The sun shone brightly, and, as we cast a lingering look behind, the venerable white turrets of the castle and the sparkling blue sea foaming at its base receded from our view. We had proceeded about ten miles over the bare wold, when, our appetites becoming rather keen from the sea breezes, we began to cast our longing eyes towards a small sequestered village, surrounded by stone walls, and a few scattered trees, which proved a welcome sight. On entering, we drew up opposite a small rustic inn, for the purpose of taking breakfast :—the chubby cherry-cheeked maids flocked around us, and became so elated at the sounds of the music, and at the sight of the red coats, that in their

hurry to lay before us such provisions as the place afforded, they pushed and jostled their rustic swains out of their way, who, while resting on their pitchforks looked uneasy, as if doubting for the first time in their lives the true constancy of their sweethearts.

After partaking of a most excellent breakfast, we resumed our road, and at the expiration of three days again entered Hull, when we soon received an order to proceed to Bristol; we passed through Beverley to Hull, then to Doncaster, Birmingham, Derby, Litchfield, Gloucester, and Worcester, besides many towns of smaller note interspersed through this highly cultivated country. Having accomplished a march of three hundred miles, we reached Bristol. While passing through a town, an old woman perceived the officer of the light company with a knapsack on his back: she hobbled towards him, and addressed him by the familiar appellation of "Sergeant;" he answered with a smile, "My good old lady, serjeants do not carry knapsacks in this regiment," at the same time casting a glance towards a few of that rank who had left theirs on the baggage waggons:—the officer loaded himself in this way for the comfort of a speedy change, on the march during wet weather. A number of French prisoners were confined at Stapleton prison, about five miles from

Bristol. This duty we found unpleasant, having to tramp over a dirty road in the winter, in white kerseymere breeches, for the purpose of mounting guard. A most fatal affray happened here betwixt four French prisoners, owing to a dispute which arose out of a trifling gambling transaction. The two principals first engaged, having split a scissars into two parts and tied the points to the end of canes, with which they fought, one was soon killed, the seconds then engaged, when another fell mortally wounded; in fact, both the friends on one side fell.

We frequently visited the village of Clifton within a mile of Bristol. It is beautifully situated, over-looking the river Avon, which romantically winds at the base of steep declivities, decorated with overhanging shrubs.—The promenades and balls were very fashionably attended, and it was surprising to observe the superiority of manners, costume, and dancing, compared with those of the company attending the assemblies at Bristol.

Early in the summer of 1808, we again moved, and passed through the counties of Somerset and Devon to Plymouth, there to do duty over the arsenals and more French prisoners.

I had now reached my seventeenth year. One evening while rambling about, I accidentally met an officer, and entered into conversation with him,

when I was not a little surprised at his making use of my elder brother's name, in no very complimentary strain, and, as I was aware that such sentiments could not be used unintentionally by a man of the world, I made a suitable retort, and left him. On reaching my brother's barrack room which was adjacent to mine, I found him poring over a volume of Shakspeare, with his usual *theatrical* delight, and, not wishing to disturb his transporting meditations, I bade him good night and retired to my bed, having given my servant directions to call me the next morning early, which being duly executed, I sent a friend with a message to the officer already alluded to, which he instantly accepted ; but, as the regiment was under arms much earlier than usual, to fire ball cartridge at a target, it was agreed that we should manage to get leave with our seconds, and fall out one at a time, so as not to create any suspicion of our intentions.

Our uniforms having been thrown aside, four of us proceeded some distance before we could find a spot to suit our purpose. The usual distance being measured, we tossed up for sides. I lost, and stood with my face towards the sun, as no other level spot could be found at hand. Having taken our ground, the usual distance (by word), we both fired without

effect : the pistols being re-loaded, a second discharge was about to take place, when my adversary addressed me by my christian name, and said he wished the affair adjusted, so that all that had passed between us should be forgotten, and that we might be the same good friends as heretofore,—the seconds then interfered, and all was amicably adjusted\*.

A general order appeared about this period, exploding hair-powder and tails throughout the army. But, previously to its coming out, a most ludicrous occurrence happened. An officer who possessed a very good figure and a fine head of hair, had shown a great antipathy against wearing powder, so much so, that it was only by a repetition of orders, that he could be induced to use the puff, and even then it was so sparingly put on his crown, as to be scarcely visible. One morning as usual he appeared on the parade, with his head unwhitened ; the captain of his company not a little roused, at having so frequently reminded him of his neglect of duty, again remarked that

\* My brother and the same officer had a dispute eight months after this affair. They met ; and at the first fire my brother received his adversary's ball through the upper part of his thigh, but eventually recovered.

he was without powder ; when he carelessly answered, that he supposed a puff of wind must have blown it out ; which so incensed the captain that he forthwith reported the circumstance. The whole of the officers being assembled to the front, the culprit patiently heard the accusation against him, and as coolly received the slight reprimand from the commanding officer, who had no sooner finished what he had to say than the accused officer fixed his eyes steadily on his captain, and, without uttering a syllable lifted his cap slowly from his head at arm's length, showing a head as white as snow, while his accuser stood petrified and confounded, to the no small amusement of the surprised circle who burst into an unrestrained laugh, joined in by the senior officers. The fact was, that the rear of the company was close to the soldiers' barrack, and, while the captain was in the act of reporting his junior officer, the latter had run into one of the men's rooms, seized a flour tub (used by the soldiers) and, with its contents, had covered his head, leaving the side locks untouched as before.

About this time, the expedition to Portugal put into Plymouth, and as there appeared some probability of an opening for the British army on terra firma, I felt an anxiety to enter the

line. A commission was promised me in a light infantry regiment, which I soon after obtained; at this time Plymouth was crowded by Portuguese officers, that had fled from their native country with the royal family of Portugal, who had departed for the *New World*. Portugal being cleared of the *French* and *Spanish invaders*, the British entered Spain to threaten the right flank of the French army under Napoleon, in the depth of winter, which ended by Sir John Moore being killed, and the whole of the English army re-embarking at Coruina. The different regiments landed in England in the most deplorable condition, having been overtaken by a tempest, which had scattered them over the face of the waters.

The inhabitants of Plymouth received these troops with open arms, and threw wide their doors for the benefit of the suffering officers; they watched over their sick beds in the most assiduous manner, and supplied them gratis with every comfort; such as shirts and shoes, and crowned all this magnanimous hospitality, by advancing money to many of the convalescent officers to enable them to reach their far distant homes, in England, Ireland, and Scotland. But how different was the treatment of the army (who had freed Portugal) elsewhere! A young

and handsome officer had landed at another port in a wretched state, bare-footed, his feet tormented with gravel, suffering from a fever, and supporting himself against a wall: then, creeping along in an exhausted state, he was unnoticed by the passers by, until a sailor said, "Why, soldier officer, you are aground, come lay hold of my arm: I will take care of you."

In March\* 1809, I obtained my ensigncy in the line, and proceeded to Colchester to join the second battalion of the 43rd light infantry. When an officer entered this corps it was an invariable custom to send him to drill with a squad, composed of peasants from the plough tail, or other raw recruits, first learning the facings, marching, and companies' evolutions. That being completed, the officer put on cross belts and pouch,

\* In that month the first battalion marched from Colchester to Harwich to embark for Portugal with the 52nd and the Rifle corps, under Major General R. Craufurd, and joined the army in Spain the day after the battle of Talavera de la Reyna, having made a forced march in good order, in hopes of participating in that sanguinary battle, where they found the remnant of those men who had been left sick or wounded (in the battalion of detachments) in Portugal after Vimiera, and who had been engaged at the passage of the Douro near Oporto, and at Talavera. The 43rd had upwards of one hundred men killed in that battle; and of officers, brigade Major Gardner killed, and Lieutenant Brown wounded,—the latter now commanding the second battalion Rifle brigade.



and learned the firelock exercise; then again he marched with the same: and when it was considered that the whole were perfect, with, and without arms, they began to skirmish in extended files, and last of all learned the duties of a sentry, and to fire ball cartridge at a target. The officer after all this was not considered clear of the adjutant, until he could put a company through the evolutions by word of command, which he had already practised in the ranks. It generally took him six months in summer at four times a day (an hour at each period) to perfect him in all he had to learn. The drill was never kept more than an hour under arms, when, to a minute, the time beater rolled his drum, the only one, (light infantry regiments used bugles) in the corps; and the recruits were instantly dismissed.

The orderly officer of each company made out the daily morning state with his own hand. Subalterns inspected squads on parade: the company was then formed and given over to the captain, who, with the rest of the officers, never quitted their company to lounge about, so long as the soldiers continued under arms. The corps paraded twice a week in heavy marching order, and the mess was equally well conducted, in a system of style and economy happily blended.

## CHAPTER II.

Scene of embarkation for foreign service at Deal—A character—Force and objects of the expedition—Arrival off Walcheren—Siege and capture of Flushing—Disastrous sickness among the troops—Evacuation of Walcheren, with the author's adventure on the occasion—The return to England—Napoleon's situation at that period.

IN June 1809 we left Colchester with other corps, for the purpose of embarkation; our route lay through Chelmsford, Gravesend, Maidstone, to Shorncliff barracks (in Kent) placed on the summit of a hill extending to the verge of the white cliffs overhanging the sea, and commanding a clear view of the straits of Dover, and the opposite coast of France.

On the 16th of July we marched through Dover to Deal, where innumerable boats lined the shore for the purpose of conveying troops to the various ships anchored in the Downs for

their reception. Large bodies of soldiers were pouring into the town by all the roads to join the vast armament about to rendez-vous at this point. Hurrying into the boats, the hardy sailors pulled away: the beach and the bay were covered with thousands of soldiers, intermixed with the fair daughters of Albion, who had come from afar to witness this brilliant spectacle.

The army was in a fine state of discipline, and filled with enthusiasm, while the ensigns of many naval victories floated in the breeze from the mast heads of those men of war, that had for years swept the ocean, opened the whole commerce of the world to this island, and filled the coffers of England with almost inexhaustible resources.

We had no sooner arrived on board the York seventy four, commanded by Captain Barton, than the usual bustle prevailed on such occasions, which had in some measure subsided, when a large fat man in a small boat was seen making towards the ship, dressed in light fawn-coloured breeches, white cotton stockings and shoes, with a loose coat, evidently of provincial cut. Coming alongside, he eagerly demanded the number of the regiment on board, which proved to be the identical one he was in search of; he then mounted the side of the ship with breathless

exertion, and attempted to bustle through the crowd of soldiers huddled together. However, the butt ends of some firelocks falling heavily near his toes, formed a sufficient hint to arrest his progress, and he was much confounded at finding himself jostled amongst such a concourse of troops for the first time in his life. After waiting some time with intense anxiety, he at length succeeded in clearing the way, crying out in accents of one whose patience had been quite exhausted by hopelessness of redress, "Will any man in this ship have the goodness to point out the Paymaster's berth? for really, gentlemen, I have striven in vain to obtain an answer of the many persons whom I have already addressed." A voice from the crowd replied, "Why, there is no such thing,"—at which unwelcome intelligence the countenance of the applicant underwent a painful transition from hope to despair.

While at anchor in the Downs, the wind blew sufficiently strong to cause the unpleasant motion of the ship which produces sea sickness, and, being one of the junior officers, I was not so fortunate as the Paymaster, who had secured a berth, for I wandered for three days into different quarters of the ship, in a state unnecessary to describe to those who have experienced the heaving of a ship at anchor. A midshipman

about my own age kindly offered to provide me with such accommodation as the cock-pit afforded, which offer I thankfully accepted, in hopes of at least getting into a quiet uninterrupted corner. I had scarcely entered the hammock hung for my reception, when I was assailed by quantities of cock chafers crawling over my face, and under the blankets, (the ship having just returned from a cruise from the West Indies.)

The prodigious armament consisted of thirty-five ships of the line ; two of fifty guns, three of forty-four guns ; and one hundred and ninety-seven sloops, bombs, and other armed small craft,—with an army of thirty-nine thousand, two hundred and nineteen men, including officers, all assembled in the Downs on the 27th of July, 1809. The whole were under the command of Rear-Adm. Sir R. Strachan and Gen. the Earl of Chatham, in conjunction. These Commanders sailed in the Venerable at day-light, on the 28th of July, and arrived in the East Kapelle roads, off the island of Walcheren on that evening ; but, owing to the boisterous state of the weather, and contrary winds, a landing could not be effected on the Domburg beach. The other two divisions of the fleet followed in succession from the Downs. The object of the expedition was, to capture or destroy the enemy's ships, building at Antwerp and Flushing, or afloat

in the Scheldt ; also the destruction of the arsenals and dock-yards at Antwerp, Ternuese, and Flushing ; to reduce the island of Walcheren, and render, if possible, the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war ; with directions to the commanders, should they not be able to effect all these objects, that after the reduction of Walcheren, (which was to be kept possession of, and a force left for its protection,) the remainder of the troops were to be re-embarked, and to return to England.

The island of Walcheren is thirty-four miles in circumference, including St. Jootsland, and is situated between the mouths of the East and West Scheldt, inclosed by Cadzand on the south, South Beveland and Wolfertsdyck on the east, and North Beveland on the north east. Our division of the fleet sailed from the Downs at half-past ten o'clock A. M. on the 30th, and came to anchor the next afternoon, in the East-Kapelle roads off Walcheren, when we observed the mortar and gun-vessels keeping up a heavy fire on the small town of Ter Veere, whilst a small body of English troops were lying behind the sand-hills, keeping watch on the road towards Middelburg, the capital of the island. Part of the fleet had already entered the Veere Gat, and had landed a large force, with three divisions of sailors (three hun-

dred) the day before, at half-past four in the afternoon, on the Bree-sand, a little more than a mile west of Fort de Haak, the fire of which had been previously silenced by the gun-boats and mortars. The peaceable inhabitants sent a deputation from Middelburg to the head-quarters; the army advanced the next day, the 1st of August, and took possession of that place, drove the enemy into Flushing, and took from them some field-pieces.

Gen. Sir John Hope landed his divisions in South Beveland the same day, and took possession of Ter Goes, the capital of the island, which is thirty-five miles long. The French fleet had retired beyond the chain which was drawn across the Scheldt near Fort Lillo. On the 3d, a few vessels were observed leaving Flushing; some boats were sent in chase; the weather was fine, the wind S.S.W., and the flood tide nearly down, which gave every hope of their effecting a safe return. The Raven sloop of war went to their protection, when the enemy's vessels again retreated into Flushing. The wind suddenly flew west in a squall, first blowing hard and then baffling. The boats got safe off, but the fire continued on the sloop for four hours without intermission, round shot passing through her from the Breskens batteries, and grape dropping on

board from the ramparts of Flushing. She suffered severely in the hull, masts, and rigging, and had two guns dismounted, the top-mast shot away above the lower caps, the main-mast, bowsprit, and main-boom, rendered unserviceable, the sails and rigging completely cut in pieces, and her Commander, Capt. Hanchett, and eight men, wounded. Night coming on, she grounded on the Ellboog; at day-break two brigs were sent to her assistance, and at seven she floated.

The enemy were very apprehensive lest our army should make an attempt to pass the East Scheldt, near Zandvliet, opposite fort Bathz, which they attacked on the 5th with twenty-eight gun-boats, but were driven off by the batteries. The weather continued so bad until the 7th, the wind blowing S.W. and S.S.W., that the sea blockade of Flushing could not be accomplished, and the enemy continued to convey their wounded soldiers to Cadzand, and also threw one thousand men across the Scheldt, one mile and three-quarters, to reinforce the town. At half-past five o'clock in the evening of the 7th the enemy made a sortie on the right of the line from Flushing, but were repulsed and pushed back at the point of the bayonet. While all these things were going on, our regiment had been removed from the line-of-battle ship into small craft, and anchored in the



Sloe passage, between Walcheren and South Beveland. On the morning of the 9th, ours, the light brigade, composed of the second battalions of the 43rd, 52nd, and the Rifle corps, part of Earl Roslyn's division (two thousand and twenty-two men) were under the command of Major Gen. Stewart. He considered, from the nature of the service we were likely to be employed on, and probably cut off from our baggage by dykes and rivers, that small black knapsacks, with brown straps, would prove of essential service to the officers: for these we had paid half-a-guinea each, previously to our leaving England. However, subsequently, as he expected us to carry them at brigade field-days, some little discussion arose on that head, behind a wind-mill.

A day's salt pork and biscuit being served out, and all the officers with their knapsacks strapped on their backs, we began our march; the day was extremely sultry, without a breath of air; the road was perfectly flat, as well as the whole face of the country, which was intersected with ditches, covered with a thick ooze or vegetable substance, and high dykes rising on each side of the way. The Paymaster had joined the column, as the place of the greatest security. As guns from the gun-boats were sounding at intervals, in front and rear, we persuaded him that it was

probable we might become engaged without any previous warning, by a front, flank, or rear attack, which information, added to the heat of the atmosphere, put him into such a state of perspiration, that when we halted, a liquid stream of hot water poured from his forehead, such as I have never before, nor since beheld; added to which, his tailor had fitted his corpulent sides to a nicety, although equal praise could not be bestowed on his hatter, who had manufactured his cap so large, that it fell over his face like an extinguisher, and the worst of it was, both his hands were occupied; in his right he held his wig and drenched pocket-handkerchief, while his left was in momentary request to disentangle his sabre from betwixt his legs. "Well," said he, with a good-tempered smile, "if ever I knew any thing like this!" and, notwithstanding his uncomfortable plight, he cracked his jokes, and proved himself a man of more ready wit, and possessing a greater fund of anecdote and humorous stories, than any one I ever met with, so that he became a general favourite throughout the regiment: but such a figure in a light infantry jacket! such skirts, with pockets large enough to have stowed away half the striplings of the corps! When the brigade was put in motion, he remained in the middle of the way, as they passed him right and

left, and waited for the light waggons carrying our baggage ; then stowing himself comfortably away in one of them, he was brought to our cantonments perfectly sick of campaigning.

As we passed along, we were much struck at the great cleanliness of the cottages, and at the contented air of the well-dressed peasantry. The females were decorated with silver or gold ornaments about their persons, and many of them wore a plate of the same metal across their foreheads. The little boys of five or six years old held pipes in their mouths, smoking with all the gravity of men, and wore their hair long behind, broad-brimmed hats, brown jackets, short breeches, shoes, and silver buckles, precisely similar to the elders. We passed through Ter-Goes, a fine old brick town, surrounded by earth ramparts and a wet ditch ; it opened its gates without making any resistance to Sir John Hope's corps.

Continuing our march half a league farther on, we arrived at the clean village of Cloting, containing a good church, and a handsome house in the centre of it, which was the residence of the Burgomaster ; we took up our quarters in the different houses, and the men in the spacious handsome barns, painted green, such as may be seen near gentlemen's houses in England. Five

companies of our regiment were detached to another village. The humble dwellings of the peasantry bore an air of comfort, and the abundantly supplied dairies, paved with well washed tiles, presented a freshness seldom exhibited among the poorer classes of other countries.—A considerable flotilla proceeded to Bathz, where they arrived on the 11th; the enemy attacked the fort with two frigates, one bearing a Vice Admiral's flag, thirty brigs, eight luggers, one schooner, and fourteen gun boats; at the expiration of a smart firing, they were beaten off, leaving six gun boats aground, five being destroyed, and one brought in. In the afternoon of the same day, Capt. Lord W. Stuart, commanding the *Lavinia* and nine other frigates, availed himself of a light breeze from the westward, (notwithstanding the tide was against the proceeding,) sailed up the west Scheldt, and passed the batteries between Cadzand and Flushing; the ships were under the enemy's fire for nearly two hours, without any material accident, with the exception of a shell striking the *L'Aigle*, and falling through her decks into the bread-room, where it exploded: one man was killed and four wounded, and her stern frame much shattered. The *Amethyst* got aground after passing Flushing.

On the 13th, the batteries before Flushing being completed, and some frigates and bombs

having taken their station, a fire was opened at half past one P.M. from upwards of fifty pieces of heavy ordnance, including mortars and howitzers, which was vigorously returned by the enemy; an additional battery was finished during the night, of six twenty-four-pounders, (worked by sailors,) and the whole continued to play on the town; until late on the following day. At half-past ten on the morning of the 14th, the following line of battle ships (anchored in the Duerlo passage) got under weigh: the *St. Domingo*, *Blake*, *Repulse*, *Victorious*, *Denmark*, *Audacious*, and *Venerable*,—and ranged along the sea-front of the town, led in by Rear-Admiral Sir R. Strachan; but before they had opened their fire, the wind came more southerly, and the *St. Domingo* grounded inside the *Dog-land*; an officer, not knowing her situation, passed inside of her, by which means the *Blake* also grounded; the other ships were ordered to haul off to anchor as at first intended. The *Domingo* was soon got off, and the *Blake* became again afloat, and came to anchor with the rest of the squadron; the ships continued to ply the enemy with a furious cannonade until four in the afternoon, when the town presented a vast conflagration, burning in all quarters. The firing having nearly ceased from the ramparts, Gen. Monnet, the Governor was summoned to sur-

render, but he having given an evasive answer, hostilities recommenced and continued until two o'clock in the morning of the 15th, when the enemy demanded a suspension of arms, and within an hour the Governor surrendered the town, (when two detachments of the Royals and 71st regiments took possession of its gates,) and the whole of the garrison, prisoners of war, besides those already taken in the different forts and islands of Walcheren, South Beveland, Shouwen, Duivland, Brouwershaven, and Zierigkzee, with all the valuable stores therein. The loss in killed, wounded, and missing of the British, during the siege, was about seven hundred and twenty, including officers.

From this moment offensive operations seemed at an end: we were surrounded with abundance, our days were occupied in the sports of the field, our evenings passed at each others' quarters in idle and pleasant conversation, pay was issued almost to the day that it was due. Provisions of all descriptions were offered for sale at a very low rate: tea, sugar, and coffee, were not half the price of the same in England; wines, brandy, hollands, and liqueurs, might be purchased for a mere trifle; and fat fowls or ducks for tenpence the pair. In this land of plenty we were lulled into a fatal security, for, about the 20th, the soldiers fell ill,

staggered, and dropped in the ranks, seized by dreadful fevers\*, and with such rapidity did this malady extend, that in fourteen days, twelve thousand and eighty six soldiers were in hospital on board ship, or sent to England; the deaths were numerous, and sometimes sudden; convalescence hardly ever secure; the disorders ultimately destroying the constitution, and causing eventually the destruction of thousands in far distant climes.

The natives now became ill, and informed us that one-third of them were confined to their beds every autumn until the frosty weather set in, which checked the exhalations from the earth, and gave new tone to their debilitated frames, and thereby stopped the progress of the complaint. Independently of the records of the unhealthiness of these islands, where every object depicts it in the most forcible manner, the bottom of every canal that has communication with the sea is thickly covered with an ooze, which, when the tide is out, emits a most offensive effluvium; and every ditch that is filled with water, is loaded with animal and vegetable substances. If persons living in these islands from their infancy, who practise a cleanliness that cannot be excelled,

\* The sailors on board ship did not suffer much from the malady.

and live in good houses, cannot prevent the effects of the climate, it may readily be supposed how much more a foreign army must suffer. The inhabitants informed us, that in the preceding autumn, two hundred French troops were quartered in the village, out of whom one hundred and sixty had the fever, and seventy of them died.

Our landing had excited a great sensation in the north of France; so much so, that numerous corps of the national guards marched to the succour of Antwerp, only garrisoned when we first made our descent on the coast with three thousand men, besides the eight thousand sailors on board the fleet, that had retired up the Scheldt. Many of the national guards suffered from the climate, and shortly returned to their families with ruined constitutions.

The town of Flushing, after the siege, presented a deplorable appearance, with many houses burnt down, and most of them unroofed, and scarcely supplying sufficient covering for the sick soldiers, who continued to increase so fast, that ten inhabitants to each regiment were requested to assist as attendants in the hospitals; the medical officers were extremely harrassed, numbers of them became incapable of attending on their patients, being themselves seized by the same fatal malady, so that, as the fever gained ground, the doctors



diminished in numbers. At one period, four hundred and ninety-eight soldiers died in a fortnight in Walcheren, which place the Austrians were very solicitous our troops should continue to occupy as long as any chance remained for them against Napoleon, who was at this time in the very heart of their empire.

Early in September, while at dinner, a sudden order reached us to move towards the coast, when we instantly packed up and reached the beach in two hours, where the troops began their embarkation. The captain of the company, with agitated looks, ran towards me, and told me that, in the hurry of moving off, he had left the whole of his company's books in the corner of the room we had occupied, and that the commanding officer had most positively refused him permission to fetch them. Under these circumstances, and at his urgent entreaties, and promises to have a boat in waiting on my return, I undertook the unpleasant excursion, and, rapidly retracing my steps, I re-entered the village at a quick pace, in little more than an hour; it appeared quite tranquil, as if no foreigners had ever been amongst them. One or two natives only were looking from their windows. A sudden thought now struck me that I might be seized and made prisoner, which caused me much uneasiness; but yet to decamp without

accomplishing my object, was sorely against the grain with me. While assailed by such conjectures, I entered the door of the house that we had previously occupied, which I found open, and saw the contented inmates enjoying a comfortable meal, nor did they evince the least surprise at my re-appearance. Without uttering a word, and passing into the inner apartment, I seized the books, (the dinner was still untouched on the table exactly as we had left it,) and with hasty strides repassed the room where the family were seated, making a slight inclination of the head: they half rose at seeing me loaded; but not a syllable was exchanged between us. Some of the inhabitants had now come out of their houses, and regarded me with suspicious looks: I feigned indifference; but no sooner cleared the village, than I started almost at speed, and had made great progress, when I espied at a distance the light waggons and fat hollow-backed horses, with flowing manes and tails, returning from the beach at a trot; and, being aware that the soldiers were not very ceremonious on these occasions, I was apprehensive the drivers of these vehicles might be disposed to treat me in the same manner, or probably take me back as a hostage. I therefore concealed myself behind a bank until they should have passed by. Night soon came on,

but I could descry the lights in the ships' tops, and, in my hurry to follow their direction, I took the wrong road, which led me into a field where it ended. However, with the hope that a short way farther would enable me to reach the beach, I darted onwards, and found a broad ditch impeding my farther progress. It was in vain I ran up and down in search of a narrow part; in almost a fit of desperation, I hurled the books across, one after the other, tried my footing, retired some paces, and, at a run, sprang across it with the greatest exertion, while a momentary joy gleamed over my countenance, on mounting a bank, to find myself at the water's edge. The lights were still stationary, but not a boat to be seen. Owing to my great exertions and haste in passing over fourteen miles of ground, I was in a profuse perspiration, which was soon succeeded by a cold shivering, such as I imagined was the disorder incidental to this swampy country. I feared that I should be left to perish before I could reach the ship; a heavy dew fell, and I was almost perishing with cold, having no other covering than my light infantry jacket, sash, and pantaloons, without drawers or a waistcoat of any sort. Frequently I was forced to run up and down to keep my blood in circulation, and my teeth from chattering. In this manner, alternately sitting,

running, or casting my eye towards the lights, which, at times, and in the exuberance of my fancy, I thought were receding, I passed the dreary hours of the night. At day-break, some sailors pulling in shore, discovered my flying pocket handkerchief, and came to my relief, and, after a considerable pull, we found the regiment on board the Ganges. Then, giving my last dollar to the sailors for grog, I mounted the side of the ship, and descended into the ward-room, where I found the officers scattered about, and lying on a main-sail, that had been spread out for their accommodation. Delivering the books to the owner, I was fully determined never again to volunteer such a Quixotic excursion. The officer assured me that all his endeavours to procure a boat had been unavailing.

The next day two hundred sick soldiers and officers were removed on board small craft to proceed to England, and, as I happened to be one of those for detachment, we left the line-of-battle ship, went on board a transport, and steered our course for the Downs, where we arrived in two days, and cast anchor for forty-eight hours, then again got under weigh, and buffeted about for four days more, between the Downs and Harwich, where we landed our sick soldiers and officers. When we were stepping on shore, a

countryman, looking towards us, exclaimed, "There goes the King's hard bargains."

The evening we landed, a fine healthy-looking young serjeant brought me the orderly-book,—and, on visiting the hospital at ten o'clock the next morning, I heard he had been dead one hour. So much for the Walcheren mad lady! In fact, the most fatal battle could hardly have made such havock in our ranks. Thus, in the short space of seven months, the English coast had been inundated with sick soldiers and scattered regiments from the Land's-end to Yarmouth. Walcheren was finally evacuated in the end of December.

Napoleon had humbled his rivals, had ridden out the storm raised against him, and repulsed all his enemies. Pope Pius the VIIth had indeed thundered forth a spiritual excommunication against him and his followers at the beginning of the Austrian campaign; but he had unluckily fallen into the power of his temporal master, who, seated in the saloon of the Palace of the Tuileries, was meditating new conquests, and weaving silken cords for the Emperor of Austria's daughter.

## CHAPTER III.

Progress of distemper on the re-landing of the regiment in England—Change of quarters—Amusements—Colchester—An eventful water party—The author obtains leave to join the detachment proceeding to Portugal—A Review—A tale of dental dislocation—Embarkation at Spithead—Landing in Portugal—Incidents of an evening—Amusements at Lisbon, and departure from that city.

THE regiment soon re-landed in England, and marched to Colchester, where a vast number of the men died, of ours as well as all the other corps, thereby keeping the clergy in constant requisition to repeat the funeral service over the rudely-shaped coffins of the dead soldiers. Nearly the whole of the corps to which I belonged were laid up with ague and fever, to such a degree, that those able to walk and the few fit for duty were removed to Sudbury, for the benefit of change of air. This proved very beneficial and restored the strength of those who had not been very badly affected with the malady.

At the expiration of two months we were able to muster again about two hundred, out of six, fit for duty. Those officers whose health was sufficiently re-established frequented the balls at Bury St. Edmunds, which were extremely well attended by the neighbouring families; added to these, occasional jaunts and a few private parties made the time pass pleasantly enough until we were ordered to Weeley Barracks, where we spent a sombre winter, (with two other regiments) which passed without any occurrence worth mentioning, except that of the garrison being called out to fire a *feu de joie* in celebration of George the Third's having reigned over this country for fifty years.

In the spring we shifted our quarters to Colchester, being perfectly sickened of our rustic amusements of shooting larks, skating, or pacing up and down a solitary barrack-square of great extent, and surrounded by a rich grass country, without any thing worthy the appellation of a village for a considerable distance.

Soon afterwards myself and another officer went to Portsmouth to receive volunteers. The officers of a regiment invited us to dine with them at Gosport, and so plied us with peppered turkeys' legs, devilled biscuits and port wine, that we were unable to beat a retreat until two o'clock in the morning.

On reaching the ferry, there was not a boat to be seen; wherefore, from necessity, we were reduced to content ourselves with a seat on some stone steps, and there to await the rising sun, whose beams no sooner crimsoned the western hemisphere, than we hailed the first morning ferry boat, and reached our lodging, right glad to quaff a smoking cup of coffee in order to settle our stomachs from the last night's debauch. In a few days we left the rustic vicinity of Portsmouth, and reached the red-bricked town of Colchester, where our time passed in such amusements as are usually practised at a provincial quarter and are so well known to most of the British army, who have had the honor of promenading up and down its *pavé*.

One day a water party was talked of, and no sooner proposed than put into execution. A boat was procured and rowers selected—the rest of the party being armed with fowling pieces for the destruction of gulls and carrion crows, or such other birds as might chance to cross us during our aquatic excursion on the river Colne. The boat being put in motion, after an hour's hard pull, the river became considerably wider, the tide was on the ebb, the weather propitious, and so much way made, that we resolved to obtain a glimpse of the sea, which soon being accomplished, we pulled in shore, made good our land-



ing, and selected the most rural spot to partake of those viands prepared for the occasion, which, being spread out on nature's green carpet, were speedily devoured by eight hungry young officers, and every bottle of wine and brown stout emptied to the very dregs. The party, full of hilarity, then returned to their slender bark; but great was our surprise to find it high and dry, the tide nearly out, and only a narrow stream remaining of the spacious Colne water we had quitted a few hours before. A launch being necessary, our jackets and caps were hurled into the boat, and, by the most strenuous exertions, it was shoved through the mud, and again afloat; then rapidly plying our oars, we made some progress, notwithstanding that the tide was still running out; when at length the water entirely failed, leaving us aground, amid channel, with extensive banks of mud rising to a considerable height on each side of us,—the sight of which afforded much mirth at the idea of our having rowed during high tide over hill and dale; so much for our geographical knowledge and nautical skill! While in this plight, one of the party was in the act of divesting himself of superfluous dress, and tying the articles into a bundle, pleading in excuse that an appointment with a *fair damsel* obliged him to laud. A noisy debate ensued amongst us:

by way of intimidating him at the same time, a threat was added, that should he attempt to desert, some small shot should be discharged at him. While we were loading the guns, he sprang from the bark and scrambled some yards, assailed by the vociferations of the party; but, before he had reached the prescribed distance, twenty yards, his situation became most alarming: every succeeding step, he sank deeper into the mire; and he was now up to his middle, calling out for help, forty yards from us, and one hundred from the shore. To return was impossible,—the fowling pieces dropped from our hands, as we watched his motions in fearful anxiety, every instant expecting to see him disappear. Despair gave him strength and perseverance: but he became a mass of mud, and his features were no longer distinguishable. I can truly assert, that at no period of my life did I ever feel stronger feelings of commiseration; a hundred weight seemed at my chest. In this way he continued his exertions, and, from time to time, while resting, it could scarcely be ascertained whether he was not gone altogether, so identified was he with the mud. Again he moved, and at the expiration of half an hour's toil, he emerged from his miry bed, presenting the appearance of an alligator, after a wallowing immersion, more

than any thing else ! As he reached the shore, the most unbounded expressions of joy on our part hailed his deliverance from his perilous situation. Then, spreading out his bundle of garments in a very dirty state, he put them on, waved his hand, and speedily vanished from our view—whilst we, less adventurous, or not being so particularly engaged on that evening, were left shivering and lightly clothed, until some time after dark, when we had sufficient depth of water to enable us to steer our course. When at length in motion, the wind being astern, the only cloak amongst us was hoisted by way of a sail, but it was long after midnight before we reached the place from whence we had started.

About this time (June 1, 1811), three hundred and twenty men of the second battalion, with a proportionate number of officers, were ordered to proceed to Portsmouth for embarkation to join the first battalion in Portugal. On the morning of their departure the bugles sounded the march. My mortification was extreme, for positively the last officer was selected to accompany them, and two of my seniors stood by my side, who of course had a prior claim to mine, and who could not succeed in obtaining permission to go ; so that all hope for me seemed now entirely to vanish, and we were obliged to content ourselves

by accompanying them a short way on the road, until their first halt,—the merry notes of the horns striking up “over the hills and far away,” the signal for wives to be torn from their husbands, children from their fathers, friends from their companions,—many bidding a long and last farewell. The detachment followed the broad path of their profession, while we, through dire necessity, took that which led to peace and pasturage amongst the Essex graziers; but no sooner had we reached our quiet quarters, than another consultation took place, between Lieutenants the Honourable Charles Gore, Wilkinson, and myself, wherein we pledged ourselves, that the trio should not be separated for individual interest, (and, as I was the junior officer, that point was of consequence to me); then hastening to the house of the senior officer, we assailed him *ensemble* by entreaties and arguments, until, finding we were bent on carrying our point, he consented to forward a memorial to the Duke of York, penned by us, which he signed. That done, we ran down to the post office, popped it into the box, and by return of post a favourable answer was given. What a moment! Gore and myself rubbed our hands and the little corporal Wilky (for that rank he had borne at the Military College at Marlow, and still continued the

title), fell on his knees and returned thanks to Heaven, for his good fortune. Our heavy baggage was crammed into the store, and ourselves, with light hearts, that evening proceeded to London.

Notwithstanding the usual hurry and preparation when going on foreign service, I managed to find my way to Wimbledon Common, where, I heard, a grand review was to take place on the 10th of June of the household cavalry, a brigade of hussars, commanded by Lord Paget, (now Marquis of Anglesea), a brigade of the foot guards, a battalion of foot artillery, wearing cross belts and white pouches, armed with muskets, and a multitude of volunteers, besides a proportionable train of artillery. When the Prince Regent rode down the line, I was much struck at the Duke of York's preceding him, dismounting in front of the two regiments of foot guards, and standing with his sword across his body, while his royal brother passed. This was an excellent example of discipline, so like the prince, the soldier, and the gentleman.

The next day, leaving the metropolis, we arrived at the place of embarkation, and so managed as to meet the detachment about the same distance from Portsmouth, that we had left them on the road from Colchester; being not a little

anxious to observe the astonishment that our unexpected reappearance would create amongst them.

My friend instantly ran towards me and expressed the happiness he felt at meeting me in such a way ; and, almost in the same breath, said, “ Oh ! we have had such fun this morning ! ” On leaving Chichester at the break of day, the head of the column had been thrown into the greatest confusion by the assistant surgeon ; “ Halt ! halt ! ” cried he, “ stop, pray stop ; you are trampling on my teeth,” at the same moment throwing himself on the ground, and groping in the dust for four artificial teeth that had dropped from his mouth. The officers and soldiers were confounded at his exclamations, while the wondering circle encompassed him in mute expectation. At length, having put several questions, to which they only obtained confused and unintelligible answers, an officer ordered the men to proceed ; and several voices, joining in chorus, exclaimed :—“ Why, he’s mad ; the doctor’s intellects are impaired ; ”—for they did not fully comprehend his real loss, owing to his wild incoherent and extraordinary gesticulations—nor did he overtake the party or make his reappearance until they had halted at the half-way house, where he found them seated round a smoking tea urn, hot muffins, toast, chickens,

ham, and all those little delicacies so tempting after an early walk to those possessing youth, health, and *good grinders*. The woe-begone countenance of the doctor, on his entering the room, caused a momentary commiseration; but no sooner did he open his mouth, and display the vacant orifice, which no longer left any doubt of the nature of the loss he had sustained, than bursts of merriment, and noisy pity, were the only consolation the unlucky and crest-fallen *medico* received—who merely vented his wrath in broken monosyllables, no longer daring to trust his mouth with a laugh.

The Monarch transport of three masts, and of considerable tonnage, was lying at anchor at Spithead for our reception. Nearly the whole of us being embarked, and the Blue Peter flying at the mast head on the 18th, there was a sufficient warning to the few left on shore to hasten on board. The sails being hoisted, and spreading their white bosoms to the gale, we cut through the water, with a spanking breeze, cleared the Needles, and, steering a prosperous course, in three days were brought into the Bay of Biscay. The wind howled, the vessel heaved and cracked, one instant on high, and the next moment hurried downwards as if about to be ingulphed and buried in the mighty waters; the huge waves lashed and beat against

her sides with foaming violence, whilst every loose article rattled about the cabin; the strife of pots and kettles being only interrupted by the smashing of cups and saucers, and other brittle utensils. During this combination of sounds I lay in my berth, with a wash-hand basin betwixt my legs, ready at a moment's warning, and with my eyes, half-closed, fixed on a solitary candle, sliding to and fro on the table, and threatening to extinguish itself into one of the lower berths. Thus stretched out, and sinking into a disturbed and feverish slumber, I soon again awoke with my tongue parched, a horrible taste in my mouth, and my lips glewed together, counting the tedious hours of the coming morn, till I should be enabled to procure a refreshing glass of water. At last the happy moment arrived, my trembling hand was put forth to grasp the liquid stream—my mouth opened—but my nose gave warning of that which smelt and tasted like the Harrowgate Spa, and was any thing but *aqua pura*. The next evening I made an effort to gain my sea legs, crept out of the cabin, mounted on the deck, and slipped and staggered towards a poultry-coop, on which I sank in a reclining position, to inhale the freshness of the air. The dark and broad clouds flitted past, and at intervals veiled the moon, which seemed flying away in the opposite direction, and



smiling in derision at our clumsy progress, (with double reefed topsails,) over the troubled waves. Perpetual motion seemed at last accomplished, as the bows and stern of the vessels rose alternately, and in rapid succession. In the morning a thick haze hung over the atmosphere, through which we could discern the outlines of the ponderous mountains of Spain, rising one above the other, until their gloomy shadows were lost to view in the interior.

On the tenth morning, with a gentle breeze, and spotless sky, we glided along the rugged coast of Portugal, and observed a number of barks making towards us, decorated with white flapping sails, and filled with swarthy raggamuffin pilots, who were hallooing, pulling, and hauling at each other in a confused way, which gave the frail bark the appearance of being about to overturn keel uppermost, and leave its brown visaged cocked-hatted navigators floundering and splashing for their existence in the briny waves of the dark blue ocean. Shortly afterwards we entered the sparkling waters of the Tagus, skirted by purple-capt mountains, curling vines, fragrant orange groves, and a white city, reflected in its glassy waters, canopied by an azure sky, a golden sun, and a genial atmosphere. We dropped our anchor within a short distance of Lisbon.

The following day, the 28th, we landed, and

the soldiers took up their quarters at the Convento di Carmo. The interior of the city by no means corresponds with the exterior, as viewed at a distance, owing to the general narrowness of the streets that are choked up in some places with heaps of filth, continually stirred up, and eagerly devoured by packs of prowling and half-famished dogs.

Towards evening a small piece of paper was handed to myself and friend, with the name of a Portuguese inserted, at whose house we were to be quartered. Having made the necessary inquiries of a bragging native, he pointed out to us the direction we ought to take, and also made motions, by way of intimating to us our good fortune in having so spacious an abode for our accommodation. Having traversed over a great portion of the town, in search of our billet, we at length came to a large gloomy-looking mansion, the door of which we found open, and ascended a dirty stone stair case, where at each landing-place we found ponderous doors: but it was in vain we kicked, thumped, and called; the echo of our own voices was the only answer returned.

Night coming on, we again sallied forth into the streets, and, while passing near a church, we met a procession following a deceased nobleman for interment. Large wax tapers being offered to us, about four feet long, and thick in propor-

tion, we each grasped one, and entered the church with others. The lid of the coffin being removed, we beheld the pale corpse attired in a magnificent satin dress, and mantle superbly embroidered with gold: the pantaloons were of white silk, and full satin rosettes were attached to the velvet shoes. A full-dress court sword lay by his side, and a black hat of velvet, with a nodding plume of ostrich feathers, looped up with a brilliant stone, rested at the head of the coffin. His costume, in short, was similar to that worn by Don Juan on our own stage. The ceremony being concluded, a man stepped forward with a basket filled with quick lime, which he threw on the dead body in the presence of the spectators: that done, all the by-standers instantly retired, and gave up their tapers to persons waiting to receive them at the church door.

Much fatigued, we returned, and reached the cloisters of the convent, in search of our servants and baggage. While we were debating on the best method of securing a place of rest for the night, an athletic figure came stalking towards us, enveloped in the garments of a friar, having a fine dark countenance, and jet black hair cut short and shaved on the crown of his head, about two inches in diameter. He demanded how it was that we seemed wandering about at so late an

hour of the night. We briefly informed him of our situation, when he most courteously invited us to follow him and led us through several passages and up many flights of stairs to a couple of small bed rooms at the very top of the convent; then retired for a short time, and re-appeared, loaded with wine and sweetmeats. My friend had previously been in the country, and therefore could make himself understood; and, as he was acting quarter-master (at eighteen) for the detachment, he was glad of this opportunity which now offered to be near the men, to enable him to superintend the serving out of rations early on the following morning. Our host proved to be the abbot, and after a short conversation he wished us a sound repose to follow our sea voyage, and retired.

During our stay at Lisbon, we made a point of seeing the handsome churches, the opera, the grand aqueduct and other curiosities. The night previously to our quitting this place, the Consul gave a ball, to which we were invited; and I was surprised to observe the Portuguese gentlemen in coloured clothes, with pink and various-coloured silk stockings. The costume of the ladies was gaudy, but their dresses were ill made and worse put on. We only danced one set, and, some hours having elapsed without any appearance of

supper, (which was of serious consideration to us, as we were ordered to be on the banks of the Tagus the next morning at day light for the purpose of embarking in boats for Villada, some distance up the river,) I explored a suite of rooms at the extremity of which I espied on a side-board a huge dish filled with wafer cakes: but, not wishing to attack such a prize without an ally, I hastened to my companion to communicate my good luck, who, without further ado, assisted at their demolition. Although they were the largest of the kind I had ever before seen, our young teeth cracked them with an extraordinary rapidity; smash! smash! they went, and two layers had now disappeared, when a Portuguese attendant out of livery, observing such dreadful havoc, advanced to their rescue, assuring us with solemn physiognomy that they were reserved for the ladies. Hostilities ceased on their protector's consenting to procure us a bottle of wine, two goblets of which we hastily swallowed, and instantly sallied out into the odoriferous streets. "*Agua fresca, agua fresca*" resounded from all quarters, while buckets of the most nauseous contents fell with a splash from the upper stories of houses into the space below—like the bursting of water spouts. "Conceal yourself," cried my friend, "or you

will be scented and sprinkled all over." In this manner, running the gauntlet at every turning, we proceeded until we reached the dark and narrow flight of stairs leading to our heavenly apartments, where we had no sooner entered than I put my foot on the body of a man, who lay stretched at full length across the doorway. I hung back, and we regroping our way down into the court yard, and alarming the guard, lights were procured: the rays of the lamp fell on the face of my drunken snoring servant, encircled with bottles—having empied the contents into his own stomach. From the effects of this he had scarcely recovered at the hour of our departure, leaving me the agreeable task of packing up, and seeing my mule safe off, as the baggage and animals were to cross the grand lines of Torres Vedras, and meet us at the place of disembarkation.

Passing through the principal streets, we entered the boats for our conveyance (after a stay of eleven days at Lisbon) and landed in the evening at Villada.

## CHAPTER IV.

March to Santarem and Abrantes—Scenery and incidents at Aronches—Junction with some other regiments—Military scene in a wood—Anticipatory reflections on the fate of some of the author's comrades—Quarters at Portalagre, Castello de Vida and Marvao—Bridge of boats across the Tagus—Contiguous scenery—Horrors of travelling for invalids in the Portuguese cars.

OUR animals and baggage having joined us the next day, we took the road towards Santarem, and about dusk reached the causeway leading up a steep hill into the town, where the French, previously to their retreat under Marshal the Prince of Essling\*, had thrown the dead from their hospitals into the wells,—the idea of which caused such horrible thoughts, that we could scarcely summon up sufficient resolution to drink while at that place.

The excessive heat of the following day having somewhat subsided, towards the cool of the evening we began our march, but, by some un-

\* Massena.

accountable accident, took the wrong road for upwards of a league before the mistake was found out. Retreading our steps, we at length regained the identical spot from whence we had previously started nearly three hours before; glancing my eye towards the battlements of the town, a smile prophetic passed my countenance, that I should not again behold its turrets. Turning our backs, and pursuing the right road, we gaily tramped along toward Golegam; and, as the morning dawned, I was loudly knocking for admittance at the door of a small house, on the confines of the church-yard, that was strewed with skulls which had been torn from the sepulchres and graves, in search of gold, by the French soldiery.

After the usual halt we pursued our march through Punhete to Abrantes, where two of us were nearly carried away amongst the quicksands, while bathing in the river Tagus, and only reached the shore by making the greatest efforts. Various individuals had been drowned at this place by the current.

Having halted here one whole day, we crossed over the bridge of boats to the southern province of the Alentejo, and entered Gaviao, where I was billeted in a very poor house. At night I entered a recess, much fatigued, and, upon quitting the mat-trass in the morning, the bugs had made such a feast on my right leg from the hip to the very sole of



my foot, so that I could scarcely walk, and was in a most dreadful state of irritation.

Passing onwards in our march, on the ninth day, we ascended a high hill on the summit of which stood Aronches, commanding an extensive prospect over a diversified sandy country, intersected with forests, vineyards, rocks, and small fields of Indian corn, and encompassed by dilapidated walls formed of loose stones carelessly heaped one on another without mortar. The streets of the town were narrow, and almost deserted, with huge shapeless rocks at every few yards, rearing their heads, and blocking up the way, whilst a solitary Portuguese was seen striking an old battered guitar with all his fingers (as on a tambourine) and hallooing forth some ditty loud enough to be heard in the distant valleys. The heat of the day was quite overpowering, the firmament was of heavenly blue, while the sun shone forth in full splendour, forcing us to retire to some shady spot from its scorching rays, and to take some repose after the fatigues of the march.

Towards the close of the evening we again stood on the ramparts to inhale the cool and delicious air. The shades of night had scarcely hidden the face of the country from our view, when the moon, rising in all her grandeur, threw a pale light around, and tipped with silver the

battlements of those venerable towers built by the Moors, which for centuries had endured, and had frowned defiance on the flitting shadows of many generations, gliding by their grey walls unheeded and forgotten. As we gazed in sweet contemplation on the surrounding scenery, all nature seemed hushed, and the universe sunk into slumber, when suddenly the bell of a monastery close at hand tolled loudly, and in the gentle breeze, at intervals, we heard the solemn dirge of a religious procession, which, by degrees, arose on the ear, and gradually encreasing became louder, and swelled into such an awful bass strain, as one might conceive to inspire reflection in the firm, horrors in the nervous, and all the terrors of purgatory in the dying. The long procession of monks passed us, wrapped in their sombre drapery, as if they had emerged from the very bowels of the earth. The scene was impressive. After we had retired, my slumbers were disturbed by the horrors of the nightmare; and, when the merry rays of the sun sparkled in at the windows the next morning, I felt as if delivered out of some dungeon, longed for the camp, and hoped that, should fate cut short my career, the sun and moon might alternately throw their rays over my expiring body, rather than that I should die a lingering death, surrounded by wax tapers and priest-craft, and then

buried in satin and gold, and finally extinguished by a basket of quick lime.

On the 20th of July we descended into the valley, and, at the edge of a wood, awaited the coming of the division, from an advanced camp on their way to Castello de Vida. Every eye was on the stretch, and in the distance we descried a cloud of dust rolling towards us, the bright sparkling rays of the sun-beams playing on the soldiers' breast plates, when suddenly the leading regiment of the light division burst forth ; their bronzed countenances and light knapsacks, and their order of march, all united to inspire a conviction that their early discipline had not only been maintained amidst privations, battles and camps, but had become matured by experience. They had raversed mountains, and forded rivers ; the grim and icy hand of death had grasped many in the unhealthy marshes of the Alentejo, and with sure effect had scattered balls amidst their ranks without distinction : yet the remainder of these veterans were still bent onwards, to gather fresh laurels in the rugged and uncertain paths of fortune. Seven regiments of light infantry and riflemen defiled before us with their thread-bare jackets, their brawny necks loosened from their stocks, their wide and patched trowsers of various colours, and brown-

barrelled arms slung over their shoulders, or carelessly held in their hands, whilst a joyous buzz ran through the cross-belted ranks, as their soldier-like faces glanced towards us to greet many of their old comrades now about to join in their arduous toils after a long separation. A cloud of dust alone marked their further progress as they receded from our view. Following in succession, we brought up the rear. At the expiration of an hour's march, we entered a wood, formed column, called the roll, and the whole division was then dismissed. The assembled multitude of voices, the tearing and cutting down of branches of trees, crackling of fires, rattling of canteens, shooting of bullocks through the head, and the hurrying of parties of soldiers for rum and biscuit for rations, the neighing of horses, braying asses and rampant mules, all resounded throughout the forest, giving new life and merry echoes to its most intimate recesses. Groups of officers stood in circles; every countenance seemed decked in smiles, and a hearty welcome greeted us from all hands.

Under the wide-spreading branches of a venerable cork-tree, decorated with pack-saddles, accoutrements, and other military trappings, dinner was served up and laid out on a pair of hampers, which served us instead of a table. Beef, biscuit, tea, rum, and wine, composed our fare, it being a

usual custom to join breakfast and dinner, so as to make one meal serve for the twenty-four hours, the troops merely halting to cook and refresh themselves during the heat of the day. A more happy meal, I can safely say, I never partook of; and with infinite admiration did I regard the purple jackets and battered epaulettes of my companions. Our small keg of wine being emptied, the word passed to pack up and accoutre; and, in an incredibly short space of time, the column re-formed. The "assembly" sounded (the signal of march) threes, from the right of companies, the bands struck up, and at the end of two hours' march, and towards night-fall, we entered another wood. The same ceremony gone through as already described, the blankets were spread out, the earth our bed, knapsacks our pillows, and the overhanging trees our canopy; the busy hum of life no longer vibrated through the bivouac, and thousands of soldiers slumbered and reposed their weary limbs, lying scattered throughout the forest, or around the dying embers of expiring fires. My companions insisted on stretching themselves on each side of me, protesting that they ought to do thus, as a protection against cold for the first two or three nights, since a very heavy dew fell, so as almost to wet through the blankets, notwithstanding the great heat of the weather by day. For some time I was unable to close my eyes,

owing to some insects flocking up my legs in swarms, and creating much irritation.

Let us, for a moment, withdraw the veil of futurity, and make a few anticipations. On my right tranquilly slumbers a youthful warrior of sixteen years old, and on my left unconsciously sleeps the other, one year older. Lieutenant E. Freer is doomed to undergo two more years of the toils of war, to suffer sickness and privation, and, at the sanguinary assault of Badajoz, to receive a severe wound in the upper part of the thigh; and lastly, at the age of nineteen, while in the Pyrenees, a ball passes through his right arm, and enters his side: he staggers, utters three words, and falls a lifeless corpse amid those dreary regions!

Lieutenant J. Considine, at the assault of Badajoz, receives a ball through his body, and, stretched on the damp sod, enveloped in darkness, bleeds inwardly. A light is held over his pale face, and discovers the blood flowing from his mouth. Borne, however, to a place of security, he recovers. The next year he is tormented by a malignant fever, and afterwards, on the highest pinnacle of the Pyrenees, a ball strikes him; his thigh-bone is broken near the hip: he cries for help. I look down: he lies prostrate between my legs. The balls carry death and destruction around: we are under the walls storming a fort, and fighting hand to hand. Four soldiers attempt to carry him off,

and, not being aware of the place of his wound, hoist him up, and turn his left foot outwards over his shoulder ; by which means the thigh-bone is completely broken asunder. His screams are dreadful, and two of the soldiers fall dead, pierced with balls. The battle ended, he is carried to a place of security, where he eventually recovers ! —and he now commands the 53d regiment.

Early the next morning we were again on the road. The martial music struck up, and continued to play for a short distance : the word passed to march at ease : conversation then commenced. The soldiers lighted their pipes ; and, before the sun had reached its meridian, we filed into Portalegre. The streets were marked off, in the first instance, for different corps ; then the houses, again, subdivided amongst officers and soldiers ; the latter portioned off according to the size of the different dwellings ; the butt ends of the soldiers' firelocks serving as knockers, to rouse the sulky inmates, who would fain plead ignorance of the arrival of so many guests. It was by no means an uncommon occurrence for owners of houses to try all kinds of expedients, by absence, paltry excuses, or otherwise, to drive away the tired officers in disgust, who presented billets of lodgement. One day, an officer on the staff had patiently waited some time at a door without being able to gain admittance, until at length the

*patron* walked up from the street and feigned civility, making a low bow, and saying to the officer, “*Senhor*, I have no key;” when the officer returned his salute, coolly lifted up his long leg, and applied it to the door with such force that it flew open at the first blow—then turning to the astonished Portuguese, said, “*Senhor, tiengo bon chave\**, and, at a slow march, and with clanking sabre, took possession of the house. From that day he was known by the appellation of *Bon chave* throughout the army.

Another division entered the town the same day. The army was composed of eight divisions of infantry, besides cavalry and artillery; the former force was known throughout the army by the following familiar appellations: “the gentlemen’s sons,” “the surprisers,” “the fighting division,” “the supporters,” “the invisibles,” “the never heard of,” “the all-sorts,” and “the division:” but, before the end of this most sanguinary war, they all fought again and again, covering themselves with fame and lasting glory.

\* A jargon mixture of the Portuguese, Spanish, and French languages was frequently resorted to in our anxiety to make ourselves understood by the natives, and when one word failed another was substituted. An officer who had just entered the country was most anxious to procure an egg, and having failed to make himself understood, as a last resource, he cut a piece of *pipe-clay* into the shape of an egg, and was instantly supplied.



The following day we proceeded to Castello de Vida, an ancient fortified place within a league of Marvao. The first brigade entered the town, and the second bivouacked in a grove without its walls. The adjacent country presented a wild appearance; but more particularly the latter town, which was perched on a rugged and stupendous mountain, inaccessible on every side, save only one approach, and even that impracticable for carriages, the road winding under the overhanging shelving of rocks, others of which reared their rugged points in the very middle of this (hardly to be so termed) pathway. A party of us with difficulty ascended to this strange place, at a season of the year when every particle of vegetation is parched and dried up. The adjacent grey precipices presented a frightful wilderness,—the hiding-place of innumerable wolves. The mind of the beholder on surveying such a prospect became perplexed how so barren a spot, even at the remotest period of antiquity, should have been fixed on for any human habitation, far more for a fortification. Some cannon of ancient construction were still on the ramparts, but few mounted, and even the carriages of those mouldering to decay. Here and there a few miserable Portuguese were observed basking in a sunny corner, grouped and huddled together, and consisting of young and old women

with dark countenances, and still darker tresses, enveloped in shabby blue cloth cloaks, and extracting *piochos* from each other's heads; that occupation being the greatest source of delight and amusement amongst them. Their general food consisted of roasted chesnuts, washed down with cold spring water—which caused their teeth to decay at a very early age; and when they could procure a little dried fish, or *sardines*, with black sour bread, they would consider it a point of luxury. The extreme heat of the weather, and the exertions that we had used to reach this spot, created excessive thirst; looking round, therefore, in search of a house of entertainment, we espied a leafless branch of a tree suspended over a doorway, which bespoke the object of our search. On our entering and demanding wine, the corner of a pig-skin was untied, out of which spouted the wine into a filthy measure. It was strongly impregnated with the taste of the skin, about milk warm, and exceedingly thick, owing to its having been recently removed from a mule's back. These animals are usually loaded with two dried pig-skins, sewed up and slung across a pack saddle for the conveyance of wine from one place to the other—the muleteer being astride in the middle, and, above all, singing a wild air, and beating time with his heels against the bags.

Quitting this isolated place, and returning to our quarters, we remained there two or three days, and then resumed our march towards the northern frontier. The first night we halted in a wood near Niza. The next morning, an hour before day light, we started ; and, while passing over the summit of a high hill, as the morning dawned, we observed a thick mist overspreading an extensive valley. As the sun rose, its refulgent light pierced through the white fog, which resembled a beautiful floating sea, out of which peeped forth the tops of hills covered with investing shrubs. As the rolling mist passed away, so these apparent islands enlarged, until nothing of this enchanting illusion remained, except a bare country covered with *gum cistus*, (a small tree,) producing a most sickly smell, and the more particularly to those with empty stomachs. After a fatiguing weary march, half suffocated by heat, added to which our eyes, nose, and mouth, were filled with sand, we descended the pass of Villa Velha, where we observed a number of vultures perched on the pinnacles of inaccessible rocks, as if watching our motions, or waiting in anticipation of more devoted victims.

Crossing the Tagus by the bridge of boats, we bivouacked under the agreeable shade of an olive grove. The surrounding scenery presented every

where a beautiful, romantic, and grand spectacle ; the river foamed over the rocks that had fallen into its dark stream from the overhanging crags. The narrow road running at the base of the adjacent mountains was filled with loose stones ; woe, therefore, to the sore-footed soldier who happened to stumble amongst them ! Woe to the sick or wounded to whose lot it fell to be placed in those Portuguese cars, rudely constructed, with small solid wooden wheels, revolving on an unoiled axletree, and causing an indescribable creaking noise to be heard at a very considerable distance ; sounds so horrible, that the bigotted peasantry declare they frighten away the evil spirit of Old Nick -himself!

The jolting of these vehicles frequently tore off the plasters, and ripped open anew the wounds of the suffering soldiers ; nor was it at all unusual to behold the sick, wounded, and dying, with pallid countenances expressive of unheard-of agonies, while these engines of torture, drawn by a pair of bullocks, with their heads thrust under a shapeless piece of wood, (for the purpose of yoking them together,) rolled on their heavy way. The conductor guided them with a long pole, with a piece of pointed iron at the end of it, which he poked into the beasts' necks, and directed them by such sort of " sharp practice."

## CHAPTER V.

March continued—Wild and striking aspect of the country—  
Excellence of discipline—Camp followers—Spanish peasant  
girls and men—Plain of Fuente de Guinaldo—Reflections on a  
soldier's life—A vegetable conflagration—Village of Martiago  
—Difficulties of the French—Arrival in cantonments—The  
paymaster's peculiarities.

CONTINUING our route through the town of Cas-  
tello Branco and several villages, we obtained to the  
left a view of the tremendous ridge of snow-capt  
mountains of the Sierra d'Estrella. The barrier of  
bare and rugged rocks towards the Spanish side,  
when gilded by the departing glare of the setting  
sun, assumes the grandest appearance, and, in the  
revellings of imagination, a thousand palaces of  
burnished gold may be fancied amid these ada-  
mantine rocks, vieing with each other in height  
and endless variety of form. Afar off, an old  
monastery might be descried, perched on the sum-  
mit of bare and wild precipices ; its spiral turrets

shooting on high, and encompassed by the immensity of space; the frowning battlements overhanging the valley below, and threatening to overwhelm the passing traveller with loose stones and crumbling ruins—while the deep tones of the monastic bell chimed the vesper hour. On a solitary eminence a lonely shepherd stood, tending his flock, with a carbine slung across his shoulder, and a couple of wolf-dogs crouching at his feet, their necks encircled by strong iron collars bristling with long spikes, to protect them against the gripe of the voracious wolves. All around seemed of other times in this precipitous part of the country, composed principally of solid rock. The rude hand of time had identified towns and villages with their primitive stones; houses had fallen to decay, but nothing new had arisen on the ruins; streets branched out, but it was no wise uncommon to find huge rocks, of many tons weight, sticking up in the middle of them, never having been removed, and leaving the traveller the option of a choice of one of the two narrow roads round these natural obstacles.

As the division threaded its march over winding and difficult roads, its horse-artillery might be heard rumbling in the rear, while the winding notes of the bugle horns echoed in the distant valleys. Major-General R. Craufurd commanded

the light division. His arrangements and regulations of march stood unrivalled : at the expiration of every hour, the division formed close columns of regiments, and halted for about ten minutes ; the leading corps were generally again marching off by the time the rear came up. When any obstacles came across the line of route, each officer, commanding a company, saw that they were closed up before he put them into the regular marching pace, and that even if a break in the column happened of fifty yards between each company. I have frequently witnessed the whole division marching in this manner through a difficult country, by which means they were always in hand, ready to engage by companies. If a man found himself exhausted between the halts, the senior officer of the company ordered him to have a ticket, which he was obliged to hand over on his arrival in camp, or to shew to any one who questioned him on the road as to his authority for being absent from his corps.

The code of discipline was very strict ; but every one knew exactly that which was required of him, and, in the event of any irregularity even on the line of route, amidst wilds and mountains, no matter where, the column was closed up *instanter*, and a summary punishment inflicted on the spot. This was far from harsh treatment : it was lenity

in the end ; it preserved the health of the soldiers, by keeping them in their ranks ; it maintained discipline and concentration, the great requisites in war ; it prevented marauding on the inhabitants ; soldiers were debarred from coming to unpleasant collisions and assassin-like encounters ; and thus peace and harmony were established among those whom we were bound to defend. The followers of the division (and of the army) were composed of lank Barbary bulls and bullocks ; mules loaded with bags of biscuit, kegs of rum, kegs of ball cartridge, reserve ammunition ; a few hardy women (mistresses, or wives of soldiers) mounted on strong and weak asses ; Portuguese boys, drivers ; officers' milch goats ; purveyors and medicine chests ; and sometimes a few suttlers, headed by a man better known by the name of *Tick*, owing to his giving credit to officers in precarious times. This person, by the bye, as a natural consequence, would lay on an enormous per centage for small articles of luxury ; disposing of bread itself at nine shillings a four-pound loaf. Tea, sugar, and brandy in a proportionate ratio.

On the 9th of August we emerged from Portugal, and passed Albergeria, a village on the Spanish frontier. My astonishment and curiosity were highly excited on observing the extraordinary difference



between the natives of Spain and Portugal, and that it could be possible, for people living so near one another, to be so dissimilar in complexion, costume, and manners,—even when inhabiting respectively the banks of a narrow stream, which holds its course near the frontier of the two kingdoms, being scarcely two yards wide, and only ankle deep.

The merry Spanish peasant girls came forward with bold smiles and strutting steps, greeting us in familiar terms, such as *Vivan los Ingleses ; vivan los Coluros, y Mil años a ustedes* ; then pulling out their castanets, jumping and saying, *dennosotros la musica : vivan los Ingleses*. Others came running forward with pitchers, and, against all rules, broke the ranks, insisting on supplying the soldiers with water. Some of them were extremely pretty ; their lively manner and becoming costume made them appear to great advantage. Their complexions generally are of a fine healthy brown, they have sparkling black eyes, and dark hair combed back and tied in a knot with a bunch of black ribbons, hanging down their backs ; their jackets of brown or blue cloth are laced up the front, and slit open at the sleeves, so as to display a white chemise. Their petticoats are of various bright colours, reaching just below the knee ; and their stockings are red, blue, and white,

most fancifully worked up the middle of the calf of the leg; their feet are remarkably small, with silver buckles in their shoes, besides gold or silver ornaments in their ears and round their necks. When going to church or visiting each other, they wear a black cloth mantilla over the head, and held across the breast with both hands. On entering a place of worship, they cross themselves quickly and drop down on the pavement on both knees, looking very devout, unless some object of attraction happens to catch their attention. The male peasantry are hardy and well-made, but by far the shortest race of men I ever saw in any other country, although their picturesque dress gives them the deceptive appearance of a height which they really do not possess. Their principal amusement out of doors is the game of hand ball, or throwing an iron bar with the right hand a considerable distance, and also pitching it betwixt their legs in various other ways which may suit their fancy. On sundays and fête days they dance *boleros* with their village maids, who beat time with their castanets and sing when music cannot be procured. That favorite dance is formed by four or eight couple standing opposite one another, not unlike the formation of a quadrille party. The male attire in the province of Leon is a large *sombrero*, or broad-brimmed hat, with a wide black

ribbon tied round it ; a brown jacket slit open at the sleeves ; a blue or green velveteen waistcoat decorated with two rows of long-shanked silver buttons, and cut out at the breast, showing a white shirt, handsomely plaited or worked, with a collar about half an inch wide, fastened with a clasp. The belt round their waists is of durable leather, about five inches broad. Their breeches are dark brown, stockings of similar colour, with shoes and silver buckles. When they go out, or during holidays, they envelope themselves in large brown cloaks, which they throw gracefully over the shoulder, and conduct themselves with a manner and deportment very far beyond the peasantry of other countries. Their villages are built in a cluster round good churches, the body of those edifices towering high above the small houses of one story high that encircle them. The floor is usually composed of earth beat down to a hard substance. There is no glass in the windows, which are merely small square apertures, one foot by six inches, divided by an iron bar, with a little shutter on hinges, which is closed at night. Their usual furniture consists of a bedstead, wool or straw mattress, covered by very coarse sheets and blankets, a table, two or three forms with backs to them, a large chest with a partition for the double purpose for stowing away flour

and holiday apparel. Sometimes in winter a brass pan with handles is used under the table, which they fill with hot embers to keep their lower extremities warm. The only chimney in the house is in the kitchen, where they use a small iron lamp filled with *aziete* or oil, and burn wood from their neighbouring forests; and when afar removed from woods, and that article becomes scarce, charcoal is substituted for cooking. Their usual food is sausages, garlic, and chocolate, the latter made into cakes ready sweetened, but only used as a luxury, and mixed so thick, that a tea spoon will stand upright in it. The bread is extremely white, and compressed, without yeast, made in the shape of a pancake, being ten inches in diameter, and about two inches and a half thick, and weighing four pounds.

The women wash by the side of streams, and continue to dip the articles in the water, and then strike them on a large round stone, on which they kneel, and, finally, lay them on the ground to dry; by which means they bleach their linen very white.

It is curious to observe a mother dressing a young child: after putting on its petticoat, she rolls several yards of coarse cloth so tight round the body of the infant, that a stranger would conceive it would be unable to respire, as its little arms stick out horizontally.

We continued our march over the plain of Fuente de Guinaldo, and within half a league of that place took up our ground in a wood, where we encamped, that is to say, cut down branches of trees, and constructed huts; and although the canopy of heaven, or a rudely formed hut, for months in succession, was the only shelter for the troops, the bivouac resounded with merriment, and afforded frequent good cheer. For my own part, I felt perfectly happy; my eyes and inclinations were directed towards the front; I felt myself securely lodged on *terra firma*, and no longer a sort of amphibious animal. I had escaped the dreadful fever and mortality of Walcheren, nor could I well call to mind the having ever experienced a day's serious illness. This was about the period of the year when the sickly season commenced; but I flattered myself that any impression on my unimpaired constitution was quite out of the question; in fact, I never troubled myself with gloomy thoughts: a wide field was now open, to which I looked forward with great anticipation, little dreaming of the example that was about to be visited, in the space of a short week, on my active limbs.

What situation is superior to the camp? and what period of a soldier's life is called to mind in such glowing colours as the days of youth, when he

was reclining under the shady branches of a forest oak, surrounded by young companions in arms, with light pockets and still lighter hearts, cheerfully talking to each other of glittering and moving armies, and all the imposing grandeur and pomp of war?—or fancy him nourishing the fonder feelings, and expatiating on the beauty of some foreign damsel, by whose wit and graces all hearts are captivated; while many another, more constant, indulges the fond hope of once more clasping the native mistress of all his thoughts to his arms, on his return to his own shores.

Spain, of all countries, tends to produce in the mind the most romantic thoughts, from the salubrity of its climate, its diversified scenery, clear sky, and bright sun—a sun which shines throughout the summer from morning till night, so that to those who sleep under the canopy of heaven all days seem the same, and when summer closes and clouds darken the atmosphere, the preceding season appears to the imagination as one continued day. These and many other feelings are indelibly fixed on the mind of a soldier, who closes his eyes on the highest mountains, in the deepest vallies, in woods, in morasses, in dusty, parched, and arid plains, or amid orange groves, luxuriant gardens, and beneath the marble fountain; or amidst frost and snow—the inmate alike of the palace, or

of the peasant's menial hut—one night reposing on a bed of down, enveloped by satin drapery, the next stretching his tired limbs on the ground, or on a miserable bed filled with vermin—one hour gazing on the sumptuous, light, flowing drapery and satin slipper of the graceful *señora*, the next on the ruddy healthy cheek of the more humble *muchacha*. All these opposite changes attend the soldiers' career in rapid succession.

But lo! dinner is served up and announced. A truce to reflections! While we were employed handling our knives and forks, displaying a hungry dexterity, and bolting morsels of unchewable ration beef, a smoke was observed issuing from a valley, in the direction of our outposts, a mile to the front, which continued to increase, and then burst into a flame. A gentle wind blew towards our bivouac. The blaze increasing, and extending with great velocity, the cry of "fire," resounded from all quarters—"The camp's on fire." All was confusion; officers and soldiers seizing their baggage, ammunition, and horses. In the mean time, some tore large branches from the trees, and advanced to check the devouring element, the dried corn burning and whizzing towards us with the noise of a whirlwind; the heat was excessive; opposition was useless; the trees of the forest blazing away like a whisp of straw; and

the whole brigade were *en déroute*, flying to save their lives, by reaching the road, where the second brigade had hastily formed, with boughs in their hands, as a last effort to endeavour to repel this vast conflagration. Fortunately the wood here ended, and the grass burnt itself out to the edge of the sandy road, which was one of great width, such as are frequently met with in the open parts of Spain. Had I not been an eye-witness to so quick and extensive a devastation made in a short time, I could hardly have pictured to my mind such a grand and awful spectacle.

Taking up fresh ground for the night, we descended in the morning the precipitous banks of the river Agueda, leading to the remote village of Martiago, nearly at the base of the Sierra de Gata. On the night we entered it, a pack of famished wolves devoured a donkey, and tore the hind quarters of a horse away. The poor animal was found in the morning, having crawled from his ferocious pursuers into the middle of the village for refuge, in that miserable condition.

Ciudad Rodrigo was to be reconnoitred. As convoys of stores and provisions were expected from Salamanca, through the great forest, of four days' march, between those places; and as Don Julien Sanches, with his Guerillas, hovered about ready to cut off all small parties, the French were



under the necessity, with incalculable inconvenience, to assemble their army, stretched over a great extent of country, to keep the inhabitants under controul, to protect their hospitals, levy contributions, and to make perpetual countermarches in order to keep open their line of communication.

On the 11th of August, before day-light, our division was bending its course over ravines, and almost impassable pathways, to show front during a reconnoissance made by Lord Wellington, who usually wore in the field, at this period, a small low-crowned cocked hat, a blue pelisse coat, and a Hussar sash.

The sun blazed forth as usual, (for not a drop of rain had fallen since I had put my foot into the country), and biscuit and rum were served out to refresh the exhausted soldiers; a humble refec-tion which no one would think of grudging to those who had been under arms for ten hours, under a burning sun, and crowning the highest hills without a bush to shelter them, or a drop of water to refresh their parched lips.

With my rum in one hand, making a shallow appearance at the bottom of a soldier's tin, and my mouldy biscuit in the other, I beheld an officer approach me, in the act of drawing from his bosom

an old ragged black silk neck-handkerchief worn out in the service, and now converted into a pocket-handkerchief. He fumbled it over for a whole corner to apply his nose to; and during this operation, his eyes were fixed on my tin. After a variety of hems, coughings, and such like indications, he took courage to beg that I would permit him to dip his dry biscuit into my shallow allowance of rum, to moisten his lips: his request being granted, and thanks returned for the given relief, he told me that, in the hurry to grasp his share, he had unfortunately upset it on the ground, and had the additional mortification to see it dry up in an instant.

We were spread out rank entire within sight of the garrison, for the governor to suppose our force stronger than it really was, so that he might inform the Duke of Ragusa, and oblige him to bring up and deploy his whole army, for the protection of his intended convoy.

Late in the evening we reached our cantonments in good spirits, though well tired, but not so much so as to prevent my making a good meal. Turning into a small recess, and getting into bed for the first time for weeks, after some hours I awoke rather feverish, went to the door in my shirt to cool myself, and found the air so refreshing that I

continued stationary for a considerable time, certainly much longer than my prudence ought to have dictated; however, I did not feel any ill effects from it at the time.

On the day following, our paymaster was encircled by a group of officers, who were listening to his odd remarks, relative to warfare. He declared that he hated *bullets* and *swords*, but with fists he flattered himself he was able to cope with, and would not turn his back on any man. "Oh!" said he, "how I should like to see a fine boiled leg of pork, and a pease pudding, smoking before me; why the very thought makes me ravenous, and I could eat any thing, from a gnat to an elephant; yes sir, I could eat an elephant stuffed with militia-men!" Then with both hands, pulling his cheeks, his breeches and his waistcoat, for in quarters he actually wore the identical dress he had joined the regiment in; "Look at these," said he, "why they fitted me as tight as a drum before I came to this cursed country; and look at them now! Well, only let me get my wife on my knee by my comfortable fire-side once more, and, if ever I leave old England again, may I be ———! and as my poor brother *did die*, I wish he had taken his departure before he ever persuaded me to enter the army!"

## CHAPTER VI.

The author is attacked by illness—Miseries of military travelling in that condition—Quarters at Celorico—The author's difficult recovery—Grievous sufferings endured by the soldiers affected with fever in the sickly season—Death of the Paymaster—The author rejoins his Division—Movements of the French—A clerical case of disaster—The contested mattress—A dance—Expensive celebration of Christmas—Story of the German sutler—Village and neighbourhood of Fuente de Guinaldo—Theatrical representations by the English officers.

THREE days after our long reconnoissance I became blind with ophthalmia, was seized with violent rheumatic pains in the soles of my feet, and took to my bed. My legs and knees swelled to an enormous size, first turning red, then blue, and I was no longer able to move.

Many other officers became sick, and were ordered to the rear. I for one, mattress and all, was shoved into a Spanish car. Our feelings during the passage of the Agueda were indescribable.—Ye invalids, stretched on your beds of down! comfort yourselves; submit to your pains with

Christian philosophy, and bless your lucky stars that you did not belong to the army of Portugal. Rejoice that your very lives are not shaken out of you by such ups and downs; first over one rock, then over another, and dragged along by bullocks sometimes forced into a run, owing to the steepness of the adamantine roads. I could no longer bear the terrible pain. In my shirt, with my legs enveloped in bandages of the car, I begged and entreated to be lifted out, being quite helpless and blind. To get on a mule's back was quite out of the question, my legs and knees were so inflamed. At length some sick soldiers offered to try and carry or rather drag me from rock to rock. First I got a jolt on one side, then an unintentional bump on the other; the men were exhausted; and I entreated them to hold up my feet, (while my head lay in the road), for I could not bear them on the ground. At the end of the second day's tormenting journey, we entered Castel Nero. The cars were drawn round a stone fountain, and while waiting for our billets from the *Juez de Fora*, the howling of wolves was distinctly heard in all directions, amid the surrounding woods and rocks.

For five burning days we travelled from morning until night-fall at the rate of a mile an hour,

Each night I was dragged out of the car, mattress and all, shoved into some horrible recess that was almost alive with vermin, and replaced in my uneasy vehicle in the morning for the continuation of the journey. On the fifth day, when within two leagues of Celorico (the place of our destination), we drew up, as Major Ellers of our regiment requested that he might rest for a short time, since he could no longer bear the jolting of his vehicle ; in a few minutes however he expired, and his body was carried forward and interred.

The heat of the weather was almost past endurance. On our arrival at Celorico, with an empty room for my quarter and the floor for my resting place, I remained sixty days nearly immoveable, my only covering a filthy blanket, which had been stained all over from my mule's sore back. On the journey it had been placed under the animal's pack saddle to save its back, by day, while in turn I had the benefit of it as a covering by night. In this miserable plight, what with bleeding and blistering, and long confinement, I had become a perfect skeleton, and reduced to the most wretched condition. Five medical officers came to hold a consultation at the foot of my mattress, and, having examined my now lank legs, and big feet, they assured me,

that they could not hold out any hope of a speedy recovery, and even doubted whether I should ever again be enabled to straighten my right leg, the knee of which had become contracted during the pains of my rough journey. The staff doctors held out every inducement to persuade me to go to England, by first offering a spring waggon to convey me to Lisbon. My suffering had been great, my arms hung nearly useless by my side, my legs refused their office: yet I still cherished the hope, that they would again, carry me forward. Doctor Mac Lean most kindly pressed me to acquiesce in their advice, but without effect: (poor gentleman—I understood he died a few days subsequently of a fever!)—how could I leave the army, whom I found amongst mountains feeding on hard biscuit and drinking rum impregnated with the mosquitoes? A pretty warlike story to recount at home! The very thought was frightful! More bleeding and blistering were therefore resorted to, by which means, added to a good constitution, at the expiration of another month I was enabled with the assistance of crutches to reach my window, the trellis work of which being thrown open offered me ineffable delight at once more enjoy the sight of a few living objects in the street.

The rain now fell in torrents for days together,

and thousands of British and Portuguese soldiers (now crowding the churches which had been converted into hospitals) were dying by hundreds, of fever produced by the sickly season. The excruciating torments, suffering and privations of the common soldiers were such, that an adequate description is impossible,—many of them lingering in raging fevers, stretched out on the pavement, the straw that had been placed for their comfort, having worked from under them during their agonies, while hundreds of flies settled on and blackened their dying faces : and so stationary did these tormentors become, that those who still maintained sufficient power were obliged to tear them from off their faces, and squeeze them to death in their hands. Cars piled up, and loaded with the remains of these unfortunate victims to disease, daily passed through the streets for the purpose of pitching their bodies into some hole by way of interment. The medical officers were overpowered by the numbers of sick, and also fell ill themselves, so that it was a total impossibility, notwithstanding their strenuous efforts, to surmount all difficulties, and to pay that attention to all that could have been wished. The very hospital orderlies were exhausted by attending, burying, and clearing away the dead. These scenes of



misery cannot be fancied: the sick pouring into the town, lining the streets, and filling every house, set at nought all theoretical conception.

Our paymaster entered the town with a raging fever. His hopes were not realized: he never again beheld his wife or his comfortable fire side. At the end of a few days' anguish he expired, and was buried with the rest.

Captain Poppleton was the commandant at this station. Officers of other corps held similar commands (with certain privileges) at *Belem*, *Santarem*, *Niza*, and other towns for the purpose of regulating quarters for the sick and stragglers of the army.

At the expiration of four unhappy months I became so far convalescent, as to be enabled to proceed to join my corps. I counted every step forward which carried me further from the hated and detestable *dépôt*, where every surrounding object depicted misery, and where, when the *lively* army happened to be in motion, such gloomy reports were spread, as to intimidate the sick and frighten the convalescents out of the country. Having passed through Guarda, Sabugal, and several miserable Portuguese villages, at the expiration of five days I reached Fuente de Guinaldo, the head quarters of the division. It is unnecessary

to say that a hearty welcome hailed my arrival, and various interesting incidents, which had occurred since I left, were related by my companions, but none were more agreeable to my sanguine mind, than to hear that the division had not fired a shot during the time of my absence ; so far dame Fortune had befriended me.

The enemy, under the Duke of Ragusa, had advanced on the 25th of September to throw provisions into Rodrigo, and had attacked the fourth division at Adea de Ponte, and part of the third division, who had distinguished themselves against the French cavalry on the heights near El Bodon, they having made several vain efforts to break their little squares for two leagues over firm charging ground ; little, I repeat, because the regiments composing the brigade were very weak in point of numbers.

The light division was stationed on the right bank of the Agueda, hovering on the enemy's left flank ; but, owing to the central attack, it was obliged to march *à détour*, so as to accomplish a concentration with the third division at Fuente de Guinaldo. This was done with the loss of one man, and that was the *parson* attached to the division, who had entered a house and turned snugly into bed, while the

soldiers were shivering on the ploughed ground with keen appetites. During the night, the troops retrograded a short distance, suffering all the while from cold. The march was much impeded owing to a trifling stream in the road, and other obstacles, which the soldiers could not at first surmount, for the extreme darkness. By some accident the parson was not aware of this movement. Towards morning, while wrapped in the arms of Morpheus, he felt a gentle tap, and on opening his leaden eyelids, he saw four French heavy dragoons wrapped in white cloaks, with weather-beaten visages and huge mustachios, (crowned by brazen helmets, surmounted with tyger skins,) hanging over him in deep consultation on the best way of disposing of his person. The debate closed by their allowing him to put on his sable garments, to be conveyed a prisoner to the governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, who, on being informed of his harmless pursuits, gave directions for his liberation, so that he might go in search of the English army. On his being conducted to the gate of the town, the French soldiers rudely divested him of his coat and waistcoat, using their feet besides, in a most unceremonious manner, and left him to pursue his journey in his shirt sleeves.

Although the house occupied by the officers of

the company was small, they declared that I should not seek a bed elsewhere; and one of my friends assured me that he would soon supply me with that article. Without further ado he hastily retired, and in a few minutes we heard a great uproar in the street, and, making for the door, we found my friend running towards the house loaded with a mattress on his back, and pursued by a woman out of whose house he had taken it. Rushing into the room breathless and convulsed with laughter, he threw it on the floor, which he had no sooner done than the furious owner burst in, and, laying violent hands on it, began to tug away, showering forth a string of Spanish imprecations, too numerous to mention, but easily to be guessed at by those who have heard such refined salutations from an enraged Spanish *muger*. It was not until her strength had entirely failed her that she would admit of an explanation; but, on money being offered her, she turned away indignantly; and as she had not shown any relaxation of the muscles of her brown visage, and her large black eyes continued to express unutterable things, the officer thought it better to reload himself and return that which, in a frolicsome moment, he had carried off with so much dexterity; but the woman

pulled it from off his shoulder, and, with all the natural generosity of the sex, gave him the use of it, (as it was for a convalescent comrade,) as long as it might be required.

A dance was to take place that evening. The officers, therefore, put on their best uniforms, and decorated themselves with all the precision and care used when about to attend a ball of a more enlightened circle.

On entering the room we observed the females decorated in their best attire and trinkets. The band struck up a *bolero*; that being concluded, the male peasantry retired, leaving their mistresses to hop down our country dances, and to instruct us in those figures we had attempted to teach them. Generals, and all ranks, mixed in these rustic dances, where a variety of little coquetries were practised on the half-enamoured swains. The smell of garlic was scarce tolerable; but these were no times for niceties.

Every effort was exerted to do ample justice to Christmas. The different officers' messes dined alternately with each other, to partake of lean roast beef and plumb pudding. Poultry was procured; in fact, no expense was spared. A four pound loaf cost a dollar; moist sugar three *pecetas* a pound, and every other commodity equally ex-

pensive ; still the festive board was well supplied, and the evenings most joyfully spent.

One of the suttlers who had taken post with our division, to amass a fortune, was a German of ordinary appearance with a pretty wife. Here it so happened that our serjeant-major, a man of portly figure, was possessed of more small talk than usually falls to the lot of men in his station of life ; and, being remarkably fond of good living, and other amusements, proved a very losing customer at the above worthy suttler's shop, who could not help seeing the decline of that stock which he had brought from Lisbon at so much expense ; besides other annoyances which he *could not see*. He, therefore, in a fit of extreme irritation, without his hat, made for the commanding officer's quarters, where he entered unceremoniously, and then laid bare all his wrongs. "*Sare,*" said he, "*your serjeant major is a very bad man. He drinky my wine. He eaty my sugar. He drinky my tea and my coffee. He kissy my wife, and he kick \*\* \*\*\*\*. Sare, your serjeant-major is a very bad man.*"

Every morning the officers were engaged rehearsing their different parts, or superintending the making of theatrical dresses, (as the tragedy of Henry IV was to be performed by various officers,)

and scene painting. The latter was principally executed by Bell, (the assistant quarter master general of the division,) in an old chapel, within one hundred yards of the village, which had been gutted of its ornaments by the French or the priests.

The compact and small village of Fuente de Guinaldo stands on an eminence in an open plain, encircled at a certain distance by a number of stone crosses, said to have been placed there by the peasantry to frighten away evil spirits. There are no enclosures, no out-barns, or farm houses, in this part of Spain, which gives the plain during winter a very lonely aspect, skirted as it is by a distant wood, and a ridge of wild mountains on the summit of which is a monastery, which is only to be seen on a clear day; for if the weather is at all hazy, it is enveloped by clouds. The communication from one village to another, is a sort of track beaten into the shape of a road by the footsteps and small traffic of many generations.

The natives of this part of the country form a little colony, unmixed by a second order of society, as there is no resident beyond the rank of a peasant, the principal holding the authority of *Alcalde*, and completely governing the village in

all judicial affairs. He exercises his power with mildness, which is perceptible in the independent manners of the people.

The girls sing very pretty airs in praise of some renowned chieftain, or of her who happens to be the acknowledged beauty. Maria Josepha, of Fuentes de Onor, was the happy *Moza* whose charms were extolled at this period: but what most struck my attention was a song about Marlborough's knowing how to make war, and sung to the same tune as in England. The mothers lull their children to sleep by it; and when bodies of troops enter towns, or the girls dance *boleros*, this is a general tune. I inquired of a *muchacha* where she learnt it; she opened her eyes with a ludicrous surprise, and made answer, in the quick witty manner usual amongst the *Mozas*, "Why, of my grandmother,—*Que edad tiene V. M?*"\*—by way of giving me a hint not to consider myself the instructor.

The long expected night of performance having arrived, written bills of the play having been distributed throughout the village (which was filled like a beehive with officers who had come from a considerable distance from other divisions of

\* How old are you ?



the army, with flowing camlet cloaks, and mounted on *boricos*, mules, and ragged-mained stallions;) and tickets being issued for pit and boxes, we moved in Bacchanalian groups towards *el Teatro* (or chapel). It was crammed to excess, as we had not forgotten to reserve some room for *los soldados*. The curtain no sooner drew up, than the wonder of the *Muchachas* knew no bounds, and they became so loquacious in admiration of the scenery and dresses, and in disputing among themselves which was *el Principe*, and which the various characters the officers were to personify, that it was a considerable time before they could be so far tranquillized as to permit the performance to proceed, which, however, went off with great eclat. "Poins, and be hanged." Alas! no. Poor Poins was badly wounded, and blown up a few days after!

## CHAPTER VII.

Preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo—A review of the light Division by Lord Wellington—The fort and convent of Saint Francisco taken—Storming the breach—Capture of the place—Regulations for the prevention of plunder—Disorders committed in the city—Remarks and anecdotes connected with the siege—Burial of General Craufurd—Removal of quarters to El Bodon—Vestiges of the previous engagement near that place—Ciudad Rodrigo consigned to a Spanish garrison—March towards Badajoz—Castello de Vida—Fortress of Elvas—An accidental acquaintance.

AT the expiration of some months' travail by the engineer department, in procuring stores from various places, active operations were commenced to collect them near at hand,—such as the battering train, cannon balls, ammunition, gabions, fascines, scaling-ladders, sand bags, shovels, spades, pick-axes, &c.—for the purpose of laying siege to Ciudad Rodrigo, (in the province of Leon,) which stands on an eminence on the right bank of the river Agueda, surrounded by an open country, and was garrisoned by two thousand French soldiers. The walls of the fortress are rather more than a mile and a quarter in circum-

ference, enclosing monasteries, convents, and churches,—which gives the city at a distance the appearance of an immense gothic castle.

A few days previously to the siege, Lord Wellington reviewed the light division on the plains of Guinaldo. He was dressed in full uniform, and merely rode down the line, looking at the troops in a cheerful manner. Just as his Lordship was leaving the ground, which was covered with snow, General Craufurd appeared, and soon after the troops returned to their quarters. The second brigade came from Martiago, and returned that night—an immense march. A few days subsequently to this review, the whole division was concentrated, the first brigade moving to La Encina, the second to El Bodon. During this march a tremendous storm of sleet and snow took place; the snow froze and adhered to the horses hoofs, forming balls which raised them several inches from the ground. Fortunately, the march was short, as fatigue-parties of soldiers were obliged to return to prop up the weak and staggering baggage-animals, that had suffered previously from bad provender.

On the 8th of January, 1812, the light division crossed the Agüeda, *sans culotte*, (*a cooler!*) at a ford about four miles above Ciudad Rodrigo. The day was fine, and, indeed, during the operations of the siege, the atmosphere was mild for the

season of the year, although sometimes frosty of a morning.

The division bivouacked for some hours two miles from the town. When the darkness had set in, three hundred soldiers drawn from the 43d, 52d, and the rifle corps, moved under the command of Colonel Colborne\*, to assault the fort of Francisco. The enemy fired about two rounds; our good troops did not allow more time, and the fort was taken. It was situated on a rising ground, six hundred yards from the town, was of a square form, with two small howitzers, "*en barbette*," and had a garrison of two officers and forty soldiers, who were made prisoners. Six or eight others either were killed or escaped into the town, where the drums began to beat to arms, and a furious fire of shot and shell opened on us, while digging a parallel close to the captured fort; the earth being thrown up on the town side. The land is arable, and bestrewn with loose stones, which were flying on all sides from the impulse given by the cannon balls, and the bursting of shells, which were exploding on every side, killing and maiming many soldiers.

The great convent of Saint Francisco, in the suburb, was carried a few days before the storming of the town, and also the ruined convent of

\* Now Major General Sir John Colborne.

Santa Cruz. On the morning of the 14th, about five hundred French soldiers made a sortie from the city, and before they retired were very nearly succeeding in entering the batteries, where the battering cannon had been placed the night before. The twenty-four pounders were of iron, mounted like field guns, on handsome carriages, painted lead colour.

An hour before dark on this day, the batteries opened within six hundred yards of the ramparts for the purpose of battering in breach. The first, third, fourth, and light divisions, employed in the siege moved by turns from their cantonments, each taking a twenty-four hours' spell.\*

On the 19th of January, the light division was ordered to the assault out of its turn. During the greater part of the day we remained cooking behind the convent of the Norbortins, a most splendid ruin, with very extensive cloisters,

\* During the siege, the enemy threw a vast quantity of shells. One night two mortars kept up an incessant discharge; and the soldiers called out "Here comes a shell from *big Tom*; and here comes another from *little Tom*." All the cannon shot that flew over our trenches lodged on a hill one mile north of the town, at the base of which was a *spring*, where I saw a soldier killed while stooping down to fill his canteen with water. This hill, owing to its being so ploughed up with balls, was familiarly named by the soldiers *plumb-pudding hill*.

situated close on the right bank of the Agueda, three miles S. E. of the town. Soon after three o'clock we moved towards the ground occupied by the foot guards, who were halted one mile and a half from the suburbs of Ciudad Rodrigo. These troops came forward to wish us success, and our band struck up the *fall of Paris*. The third division occupied the trenches, and the garrison must have observed the march of the light division from the ramparts,—extra troops! The governor should have pondered on it! If he had kept a sharp look-out, he must have been expecting the assault.

There were two breaches effected in the walls of this town. By the small breach the large one was taken in reverse.

At half-past six o'clock the light division was formed behind the convent of Saint Francisco, near the suburb, and almost exactly opposite to the small breach, and about four hundred yards from it. The third division, under General Sir Thomas Picton, was also formed behind the ruins of Santa Cruz, and in the trenches opposite the large breach. All was silent, four or five shells excepted, which were thrown by the enemy into our left battery, and fell not a great distance from our column. Now, if the governor thought that the assault was preparing, he ought not to have

fired at all from the ramparts, as it prevented the approach of the troops from being discovered by the ear.

I heard the town-clock strike seven, and at the same time saw a match lighted in one of the embrasures—(very awful!) at that moment the “forlorn hope,” headed by Lieut. Gurwood, of the 52d, and the storming party (composed of three hundred soldiers, with a proportion of officers) moved on, carrying a number of bags, filled with dried grass, to lessen the depth of the *fausse braie* and the ditch. In a few minutes they were on the brink of the ditch, and the fire of the town opened briskly on them. There was a sort of check, but no longer than might be expected, as they had to scramble in and out of the *fausse braie*, and then to jump into the dry ditch; but having gone too far to the left, the advance got on the wrong side of the tower, which was not breached, and the soldiers, for a few seconds, were knocking with the butt-ends of their fire locks against the wall, crying out “Where’s the breach?” for although the enemy were firing rapidly from the top of the wall, still the troops, on first descending to the bottom of the ditch, were in total darkness. This state of suspense lasted, however, a very short time, for two soldiers, stumbling on

the loose rubbish, called out "Here's the breach," and Lieut. Gurwood\* led up it; but the French swore they should not enter, and fought most desperately on the crest of the breach, throwing down large stones and missiles, and keeping up a most deadly fire. Here many brave officers and soldiers fell. General Craufurd received a mortal wound, and fell into his aide-de-camp's arms, on the glacis, while cheering on the main body of the division. Major-General Vandeleur and Colonel Colborne were wounded. How the troops contrived to force the breach I know not: I can only say that it was well done. The breach was exceedingly steep: about five yards wide at the top, having a cannon, of heavy calibre, placed sideways, to block up the passage; however, there was a clear yard from the muzzle of the gun to the wall, a sufficient space for one or two soldiers to enter at a time, besides those who could pass underneath the muzzle of the gun, or over the wheels of the carriage.

The moment the division entered, a number of soldiers rushed to the right, along the ramparts, to the large breach (*one hundred and fifty yards*), and then engaging those of the French who were

\* Lieutenant Gurwood took the governor of the fortress prisoner.



still firing on the third division, absolutely drove them over the breast-work, on to the large breach. At this time a wooden spare magazine, placed on the rampart, exploded, and blew up some French grenadiers, and many of the light division. Lieutenant Pattenson, of the 43d, and Lieut. Uniacke, of the rifle corps, were of the number. This occurred just behind the traverse, which, on the enemy's right, confined and guarded the great breach.

On ascending the small breach, directly after it was carried, I found myself with the crowd. Lieut.-Colonel M'Leod managed to collect, with the assistance of some other officers, on the rampart about two hundred soldiers of our regiment, and was exhorting them to keep together. At this time there was not any firing on us, with the exception of a few stray shots from the opposite buildings; but there was sharp musketry still at the great breach.

I ran towards the large breach, and met an officer slowly walking between two soldiers of the rifle corps. I asked who it was, when he faintly replied, "Uniacke\*," and walked on. One of his eyes was blown out, and the flesh was torn off his arms and legs. He had taken chocolate, with our mess, an hour and a half before !

\* He died in excruciating agony.

The regiment was now formed, and Colonel M'Leod immediately detached officers with guards, to take possession of all the stores they could find, and to preserve order. These parties ultimately dissolved themselves. If they had not done so, they would have been engaged in the streets with our own troops.

Colonel M'Leod caused Lieutenant Madden, of the 43d, to descend the small breach with twenty-five men, ordering him to continue at the foot of it during the night, and to prevent soldiers leaving the town with plunder. At eleven o'clock I went to see him; he had no sinecure, and had very judiciously made a large fire, which, of course, showed the delinquents to perfection, who were attempting to quit the town with plunder, in the garb of friars, nuns, or enveloped in silk counterpanes, or loaded with silver forks, spoons, and church plate, all of which was of course taken from them, and was piled up, to hand over to the proper authorities on the following day. He told me that no masquerade could, in point of costume and grotesque figures, rival the characters he stripped that night.

The fire was large, and surrounded by the dead bodies of those who fell in the first onset at the foot of the breach. The troops must have rushed up and taken the latter without hesitation: had the governor of the town only placed a few obstacles on

the crest of the breach, he must have stopped the entrance of the light division altogether. He had time, as the firing from our batteries ceased two hours before the assault, and then from the rampart there was a gentle slope into the town, leading into a narrow lane, which was blocked up with a cart only, leaving a sufficient space for one person to pass at a time. The Governor was most culpable! There was no musquetry from any part of the ramparts until the head of the light division column was close to the small breach.—Amongst others lay Captain Dobbs, of the 52d, on his back, at the foot of the breach, and stripped of his uniform. An officer at first thought he was a Frenchman, who had tumbled headlong during the strife from the top of the breach; but, while he was holding a piece of lighted wood, to contemplate, with admiration, his extremely placid and handsome countenance, even in death, a captain of the 52d knew it to be the body of poor Dobbs. On lifting him up, the blood flowed copiously from his back, a musket ball having entered at the breast, and passed through his body.—A soldier of the third division came up to me and said, “Captain Hardyman, of the 45th, is killed!” for although three generals and seventy other officers had fallen, yet the soldiers fresh from the strife talked of him; and if a soldier’s praise can add to a man’s fame, certainly no one

had a greater share than Hardyman; he was the real type of a soldier, and kind to every one.

When the troops had sipped the wine and the Cogniac brandy in the stores, the extreme disorders commenced. To restore order was impossible; a whole division could not have done it. Three or four large houses were on fire, two of them were in the market-place, and the town was illuminated by the flames. The soldiers were drunk, and many of them for amusement were firing from the windows into the streets. I was talking to the regimental barber, private Evans, in the square, when a ball passed through his head. This was at one o'clock in the morning. He fell at my feet dead, and his brains lay on the pavement. I then sought shelter, and found Colonel M'Leod with a few officers in a large house, where we remained until day-light. I did not enter any other house in Ciudad Rodrigo; and if I had not seen, I never could have supposed that British soldiers would become so wild and furious. It was quite alarming to meet groups of them in the streets, flushed as they were with drink, and desperate in mischief.

On the morning of the 20th the scene was dreary; the fires just going out; and about the streets were lying the corpses of many men who had met their death hours after the town had been taken. At eleven o'clock, I went to look

at the great breach. The ascent was not so steep as that of the small one, but there was a traverse thrown up at each side of it on the rampart; hence there was no way into the town, as the wall was quite perpendicular behind the breach. When the third division had gained the top of the rampart, they were in a manner enclosed and hemmed in, and had no where to go, while the enemy continued to fire upon them from some old ruined houses, only twenty yards distant.

I counted more than sixty-three soldiers of the third division lying dead on the *terre-plein* of the rampart exactly between the traverses I have already described. I did not see one dead soldier of that division on the French side of those traverses; but I saw some of the light division.

I saw General M'Kinnon lying dead on his back, just under the rampart, on the inside, that is, the town side. He was stripped of every thing except his shirt and blue pantaloons; even his boots were taken off. He was a tall thin man. There were no others dead near him, and he was not on the French side of the traverse either, nor was there any possibility of getting at the General without a ladder, or traversing a considerable distance along the ramparts to descend into the town, and then passing through several narrow lanes, ruined houses, and over broken stone walls

being a distance of at least a quarter of a mile, and what no human being could have accomplished during the night. It is said that he was blown up. I should say not. There was no appearance indicating that such had been his fate. Neither the state of his skin nor the posture in which he was lying, led me to think it. When a man is blown up, his hands and face, I should think, could not escape. I never saw any whose face was not scorched. M'Kinnon's was pale, and free from the marks of fire. How strange, that with the exception of the General, I did not see a soldier of the third division who had been stripped! Neither was there any officer among the dead, or else they had been carried away. I should not wonder, (if it is not uncharitable,) that the General had been killed with all the others between the traverses, and that some *tender-hearted* follower of the army had taken his clothes off, and then just given him a hand over the wall, and so placed him in the position described.

The two divisions attacked without knapsacks. The greater portion of the light division lay at the foot of the *small breach* in the ditch; hence it was that they fought on the slope, and rolled down in succession as they were killed; but, on gaining the ramparts (there being no interior defences) they followed the French right and left,

who retreated, panic-struck, into the interior of the city, keeping up, however, a running fire from the different streets, or the massive stone buildings.

The third division, at the first onset, were fired on from the parapets of the ramparts, and assailed by missiles and live shells, which were rolled from the summit of the wall : but the enemy did not stand on the crest of the great breach to oppose their ascent ; for, if they had, it would have been impossible to escape behind their traverses. The enemy had left a space for one man to pass at a time, on the left of the right traverse, but expecting the attack, they had previously blocked it up with barrels filled with earth, having placed others behind to stand on for the purpose of firing over them. Before the morning, all these barrels, except one, were thrown down the scarp wall. The fact is, that the third division mounted to the *terre-plein* with facility ; but when on the rampart, they were fired on in front and both flanks, as before described, and in this small space, they suffered a tremendous loss of nearly five hundred heroic officers and soldiers. During the fighting, their dead and wounded were piled one on the top of the other, crying out in agony as they were trampled upon, and impeding the progress of others, who exerted themselves in vain amongst such havoc to carry the traverses.

The moment the wooden magazine blew up, all firing nearly ceased, for the enemy literally jumped over the right entrenchment on to the *terre-plein* of the great breach, to save themselves from the bayonets of the light division. A young Italian officer there seized Captain Hopkins, of the 43rd, round the neck, and implored his life.

At about eleven o'clock in the morning (of the 20th) the great explosion took place a few yards to the right of the *small breach*, blowing up the *terre-plein* of the rampart, four yards in breadth and ten in length. This fatal explosion (which was accidental, owing to some sparks of fire igniting some barrels of gunpowder in a casement,) happened while the French garrison were marching out of the city by the *small breach*, which had become so hard, owing to such numbers of soldiers walking up and down it, as to make the ascent nearly impracticable. The French, as well as the British soldiers, were carried up into the air, or jammed amongst the rubbish, some with heads, arms, or legs sticking out of the earth. I saw one of the unfortunate soldiers in a blanket, with his *face, head, and body*, as black as a coal, and cased in a black substance like a shell; his features were no longer distinguishable, and all the hair was singed from off his head, but still the unfortunate man was alive. How long he lived in this horrible situation I cannot say.



A tall athletic soldier of the 52d lay amongst the dead at the foot of the breach, on his back ; his arms and legs being at their full extent. The top of his head, from the forehead to the back part of his skull, was split in twain, and the cavity of the head entirely emptied of the brains, as if a hand-grenade had exploded within, and expanded the skull, till it had forced it into a separation with the parts ragged like a saw, leaving a gaping aperture nine inches in length, and four in breadth. For a considerable time I looked on this horrible fracture, to define, if possible, by what missile or instrument so wonderful a wound could have been inflicted ; but without being able to come to any conclusion as to the probable cause.

From this place I walked to the convent of Saint Francisco to see a wounded friend. The interior was crowded with wounded soldiers lying on the hard pavement. A soldier of the third division was sitting against a pillar, his head bent forward, and his chin resting on his breast, his eyes open, and an agreeable smile on his countenance. For half a minute I stopped with surprise to observe him sitting in so contented a posture, surrounded by the groans of his companions. At length, I addressed him, but, no answer being returned, I called a doctor, under the impression that the man was delirious. On the contrary, we found he was quite dead.

In the afternoon we returned to our quarters by regiments across the stone bridge, having been relieved by the fifth division, which came from the rear, and took charge of the city.

A few days after the assault, most of the officers of the light division attended General Craufurd's funeral. He was buried under the wall near the small breach.

In a few days we moved from La Encina to El Bodon, where our principal amusement consisted in playing at rackets, with wooden bats, against the side of the church, or riding about the country.

One day we visited the heights about half a league from this place, where, on the previous September, a brigade of the third division had been engaged. Many skeletons of the French horses lay in deep ravines, or on the shelvings of rocks, to the very summit of the ridge, on the crest of which some of the Portuguese gunners were cut down; and where for a short time the cannon remained in the hands of the enemy. It must have been at this moment that the second battalion of the fifth regiment retook them by charging in line, before the enemy's cavalry had time to form. I rode up the ragged ground myself with the utmost difficulty; the ground near the summit was so steep that the Portuguese, while throwing balls into the valley, could not see the advance of the French cavalry until quite upon

them. Not that I wish to detract from the deserts of the Portuguese; but, as it has been stated that they stood to their guns to the last, I only wish to demonstrate how it happened. The very print of the wheels of the cannon were still indented in the ground, and showed, to an inch, where they had stood.

The whole of the dead French soldiers lying in the valley were stripped, and in a perfect state of preservation, blanched like parchment by the alternate rain and sunshine; and their skins had become so hard, that the bodies on being touched sounded like a drum. The vultures had picked the bones of the horses perfectly clean, but had left the soldiers untouched; and, although *four months* had elapsed since they had fallen, their features were as perfect as on the day they were killed. Some of these soldiers were gracefully proportioned, and extended in every possible attitude.

The rubbish of the breaches at Ciudad Rodrigo having been cleared away, the parapets built up with gabions and fascines, all the trenches filled up, and a garrison of Spanish soldiers left for its defence—at the latter end of February we marched towards Badajoz, for the purpose of laying siege to that fortress, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, the road more than half way lying

through the rocky provinces of Portugal, where the villages are generally built on the tops of the highest mountains, with the remains of Moorish castles, or towers, studding the wildest rocks and the most tremendous precipices.

We remained a week at Castello de Vida, then resumed our march, and, on the 16th of March, entered Elvas, the principal fortress on the frontier of the Alentéjo, three leagues distant from Badajoz. It is situated on a hill, flanked on the right by a fort or citadel, half a mile without its walls, and on the left by the fort La Lippe, which stands on a scarped hill, a mile from the town.

While quartering off the soldiers, I observed a very pretty young lady looking out of a casement, which occasioned her house to be selected for our quarter. In the evening, myself and messmate were invited to take chocolate and sweetmeats with the family ; and, before retiring, the good old *Senhora* remarked our youthful appearance, and begged that, should either of us be wounded, we would come to her house. My companion was subsequently shot through the body, and, being conveyed back to Elvas, the mother and daughter kindly watched over him until he was perfectly recovered.

## CHAPTER VIII.

March from Elvas to Badajoz—Defences of that city—The investment—A sortie—Operations of the batteries—Capture of fort Picurina—Preparations for the grand assault—Advance of the “forlorn hope”—Desperate encounter at the breaches—Loss of life experienced by the British—The mode of attack changed to escalade with success—The city sacked by the British troops—Reflections respecting the conduct of the siege—Incidental anecdotes.

ON the morning of the 17th of March we formed contiguous columns, outside the walls of Elvas, and entering a spacious plain, passed the river Guadiana by a pontoon bridge, a few miles below Badajoz, which was garrisoned by nearly five thousand French soldiers. It is situated on the margin of the left bank of the Guadiana, in the province of Estremadura, in Spain, and encompassed by an open country, without a tree, a shrub, or even a hut to be seen without its walls. The ramparts are about two miles in circumference, and were protected by the forts San Cristoval, Napoleon, and the *Tête*

*de Pont*, at the head of the fine stone bridge, which communicates with the right bank of the Guadiana.

The fort Picurina, the outworks of Pardalaras, and the *lunette* of Saint Roque, constituted the general outworks of the city, on the left bank of the river.

As we drew near the ramparts of the fortress, we saw the flag of *three colours* majestically waving on the top of the great lofty square tower, in the centre of the old castle, which stands on the summit of a hill, whose frowning battlements overhang the town, and overlook the adjacent plains for a considerable distance.

The third, fourth, and light divisions invested the city on the left bank of the Guadiana\*.

Our division bivouacked within one mile and a half S. S. W. of the town, our position communicating in a manner with the bridge of boats. The day was fine; but at six o'clock in the evening the rain began to fall in torrents, and continued the whole night, which prevented the enemy hearing the troops when they commenced the first parallel, and the latter continued to work all night without being molested.

Before daylight on the 18th, the parties fell in

\* Some Portuguese troops watched the right bank of the river on the side of Portugal, but, during the latter end of the siege, part of the fifth division under General Leith took that duty.

to relieve those of our division who had first broke ground, a thousand yards S. E. of the town ; we had to make a quarter circle, which rendered the march nearly three miles to the mouth of the trench, where we arrived at day-break, and I saw the first shot ; it was fired from the Fort Picurina, and killed two poor fellows in the covering party of the fourth division, which was formed under the slope of a hill. In a few minutes the round shot came up the road quite often enough to put our blood into circulation ; and we immediately took our station under a small natural rise of ground, where we remained covering the workmen for twelve hours. The cannonade was pretty regular during the day, both from the town and from Fort Picurina.

We returned to camp an hour after dark, and I was surprised to find the division had been supplied with Portuguese tents. I found my friend waiting in one for me, and the canteens laid out with all the affection of a youthful soldier. I had been exposed in the rain for twenty-five hours, and this was one of the happiest moments of my life.

On the 19th, at mid-day, the firing from the town was very heavy ; every one in the best position for security, which it was not difficult to obtain, as the trenches were well advanced, but

every body cried "Keep down," for which truly there was no occasion. Notwithstanding this cry, Israel Wild, and another man of our regiment, who was afterwards killed, (a splendid soldier,) got on the top of the trench. I caught hold of Israel's\* jacket, to pull him down, but he turned round, and said, in a most furious manner, "We know what we are about;" then looking forward for a moment, shouted, with an oath, that the French were coming on, and instantly sprung out of the trench like a tiger, following his comrade, just such another fine fellow. Two or three French dragoons at that instant fired their pistols into the trenches, having approached within a few yards without being perceived. We had just entered the mouth of the first parallel, and all joined in a simultaneous attack on the enemy's infantry, without regard to trenches or any thing else. The French being beaten out of the advanced lines, retired and formed line under the castle, having two field-pieces on their left flank. I cannot say how they entered the town, there was so much smoke covering them, when near the walls. *General Philippon knew his business*

\* I have often been told, from undoubted authority, that this soldier was one of the first who entered the small breach at Rodrigo, and whose Stentorian voice rose above the din of arms.



*well.* Fourteen hundred men came out—two battalions.

We had quite abandoned the trenches, and approached near to the castle. I perceived two soldiers of another division, who were stretched close to where I stood: one was quite dead, a round shot having passed through his body; the other had lost a leg, his eyelids were closed, and he was apparently dead. An adventurous Portuguese began to disincumber him of his clothes. The poor soldier opened his eyes and looked in the most imploring manner, while the villain had him by the belts, lifting him up. I gave the humane Portuguese a blow with the back of my sabre, that laid him prostrate for a time, by the side of the soldier he was stripping.

I know not what became of the wounded man, as my attention was attracted by an extraordinary circumstance. I saw a heavy shot hopping along, till it struck a soldier on the hip; down he went, motionless. I felt confident that the wounded man was not dead, and begged that some of his comrades would carry him off to the rear, (we were now retiring under a heavy cannonade); my words were at first unheeded, but two soldiers, at the risk of their lives, rushed back, and brought him in, or he, with many others, would have been starved to death, between our lines and the ram-

parts of the town. His hip was only grazed, and his clothes untorn ; but, of course, he was unable to walk, and seemed to feel much pain, for he groaned heavily.

The sortie took place about a quarter after twelve ; (*military time, quite correct ;*) we were filing into the trenches. The day was fine, and the time well selected by the governor, as he concluded that the front parallel would be vacant while the relief was coming in ; but there was an order against that.

The trenches were very extensive. The weather again became bad, and our right battery was silenced ; but when the great breaching battery was completed, it fired salvos, which the enemy returned in a similar manner from a battery just under the castle-gate, on a commanding situation. One morning, at day-light, the enemy brought a light gun out of the town to enfilade the right of the front parallel ; but as the relief came in at the time, I do not know the sequel of it.

The left of our lines, previously to the escalade of Picurina, ran within about a hundred yards parallel to it. One hundred of our regiment were employed one night on the delightful job of carrying the trenches across the Seville road. We commenced at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards from the fort. The instant the enemy

heard the pickaxes striking on the hard road, they opened, when, strange to relate, eleven rounds of grape were poured on us, and yet only one officer was hit. The gunners could not depress their artillery so as to cover the spot we were on.

I was surprised that they used no musketry; but I imagine they had orders not to do so at night, unless an attempt was made to escalate the fort.

Picurina was situated on a rising ground, without the least appearance of strength. Three hundred of the enemy formed the garrison, and latterly they were obliged to block up their embrasures with sand-bags, to screen themselves from the musketry of our lines; now and then they cleared away to fire grape shot.

Towards the end of the siege the weather became beautiful. One day in particular, the enemy scarcely fired a shot, all our troubles were forgotten, and two or three of us amused ourselves by reading a novel in the trenches.

Lieutenant Wilkinson,\* was among the wounded on that day. There was a path across a field, which

\* He was mortally wounded at New Orleans, as Brigade-major, while scrambling up the enemy's lines. His horse had been killed under him. He was taken prisoner, and died raving mad from the agony of the wound through his body.

communicated with our grand battery, and an order forbade any person to cross it in the day-time, as the French were continually firing small arms whenever any lazy-fellow took that road. Poor little Wilky's curiosity was excited; he made a start out of fun, was just entering the battery, when alas! he fell, shot through the thigh.

On the night of the 25th, a part of the third division, and also one hundred of the light division, carrying ladders, assailed Picurina, directed by General Sir James Kempt, and for a long time without success: no wonder! The ditch was terrifically deep, and narrow at the bottom. The soldiers walked round the fort, prying into all corners, and got upon the gate, which they broke down, and then entered, bayonets in advance. The French grenadiers would not give in—a desperate bayonetting took place, and much blood was spilt; already five hundred French soldiers from the town were at hand. The struggle continued with hard fighting, inside and outside of the fort. The enemy wished to vie with their comrades who had defended Fort St. Christoval at the former siege. Victory was some minutes doubtful; at length the fort was taken, and the reinforcements were beaten back into the town. I was sitting at the door of my tent, and witnessed all the firing.

The garrison of Badajoz fired every morning, for a few days previously to the grand assault, a certain number of rounds, as if for practice, and to measure the ground.

The first order for storming the breaches fixed it to take place on the 5th of April. I was informed that my turn for trench duty fell on that evening, because the officer just preceding me was out of the way. I resolved to play a like trick, and for a like reason, namely, not to miss the assault. I therefore got a friend to persuade the Adjutant to allow that the men should march off without me, promising to follow. This anecdote I relate, because of the curious circumstance that it led to.

When I was quite certain that the assault was not to take place that night, I mounted my horse, and, riding to the entrance of the first parallel, I gave the animal to my batman, and proceeded on foot. I had just crossed the trench, and got into a field, taking a short cut, when I observed two figures making towards me. There was not any firing; a solemn silence reigned around. Coming up at a half run, I put my hand to my sword, for the night was clear, and I saw they were not soldiers; they soon closed on me, demanding boldly, and in Spanish, the way out of the trenches: I pointed out the road to them, but, an instant after, suspected they were not *Spaniards*, but spies. I

noticed they kept their hands behind them, and I thought it also very *civil* of them not to fire, for I am confident they were well armed. “*Buenas noches, Señor,*” said they, and hastily retired. When I reached the great battery, and found every body in it asleep, I thought the place bewitched. This was my last trip to the trenches. Thirteen times I visited them during the siege.

A long order was issued relative to the positions the troops were to occupy. On the 6th of April, the day was fine, and all the soldiers in good spirits, cleaning themselves as if for a review. About two o'clock I saw Lieutenant Harvest of our regiment; he was sucking an orange, and walking on a rising ground, alone, and very thoughtful. It gave me pain, as I knew he was to lead the “forlorn hope”. He observed, “My mind is made up; I am sure to be killed\*.”

At half-past eight o'clock that night the ranks were formed, and the roll called in an under-tone. Lieutenant-Colonel M'Leod spoke long and earnestly to the regiment before it joined the division, expressing the utmost confidence in the result of the attack, and finished by repeating, that he left

\* He was killed; and his twin-brother, of the 52nd light infantry, fell two years after at St. Sebastian, also at the head of twenty-five volunteers from that regiment.

it to the honour of all persons to preserve discipline, and not to commit any cruelty on the defenceless inhabitants of the town.

The division drew up in the most profound silence behind the large quarry, three hundred yards from the *three* breaches, made in the bastions of la Trinidad, and Santa Maria. A small stream separated us from the fourth division. Suddenly, a voice was heard from that direction, giving orders about ladders, so loud, that it might be heard by the enemy on the ramparts. It was the only voice that broke on the stillness of the moment; every body was indignant, and Colonel M'Leod sent an officer to say that he would report the circumstance to the General-in-Chief. I looked up the side of the quarry, fully expecting to see the enemy come forth, and derange the plan of attack. It was at half-past nine this happened, but, at a quarter before ten, the ill-timed noise ceased, and nothing could be heard but the loud croaking of the frogs.

At ten a carcass was thrown from the town; this was a most beautiful fire-work, and illuminated the ground for many hundred yards; two or three fire-balls followed, and, falling in different directions, showed a bright light, and remained burning. The stillness that followed was the prelude to one of the strangest scenes that the imagination of man can conceive.

Soon after ten o'clock, a little whispering announced that "the forlorn hope" were stealing forward, followed by the storming parties, composed of three hundred men, (one hundred from each British regiment of our division;) in two minutes the division followed\*. One musket shot, *no more*, was fired near the breaches by a French soldier, who was on the look out. We gained ground leisurely—but silently; there were no obstacles. The 52nd, 43rd, and part of the rifle corps, closed gradually up to column of quarter distance, left in front; all was hushed, and the town lay buried in gloom; the ladders were placed on the edge of the ditch, when suddenly an explosion took place at the foot of the breaches, and a burst of light disclosed the whole scene:—the earth seemed to rock under us:—what a sight! The ramparts crowded with the enemy—the French soldiers standing on the parapets—the fourth division advancing rapidly in column of companies on a quarter circle to our right, while the short-lived glare from the barrels of powder and combustibles flying into the air, gave to friends and foes a look as if both bodies of troops were laughing at each other.

A tremendous firing now opened on us, and for

\* This was with the exception of the two regiments of Portuguese Caçadores, who were left in reserve in the quarries; but many of them afterwards came towards the breaches.



an instant we were stationary; but the troops were *no ways daunted*. The only three ladders were placed down the scarp to descend into the ditch, and were found exactly opposite the centre breach, and the whole division rushed to the assault with amazing resolution. There was no check. The soldiers flew down the ladders, and the cheering from both sides was loud and full of confidence.

While descending the ladders into the ditch, furious blows were exchanged amongst the troops in their eagerness to get forward; at the same time grape-shot and musketry tore open their ranks. The first officer I happened to see down was Captain Fergusson, who had led on our storming-party here, and at Rodrigo; he was lying to the right of the ladders, with a wound on the head, and holding a bloody handkerchief in his grasp\*. I snatched it out of his hand, and tied it round his head. The French were then handing over the fire-balls, which produced a sort of revolving light. The ditch was very wide, and when I arrived at the foot of the centre breach, eighty or ninety men were formed. One cried out, "Who will lead?" This was the work of a moment. Death, and the

\* He had also two unhealed body wounds open, which he had received at Rodrigo, and one in the trenches at Badajoz a few days before. He now commands the 52nd regiment.

most dreadful sounds and cries encompassed us. It was a volcano ! Up we went ; some killed, and others impaled on the bayonets of their own comrades, or hurled headlong amongst the outrageous crowd.

The *chevaux-de-frise* looked like innumerable bayonets. When within a yard of the top, I fell from a blow that deprived me of sensation. I only recollect feeling a soldier pulling me out of the water, where so many men were drowned. I lost my cap, but still held my sword. On recovering, I looked towards the breach. It was shining and empty ! fire balls were in plenty, and the French troops standing upon the walls, taunting, and inviting our men to come up and try it again.

Colonel M'Leod was killed while trying to force the left corner of the large breach\*. He received his mortal wound within three yards of the enemy, just at the bottom of some nine-feet planks, studded with nails, and hanging down the breach from under the *chevaux-de-frise*.

At half-past eleven the firing slackened, and the French detached soldiers from the breaches to repulse the other attacks, and to endeavour to retake the castle. I heard the enemy calling out

\* The right corner looking from the ramparts ; but, as we attacked, it was on the left.

on the ramparts in German, "All is well in Badajoz!"

The British soldiers did as much as *men could do*. The wood-work of the *chevaux-de-frise* was ponderous, bristling with short stout sword-blades fastened in it, and chained together. It was an obstacle not to be removed, and the French soldiers stood close to it, killing deliberately every man who approached it. The large breach was at one time crowded with our brave troops; I mean the fourth division, the heroes of many hard-fought victories and bloody fields. The light division had recently been crowned with victory; but to remove such obstacles was impracticable by living bodies, pushing against them up a steep breach, and sinking to the knees every step in rubbish, while a fearless enemy stood behind pushing down fragments of masonry and live shells, and firing bullets, fixed on the top of pieces of wood, the sides of which were indented with seven or eight *buck* shot.

Generals Picton, Colville, Kempt, Bowes, Hervey, Walker, Champlemond, and almost every officer commanding regiments, besides more than three hundred officers, and between four and five thousand gallant veteran soldiers, fell around these walls.

The left breach\* had not been attempted at all until a quarter before twelve o'clock, when Captain Shaw of our regiment†, collecting about seventy men of different regiments, and with great difficulty, after such slaughter for two hours, made a desperate effort to gain the top; but when half-way up, as if by enchantment, he stood alone. Two rounds of grape and the musketry prevented any more trouble, for almost the whole of the party lay stretched in various attitudes!

Captain Nichols‡, of the Engineers, was of the number; he now showed great courage; and when asked by Shaw, if he would try the left breach, answered he would do any thing to succeed. A grape-shot went through his lungs, and he died three days after.

This attack was very daring. It was a forlorn hope, under accumulated dangers; almost all the troops had retired||, and, a few moments before, a

\* There was a trench three feet wide and four deep, cut between the centre and left breach, which was choked up with the dead and wounded.

† Now Lieut.-Colonel Shaw.

‡ The engineer officers suffered terribly in killed and wounded during the siege, as they joined in all the desperate attacks.

|| The fourth and light divisions retired at midnight from the breaches; but many of the soldiers did not leave the ditch, being unable to ascend the ladders owing to the heaps of dead

great alarm was excited by a cry from the heaps of wounded, that the French were descending into the ditch. To exaggerate the picture of this sanguinary strife is impossible:—the small groups of soldiers seeking shelter from the cart-wheels, pieces of timber, fire-balls, and other missiles hurled down upon them; the wounded crawling past the fire-balls, many of them scorched and perfectly black, and covered with mud, from having fallen into the *lunette*; where three hundred soldiers were suffocated or drowned; and all this time the French on the top of the parapets, jeering and cracking their jokes, and deliberately picking off whom they chose. The troops lining the glacis could not fire sufficiently, as they were terribly exposed, and could scarcely live from the cross fire of grape-shot.

Colonel Barnard\* did all in his power to concentrate the different attacks. It was in vain; the difficulties were too great. But Badajoz was not the grave of the light division's valour, nor of the fourth division's either.

Philippon, the governor, a *Frenchman*, and our enemy, gave the full particulars of this affair to a

and wounded. The fourth division descended opposite the large breach by only two ladders.

\* Now General Sir A. Barnard.

friend of mine, while travelling in England; he said that he thought the great explosion would have finished the business, but he was astonished at the resolution of the British troops, who, he said, were fine fellows, and deserved a better fate.

The single musket-shot, fired just as the "forlorn hope" descended the ditch, was a signal of their approach, which shows how determined the French were to have a good blow-up, for not a ball was fired before the explosion. The efforts of the garrison to preserve the place did them much honour. Philippon was determined not to do as the governor of Ciudad Rodrigo had done. Had not the Earl of Wellington planned the two extreme attacks by escalade, on the castle, by the third division, and on the south side of the town by part of the fifth division, and on the Fort Pardalaras by the Portuguese, the result might have been very serious. The Duke of Dalmatia was within a few leagues, and opposite Generals Hill\* and Graham†. The Duke of Ragusa had pushed his advanced dragoons as far as the Bridge of Boats at Villa Velha, and at length got entangled in the labyrinths of Portugal. I have heard and read of sitting down before a town, *opening*

\* Now Lord Hill, commander-in-chief of the British army.

† Now Lord Lynedoch.

*trenches, blowing up the counterscarp, and all according to rule ; but this was a crisis, time was precious, added to which the Guadiana ran in our rear, and the pontoon bridge had been carried away once during the siege, by the swelling of the river.*

When the French soldiers found that the town was falling by escalade on the south side, and that the castle was lost to them, they made an attempt to retake the latter by an old gate, leading towards the town ; that gate was pierced by their musketry in numberless places. I never saw a target better covered with holes. The third division had in return twice discharged a gun through it, which made two large holes. An old hand-spike was placed under its breech to depress it, and remained precisely in the same way three days afterwards. The scaling-ladders were well placed, *five* quite close together, against an old round tower. Many slain soldiers had evidently been pushed from off the parapet, and rolled nearly fifty yards down the hill ; some lay with heads battered to pieces, whilst others were doubled up, looking scarcely human, and their broken limbs twisted in all directions.

The third division had been obliged to cross the broken bridge over the small river Revellas, rank entire, (amidst a shower of grape-shot, bullets, and

bursting of shells,) and during the work of death to drag the unwieldy ladders up a rugged hill, to plant them against the walls: their first effort failed; many of the enemy then, contrary to General Philippon's orders, evacuated the Castle, and went to assist at the breaches. At this moment, Lieutenant-Colonel Ridge of the fifth regiment called on an officer of his corps, "There, you mount one ladder, and I will lead up the other. Come on Fifth, I am sure that you will follow your commanding officer." *He was killed; but the place was carried!*

Let us pause and reflect that this act of heroism was executed after a long and fearful struggle, high walls and defeat staring them in the face.

The third division then filled the castle, and there remained until day light. On the south side of the town, General Walker's brigade of the fifth division\*, hearing the rolling fire at the breaches, became impatient, and, with a simultaneous rush, gained (by escalade) the top of the walls, and even formed on the ramparts. On seeing a light, the cry of a *mine* was set up, and a short panic ensuing, the enemy at the same time charging forward at a run with fixed bayonets and shouting loudly, these troops were forced to give ground. An officer in-

\* The fifth division took the city of Badajoz, and the third division the castle.



formed me, that he had thrown himself over the ramparts to save the colours of his corps, while nearly surrounded by French grenadiers. This bold fellow had the choice of either being pinned to the wall, or the risk of breaking his neck: he chose the latter. The rear regiment, however, fortunately stood firm. Many of the enemy then precipitately abandoned the town, accompanied by the Governor, crossed the bridge, and shut themselves up in Fort St. Christoval, on the other side of the Guadiana; and the next morning surrendered themselves prisoners of war. This brigade continued to be *hotly* engaged in the streets during the *whole night*. Some even asserted, that many of the Spaniards fired from their windows on our troops, and *held out lights* to guide the French; knowing that their property would fall a sacrifice, should the town be taken.

The place was eventually completely sacked by our troops; every atom of furniture broken; mattresses ripped open in search of treasure; and one street literally strewed with articles, knee-deep. A convent was in flames, and the poor nuns in dishabille, striving to burrow themselves into some place of security; however, that was impossible; the town was alive, and every house filled with mad soldiers, from the cellar to the once solitary garret.

When I examined the three breaches by day, and witnessed the defences the enemy had made for their protection, I was fully satisfied that they were impregnable to men ; and I do declare, most positively, that I could not have surmounted the *chevaux-de-frise*, even unopposed, in the day-time.

Some *talk* that grappling-irons would have moved them. Who would, who could have done it? thousands of warlike French soldiers standing firmly up to the points, not giving an inch, and ready for the fight. They fought in the streets to the last, and tried to retake the castle—*Que voulez-vous?*

The *chevaux-de-frise* were fixed after dark. Round-shot alone could have destroyed these defences, which were all chained together, and not made in a temporary manner, as most military men imagine, but strong and well finished ; and the enemy, behind all, had made a deep cut, over which they had thrown planks, communicating with the town, besides three field-pieces to enfilade the centre breach, if the *chevaux-de-frise* should be seriously shaken. Had it not been for this, the divisions would have entered like a swarm of bees.

*One man only* was at the top of the left breach (the heaps of dead had, as a matter of course, rolled to the bottom), and that was one of the

rifle corps who had succeeded in getting under the *chevaux-de-frise*. His head was battered to pieces, and his arms and shoulders torn asunder with bayonet wounds.

Our batteries did not play on the ramparts that night after dark; but when the explosion took place, the whole of them opened with *blank cartridge* in our rear—probably to frighten the enemy, or to make them keep down; but they were old soldiers, and not to be so done.

Poor M<sup>r</sup>Leod, in his 27th year, was buried half a mile from the town, on the south side, nearly opposite our camp, on the slope of a hill. We did not like to take him to the miserable breach, where, from the warmth of the weather, the dead soldiers had begun to turn, and their blackened bodies had swollen enormously; we, therefore, laid him amongst some young springing corn; and, with sorrowful hearts, six of us (all that remained of the officers able to stand) saw him covered in the earth. His cap, all muddy, was handed to me, I being without one, with merely a handkerchief round my bruised head, one eye closed, and also a slight wound in my leg.

The country was open. The dead, the dying, and the wounded were scattered abroad; some in tents, others exposed to the sun by day, and the heavy dew at night. With considerable difficulty,

I found at length my friend, Lieutenant Madden, lying in a tent with his trowsers on and his shirt off, covered with blood, bandaged across the body to support his broken shoulder, laid on his back, and unable to move. He asked for his brother.—“Why does he not come to see me?” I turned my head away; for his gallant young brother (a captain of the 52nd) was amongst the slain !

Captain Merry, of the 52nd, was sitting on the ground sucking an orange. He said, “How are you?—You see that *I* am dying; a mortification has ensued.” A grape-shot had shattered his knee; and he had told the doctor that he preferred death rather than to permit such a *good leg* to be amputated. Another officer had just breathed his last between these two sufferers.

The camp became a wilderness, some of the tents being thrown down, others vacant, and flapping in the wind, while the musketry still rattled in the town, announcing the wild rejoicing of our troops.

## CHAPTER IX.

Movements of the enemy after the fall of Badajoz—March of the British light and third divisions towards Ciudad Rodrigo—Dispositions for a fresh campaign—Excellent marching arrangement of the light division—Occupation of Salamanca by the British, and investment of the forts—Advance of the French army—Skirmishing and cannonading—Surrender of the forts by the French—English quarters at Rueda, and amusements there—Movements of the author's division—A breakfast party broken up—Personal escape of the commander-in-chief—Active manœuvres of the contending forces—Retrograde movement of the British towards Salamanca—Relative position of the two armies—Battle of Salamanca.

THE Duke of Dalmatia, on hearing of the fall of Badajoz, retraced his steps towards Seville, followed by the British cavalry, under General Sir S. Cotton\*.

On the 11th of April, the light and third divisions crossed the fine stone bridge to the right bank of the Guadiana, and entered Campo-Mayor. The march of the troops presented the most warlike appearance. Many of the soldiers' blood-stained and torn uniforms were discoloured from explosions; numbers of the soldiers held their

\* Now Lord Combermere.

arms in slings, and carried their firelocks and caps slung on their knapsacks; whilst others were seen with bandaged heads, or lame from contusions through wounds inflicted by the iron-crows' feet with which the enemy had strewed the ditch of Badajoz. In this manner did all those gallant soldiers, who were able to join their ranks, trudge along for ten days, for the purpose of chasing out of the province of Beira the Duke of Ragusa, who now blockaded and threatened the fortresses of Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo. Every morning before day light we were creeping over the rough, flinty, and winding roads along the *Cordon* of Portugal, until we reached the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, from which place the enemy had retired on our approach.

On the 19th of May, General Sir R. Hill, with the second division, attacked, and carried by escalade, and destroyed the forts Napoleon, Ragusa, and the *Tête de Pont*, which guarded the bridge of boats thrown across the Tagus near Almaraz in Spanish Estremadura. As the summer came on, officers and soldiers rejoined us with wounds scarcely healed; others arrived from England to fill up the vacant ranks. A fresh campaign was in contemplation, and the officers from various divisions of the army flocked merrily into Ciudad Rodrigo.

On the 12th of June, the army crossed the river

Agueda, the light division leading the centre column. The march of the light division was worthy of notice. The men were not tormented by unnecessary parades—the march was their parade; that over, the soldiers (except those on duty) made themselves happy, while those with sore feet, by such a system, had rest, which enabled them to be with their comrades, when, by a mistaken notion of discipline, it would have been otherwise: their equipment was regularly examined, nor were the men on any pretence permitted to overload themselves—one of the most serious afflictions to an army. A general may be endowed with transcendant abilities, and by a forced march place himself in a situation to overthrow his enemies; he may possess the number of divisions, and the number of regiments, but through internal bad management, half his army may be straggling in the rear. Again, nothing is so pernicious as keeping the soldiers under arms, while the officers are rambling about: it destroys all *esprit*, causing the officers to forget the sufferings of the men after a weary march, and creating feelings of dislike towards them in the breasts of the soldiers. Such a system did not exist in the light division; and when a young officer fell in action, the old soldiers proffered their services with parental care.

The baggage followed the line of march in succession. The mules of each company were tied together, and conducted by two batmen in rotation, right or left in front, according to the order of march. Each regiment found an officer, and each brigade a captain to superintend. The alarm-post for them in camp was on the reverse flank of respective regiments. When the enemy were at hand, the baggage was ordered to the rear,—the distance according to circumstances.

The army was four days clearing the forest, which was clothed with verdure, and supplied the most delightful bivouacks. The Sierra de Gata lay on the right hand, covered with snow, while a cloudless sky formed our canopy, and the sunshine of hope and happiness was beaming on every countenance, not excepting those of the growling surly batmen, who were seen to smile at finding forage at hand for their animals.

On the fourth day the division encamped within two leagues of Salamanca, and quite clear of the wood. The German hussars had an affair on that day with the enemy's cavalry. The officers of hussars described it to us, and related the conversation that took place between them and the French dragoons stationed on picquet in front of Salamanca. The enemy requested the Germans not to charge; the hussars replied, while advanc-



ing, that if the French fired, they would. The enemy then fired their carbines to stop their progress. The hussars charged, and cut most of them down.

The next morning we advanced, and pushed a body of the rifle corps to feel their way through a village, near Salamanca, which they found to be unoccupied by the enemy. The division then brought up their left shoulders, and passed in open column of companies within cannon range of the forts, situated on the right bank of the Tormes, and within a short distance of the north side of the town. The enemy stood on the ramparts to see us pass; the whole plain was covered by our cavalry and infantry, crowding towards the ford of Santa Martha, where we all forded the river, and bivouacked a short distance from the town. The French army had retired, leaving eight hundred men to garrison the three forts of St. Vincente, Gayetano, and Merced, that were constructed with the masonry extracted from the different handsome convents, monasteries, and colleges, which had been pulled down to be converted into bastions.

The sixth division took possession of Salamanca, and invested the forts. Soon after we had taken up our ground, most of the officers hurried into the town; the inhabitants appeared much rejoiced to see us, and, as I entered, two ladies ran towards

me, each seizing a hand. My Rozinante dropped her head in search of food, as I believe she had not enjoyed a feed that day, while I looked right and left, and thought such congratulations very romantic. The *Señoras*, in black silk, put numerous questions, few of which I could understand, nor am I confident whether they were civil or military, although, from the expression of their eyes, I concluded that they were on a *civil* subject. I much admired the female peasantry; they were healthy, well-made, with black eyes, red lips, little feet, and wore red, yellow, and blue petticoats.

Soon after, I ascended to the top of the cathedral, to reconnoitre the forts, when I had a full view into the interior of them, and saw that musketry might have been applied with effect from this point. I then descended, and entered into the festivities and pleasures of the place.

In the evening the town was illuminated, and resounded with music, while the merry Spanish *muchachas* were dancing boleros, and striking their castanets in the streets. The glare of light was reflected from the bright arms piled in the great square, surrounded by soldiers of the sixth division, many of whom were destined soon to fall within a few hundred yards of the fascinating scene.

Our division advanced the next day, and took up its ground a league and a half in front of Salamanca. On the 20th a staff officer rode up to a group of us, and said, "The enemy are advancing." I rode up the side of the position of St. Christoval, and descried them afar off in the vast plain. The division then fell in, and were ordered to crown the heights, which they did; and at the same time some Spanish regiments came in our rear, with two pieces of cannon: the mules became restive; some went one way, and some another—every way but the right: they became entangled in their harness; some kicking, and others feeding on the uncut corn, and, finally, during this mutiny of the mules a gun was upset, and, rolling over the bank into the road, quite deranged the dignity of the Spanish march.

The different divisions of the army were now ascending the heights of St. Christoval at many points. The French army continued to advance, and soon after began to debouche from the different roads in order of battle. The view was not obstructed; the country was level, covered with a sheet of corn, as far as the eye could reach. To those fond of military evolutions, the scene was bold; to those of more tranquil habits, time was given to pray for the good of their own souls,

and, if charitably inclined, for the rest of the army.

At first our division deployed on the left of the front line ; then again moved, and took post in the centre of the second line ; the whole army were deployed in two lines, to oppose the enemy, the cavalry to the right, and also some detached on the left, to scour the plain between us and Salamanca, where part of the sixth division remained to cover the forts of that place. The whole army present consisted of seven divisions, besides cavalry, artillery, the before-mentioned Spaniards, and some Portuguese infantry.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the French cavalry approached by the valley to the left of our position, where our light dragoons began to skirmish with them, and showed some disinclination to give ground ; the enemy brought up six guns, and opened on our squadrons in reserve, when the dispute ended.

Towards evening the French made an attack on part of the seventh division, occupying a village at the base, and on the right of our position ; after some sharp work, it was carried by the enemy. A brisk cannonade then took place to our right between the two armies. Night put an end to the firing. The whole army slept on their

arms in order of battle, and after dark the picquets were placed at the foot of our position.

An hour before day-break, the troops stood to their arms, fully expecting to be attacked. The dark shades dispersed; the sun rose; both armies tranquil, notwithstanding their proximity; the enemy were full in view, without a bush, or any obstacle to prevent close quarters. Their right was thrown back in *échelon* of divisions. I suppose our General-in-chief wished them to come a little nearer, but the Duke of Ragusa was now cautious, for his army was inferior in numbers.

Our position was covered with uncut corn, which served the cavalry for forage, and the infantry for beds. The contending armies caused great devastation, and trampled down the ripe wheat for miles around. The river Tormes ran about two miles in our rear, with two fords. Our division was now withdrawn from the line, and placed as a column of reserve in rear and centre of the army: it protected the fords in our rear, and might be used as a moveable mass either to resist cavalry, or assist where required.

The Earl of Wellington was stationary from morning till night, watching the enemy, generally alone and on foot, at the crest of the hill, and in the centre of the position. His staff approached him one at a time to receive orders.

At night the Earl slept on the ground, wrapped in his cloak.

The troops were much inconvenienced for want of water, as the river was at some distance, and only a few men could be spared, since it was impossible to know at what moment the enemy might not attack. Some Spanish ladies came from Salamanca, and walked through our lines. On the third night the French retired; our division took ground to the right, and were posted on the bare and conical hill of Cabrerizos. It appeared necessary that the forts and the command of the bridge at Salamanca should be secured before we made any forward movement. The Duke of Ragusa evidently wished to gain time, and to continue in the vicinity to succour the forts, also to infuse courage into the little garrisons, until his reinforcements should arrive.

The Earl of Wellington remained on the hill of Cabrerizos the whole day. The sun shone with great brilliancy, and it was burning hot. One of the soldiers of the 43d put up a blanket to keep the rays of the sun from his lordship. Our bivouac presented a droll appearance, as the whole division had hoisted blankets in a similar manner. A Spanish *muchacha*, with sandy hair, named Agueda, from the *pueblo* of Fuente de Guinaldo, who preferred the sound of the bugle-horn to her

domestic occupations, was the sole female to be seen amid the sun-burnt soldiers, and the brilliant masses, that now covered hill and dale, ready at a moment to deploy in battle array. The breaches at the forts were now considered practicable. At about nine o'clock at night the attack commenced; but after some time the firing became slack, and I saw three rockets thrown up from the forts; they were immediately answered by several rounds of artillery from the French army, on a rising ground two leagues to our right, which instantly satisfied me that the assault had not succeeded, and that it was done as a signal that they were still at hand.

On the morning of the 25th, at day-light, we heard some firing on the other side of the Tormes during a dense fog, which at first prevented the force of the enemy from being ascertained. The Earl of Wellington would not move. The soldiers laughed, and said, "Oh, they are only shaking their blankets on the other side of the water;" for in heavy weather musketry produced sounds such as I have described. As the fog cleared away, a few rounds of artillery took place; and the General-in-Chief sent a sufficient body of troops by the ford in rear of St. Christoval to meet the enemy. When the atmosphere cleared, we saw about a division of the French moving

towards Salamanca. They were opposed by our heavy cavalry, which had been placed there to secure the flank and rear of our army.

At seven that evening, the French re-crossed, unmolested, to the right bank of the Tormes, by a ford a league to our right. I did not consider the movement a serious one, but merely as intended to encourage the soldiers in the forts to hold out.

On the 27th, St. Vincente being in flames, the enemy permitted our troops to ascend the breaches without opposition. It was a sort of half assault and half surrender. The troops in the other forts also laid down their arms, having suffered severely; and only marched out three hundred out of eight, their original force, and many of those scorched by the flames, or otherwise hurt.

The army now moved forward. Our division supported the cavalry, and advanced towards Ruéda. On the 2d of July, Captain Bull's horse artillery and the cavalry overtook the enemy's rear guard near that place. Although the country appeared open, it was unfit for cavalry, as it was intersected with small vines, the size of goose-berry-bushes. On entering the town, I observed five of the French killed from the fire of the six-pounders.



The division bivouacked round the town; and the next morning we moved about two leagues in advance, and rather to the left, where an interchange of shots took place between the left of our army and the enemy, near Pollos, who had no idea of permitting us to cross the Douro at that time, as the French Marshal wished to maintain his line on that river for the base of his future operations. We then returned, and took up our quarters in Ruêda. Pay was issued, all of which we spent in gaieties and *iced wines*. The inhabitants had all returned to their dwellings. The mayor was informed that the officers would give a ball; when he procured *Señoritas*, according to custom. It was extremely pleasant, with waltzing, and all the fascinating mazes of the Spanish country-dance in perfection. The Marquis of Worcester, and others of the Earl of Wellington's staff attended.

On the evening of the 16th July our division was ordered to quit Ruêda, and marched the whole night over a dusty and arid country; and towards morning we took up our ground near Castréjon. During this day the Valenciens (commonly called the lemonade-men) came into our bivouac, the sure harbingers of the approach of the enemy. These men wear a spiral cap, of felt or leather, and have jet black ringlets hanging down each side of their

dark olive faces; and their fierce black eyes give them a noble expression of countenance. A white linen jacket is thrown over the shoulder, and a red sash encircles their loins; they also wear a white linen kilt, like our Highland soldiers, reaching to the cap of the knee; the white half stockings are gartered under the knee, which is bare; and hempen sandals are tied round the feet. They carry a long tin can, strapped on their backs, cased in the bark of the cork-tree, which keeps cool the lemonade with which they are filled. These men generally marched with the French columns, and acted as spies to both parties. Just before night-fall, the company was ordered a quarter of a league to the front on picquet; the country was open, and, as the cavalry passed, I heard a staff-officer giving orders, which led me to suspect that the enemy were at hand.

At break of day on the 18th, a few shots were exchanged to our right; the firing increased, and the cheering might be distinctly heard at intervals, as the sun rose above the horizon.

Our dragoons became visible while retiring before the enemy's horse and light artillery, which at intervals were blazing away. The scene was sublime and beautiful. An officer said to me, "There will be a row this day; however, we had better get our breakfast, as God knows *when* we

shall have any thing to eat, unless we take advantage of the present moment." The tea service being laid out, and a stubble fire kindled, to warm the bottom of the kettle, we suddenly espied some squadrons of French heavy dragoons in a valley to our right, pushing for the main road at full trot. An absurd and ludicrous scene now took place. The crockery was thrown into the hampers ; also the kettle, half filled with hot water ; another officer, who had come to *déjeûne* with us, from the rear, all the while vociferating, " God bless me ! you will not desert my mule and hampers ; they are worth four hundred dollars." In fact, to get off seemed impossible ; the company, however, formed column of sections, and fixed bayonets, fully determined to cover the old mule, who went off with a rare clatter, and we after him, in double-quick time. The enemy were now within two hundred yards of us, brandishing their swords, and calling out, when they suddenly drew up on seeing some of our cavalry hovering on their right flank. A rivulet, with steep banks, ran parallel with the road ; but we soon found a ford, where we drew up, intending to dispute the passage. The right brigade of our division had moved forward, and had deployed to the succour of our dragoons first engaged, about half a mile to our right. Soon after this, two squadrons of our light dra-

goons formed on a rising ground, two hundred yards from us, with two pieces of horse artillery on their right, when about an equal number of French heavy cavalry, handsomely dressed, with large fur caps, made rapidly towards them, our guns throwing round shot at them during their advance. When they had arrived within one hundred yards of our squadrons, they drew up to get wind, our dragoons remaining stationary\*.

A French officer, the chef d'escadron, advanced and invited our people to charge, to beguile a few moments, while his squadrons obtained a little breathing time. He then held his sword on high, crying aloud, "*Vive l'Empereur ! en avant, Français !*" and rushed on single-handed, followed by his men, and overthrowing our light dragoons. The guns had fortunately limbered up, and the horse-artillery fought round them with great spirit, the enemy trying to cut the traces, while the poor drivers held down their heads, sticking their spurs into the horses' sides with all their might, and passed the ford under cover of our picquet. The Earl of Wellington was in the

\* The company was formed up, and fronting the right flank of our dragoons. We, therefore, had an admirable view of the space between the combatants. The soldiers of the company had made ready, holding their firelocks horizontally, or rather at the charging position, but to have fired would have been rather unchivalric, and would probably have destroyed the valiant French officer, who, though our enemy, was an honour to his country.

thick of it, and only escaped with difficulty. He also crossed the ford, with his straight sword drawn, at full speed, and smiling. I did not see his lordship when the charge first took place, but he had a most narrow escape; and, when he passed us, he had not any of his staff near him, and was quite alone, with a ravine in his rear.

A few stragglers of each party still continued engaged, and this part of the affray took place within twenty yards of us. One of our dragoons came to the water with a frightful wound; his jaw was entirely separated from the upper part of his face, and hung on his breast; the poor fellow made an effort to drink in that wretched condition.

The round shot now flew in various directions; one spun through a cottage behind us, and the shepherd ran out in great terror. The light division now commenced its retreat from the vicinity of Castréjon. The French had crossed the river Douro with reinforcements, and had made an amazing march to take us in flank. We had only retrograded a short way, when we obtained a view of the bulk of the French army, pushing forward on a ridge of hills to our left. The first false attack had been made at day-light on our right and in front, merely to draw all our force to that point, while the Duke of Ragusa executed this movement. The fourth division were retiring in mass, within range of the enemy's fire, being

critically situated in the valley, while the French cannon rolled on the crest of the hills above, and poured in their shot with effect on their right flank.

Our division was obliquely to the rear, in column of quarter distance, with fixed bayonets, ready to form square,\* surrounded by large bodies of our cavalry. To avoid an action seemed impossible. The enemy's infantry were almost on the run, and we were marching away from them as hard as we could. While the round shot from a flank fire flew over us, a French division came running to engage and detain us until others came up, and obliged us to abandon the road, and trample down a tract of wheat. The heavy German cavalry drew close round us. The country was open, and a vast sheet of corn enveloped us for many miles. The men became much distressed, owing to the rapidity of the movements and heat of the day. We were again enabled to regain the road (owing to our numerical superiority of cavalry), which made a curve down a gentle descent; and the men descried, at a short distance, a dirty meandering stream, called the Guarena, near Castrillo. A buzz ran through the ranks that water was at hand, and the soldiers were impelled forward, with their eyes staring and mouths open; and when within fifty yards of the

\* Six companies of the second battalion of rifles joined us on the retreat, just arrived from England.

stream, a general rush was made. I never saw the troops during my service so thirsty. The discipline of the division was such, that I have seen them pass clear water, unbroken, in the hottest weather, suffering under fatigue known only to those under the weight of a knapsack and accoutrements.

All this took place under a cannonade, which had continued, at intervals, for more than ten miles. This was following up with a vengeance. We had no sooner crossed the river than some squadrons of the enemy's cavalry galloped up a hill immediately overlooking us. The division now moved more leisurely; and every one was aware that had our cavalry given way, the division must have halted to repulse charges, which would have given time for the French infantry to come up; and had that been the case, the struggle must have been very sanguinary. Our reserves now being at hand, we soon halted on a round hill, and showed front. The fourth division did the same; when a brigade of the enemy, covered with dust, came in contact with an equal number of the fourth division; who, firing a volley, charged with the bayonet, and overthrew the French in good style, taking many prisoners.

The French army had done their best to overtake us, but became glad of a halt as well as ourselves, and the firing ceased. We remained

stationary during the day, when I fell asleep ; and after some time, I suddenly awoke, with my lips glued together, and my person almost roasted by the scorching rays of the sun ; and actually crawled some distance before I knew where I was. Dry biscuit was served out ; but we could not get any water until eleven at night, when I obtained a draught of dirty water out of my batman's canteen ; however, it cooled my inside ; and I believe that many hundreds dreamed that night of limpid streams.

On the 19th the troops stood to their arms an hour before day-break ; but the enemy continued stationary, and well they might, as they had made the previous night and day an enormous march to cut us off in detail, according to the Duke of Ragusa's favourite expression ; however, at four o'clock in the afternoon the Earl of Wellington rode up to Lieutenant Wilkinson of the 43d, who was on picquet, and said, "What are the enemy doing?" Wilkinson replied, "The French are in motion." The dust was flying upwards from behind the ridge of hills in our front. The General-in-chief said, "Yes—to the right now;" and ordered the first brigade of our division to make a corresponding movement, by crossing a valley, to prolong our right. We ascended a high hill, and formed on our original front, when the French army issued from behind the hills, pre-



senting a martial appearance, and a grand display of moving squadrons, with brazen helmets, and a great body of infantry flanked by their cannon.

The river Guarena was nearly dried up, and was the only obstacle between the contending armies, as the face of the country still continued bare and hilly, without even a tree to be seen. The Duke of Ragusa entered the valley to reconnoitre, surrounded by a numerous staff, when two guns of our horse-artillery opened, and a ball struck on the ground, and knocked up the dust in the very centre of the group, without killing any one: they took the hint, and shifted their ground.

Eight of the enemy's guns instantly began a heavy firing on our brigade: the first shot struck an officer of the horse-artillery on the side of his helmet, and displaced him from his horse; after a short time the brigade went to the right about, to get out of range. At that moment the Spaniards\* attached to us simultaneously started from the left of each regiment, and I do not recollect ever seeing them afterwards: it was most ludicrous to witness the flight of these patriots, in disorder, while our troops retired sloping their arms with the utmost *sang-froid*. We soon halted, and faced about; the enemy's guns ceased to play, and

\* During this campaign only a few Spaniards were attached to each British regiment in our division.

a large force of our light dragoons mounted the hill in our rear, with sloped swords. Night coming on, we formed columns in case of accidents. An officer and myself then stole down the hill on horseback, in search of water for ourselves and animals : having passed our advanced posts some distance, and hearing strange voices, we looked at each other, and whispered that to go further would be indiscreet, wherefore, rejoining the column, we wrapped ourselves in our cloaks, and fell into a profound slumber, out of which we were awakened by a great bustle and the trampling of horses. Word passed to stand to our arms, and the Portuguese Caçadores fired some shots, but I was so overcome by drowsiness, that I continued in a squatting position, rubbing my eyes, too lazy to move. The confusion was caused by two or three mules breaking their ropes, and becoming lively ; not unusual amongst such animals.

On the 20th our division concentrated soon after day-light, and descended into the plain of Velesa, where we observed our whole army formed in a dense phalanx, ready to deploy in order of battle. The French army were not in sight ; however, it was evident they intended to avail themselves of the high ground ; a brigade of our cavalry had pushed half way up the ridge, to entice them to show front, and to develope their movements, as it appeared during the night they

had moved on a quarter circle, round our extreme right flank, and were now pushing on, and trying to cut off our communications. The Duke of Ragusa would not accept battle as long as he could gain ground without it, unless we attacked at a disadvantage, as he seemed to be a perfect master of the localities of the country.

Our army, under all these circumstances, broke up, and began to retreat, the different divisions arranged in such a manner, that, should it become necessary, by wheeling to the left, they could show front, and be ready to engage, the more particularly as both armies were again moving parallel to each other; and in this order they continued some leagues, and bivouacked. It became necessary for the troops to cook with fires of stubble, as there was not any wood in the neighbourhood. A brigade of Portuguese cavalry happened to be left at some distance in the rear, and, as it slowly retired in line, presented such an imposing *front to their own rear*, that, by mistake, an artillery officer ordered them to be saluted by a couple of shot, which unfortunately did some execution.

On the 21st, two hours before day-light, we began our march, branching off towards Salamanca, and took up our ground in the valley, below St. Christoval, the enemy having moved on Alba de Tormes and its vicinity. Toward evening, we fell in, and crossed the Tormes by a ford,

under the hill of Cabrerizos, and marched in the direction of Salamanca, the river being on our right hand. Night approached, and a German hussar passed us at full speed, and said, "*She's co-ming,*" meaning the French dragoons, who had pushed forward to the village of Calbarasa de Abaxo.

The atmosphere became now overspread with an unusual darkness; the thunder began to roll, the lightning was vivid, and the rain fell in torrents. During the storm a whole troop of horses galloped past at full speed, without their riders, having broke loose from fright, caused by the loud claps of thunder. Continuing our march, we soon bivouacked about two miles from Salamanca, our left wing resting on the Tormes, and in vain attempted to screen ourselves from the pelting of the storm. However, the morning of the 22d broke beautiful and serene; and at six o'clock we heard to our right, and about two miles to the front, a brisk fire of small arms, which continued for an hour, and then died away. The enemy had attacked the seventh division, in a wood near the heights of Nuestra Señora de la Pena, to ascertain whether the Earl of Wellington intended to give up Salamanca. A young officer was washing his shirt in the Tormes when the order came to fall in at eleven o'clock, and was under the necessity of putting it on wringing wet.

The light division advanced, and took up the ground which the seventh division had occupied in the morning; the wood extended a short way to our front. The division was formed in open column, concealed from a small body of the enemy, who were stationed in small force half a mile to our front, with two pieces of cannon, on some rocks, round the old *quinta* of Nuestra Señora de la Peña. From our situation we formed a corps of reserve, communicating with the third division placed on the top of the conical hill of Cabrerizos, on our extreme left, and rather in advance of us, on the right bank of the Tormes.

We had no sooner piled arms, than I began to look about me. A *Table Mountain*, or rather one of *Los dos Arapiles*, was a short way to the right, and a mile to the front, with a very large mass of troops formed behind it, in contiguous columns, with one red regiment presenting their front towards the enemy in *line* at the top of it. Large bodies of cavalry, the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh divisions of infantry, with a proportion of artillery, composed the right and centre of the army in the plain, towards Las Torres; also a corps of *Spanish Patriots*. Placed thus, who could have thought that the General-in-Chief intended that day to retreat? *I never did*. Nor could I see the reason for it: it seemed advisable to beat the French before *El Rey Joseph*

coming from Madrid, and General Chauvel, who, with a reinforcement of cavalry and horse-artillery, had crossed the Duoro, near Pollos, should make their appearance with additional forces.

The arrangement of our troops was inimitable ; *years* could not have improved it. Our right had been fairly turned since the 20th ; the army were presenting a new front, so that the *first or last*, whichever it may be termed, of military movements was to be effected, that is for the contending armies to *change places*. The French could not attack our left that day ; if they had, the right of their army must have been either surrounded or cut to pieces. The third division would have hung on their flank, the light division would have engaged them in front, the masses behind the Table Mountain could have debouched on either side, while our cavalry, artillery, and the rest of the army, could have moved forward, and attacked the left of the French in the plain, which must have advanced to support such a movement. The Table Mountain is the mark of the French marshal's discomfiture. Military men say the French ought to have taken possession of it : but was their army up and strong enough to maintain it ? The advance of the enemy at six o'clock in the morning was not that of their whole force : I should say, that it was merely a *reconnoissance* ; half a dozen squadrons of cavalry and

a division of infantry must not be taken for a whole army. Nor had the French soldiers wings; for in justice to them, more could not have been done by legs. The Duke of Ragusa might have had his army in hand, and could have placed a corps of observation where his centre stood; then towards evening manœuvred with his main body at a greater distance from our right flank, and threatened to cut us off from Rodrigo, (and thereby change positions with us) until nightfall; at the same time keeping his communications open with Alba de Tormes, in the event of his not deeming it advisable to follow up such a movement the next day. At all events, the French general would have gained time, which was precious to him, as reinforcements were on the road to join him. The fact was, the French marshal was completely out-generalled: the Table Mountain puzzled him; and the third division descending from Cabrerizos at twelve o'clock, and raising clouds of dust as they passed along the rear of our army\*, caused the Duke of Ragusa to imagine that we were drawing off, which I am confident led him to take hasty measures, forgetting that he had been manœuvring only on *blank* ground the

\* The third division did not pass through Salamanca, when they descended from the hill of Cabrerizos. They forded the Tormes, and passed within a mile in rear of us.

four previous days. The Earl of Wellington saw his over haste and his error; knowing that to support such an extension of the left, the enemy ought to have advanced in force on the village of the Arapiles, or that they must expose their left to a flank attack, which they did. On the other hand, had they advanced towards the Arapiles in the plain in force, our right and centre would have become engaged, and the troops concealed behind the Table Mountain could have debouched, and hovered on their right flank.

This was the first *general action* fought on the Peninsula, where the Earl of Wellington *attacked*; which led the French marshal still farther from his reckoning. The General-in-Chief, of course, did not wish to fritter away his army in useless skirmishes, and therefore only waited for a *fit moment* to bring it fairly in contact with the enemy, to *finish* well when once commenced; and as the Duke of Ragusa brought himself to action within the precincts of Salamanca, the advantage was ours, the wounded soldiers having speedy assistance, while those of the enemy who managed to drag themselves far from the field, endured the most distressing privations. The French were formed on the heights behind the village of the Arapiles, with an extensive forest in their rear.



The field of battle generally was composed of light sand, with a few straggling blades of parched grass. A very light breeze blew towards the French, which gave them the benefit of the clouds of dust and the volumes of smoke arising from the immense masses in motion, notwithstanding the heavy rain on the preceding night. Near one P. M. the third division were passing in rear of ours. I was strolling about, here and there coming across a dead or wounded soldier of those who had fallen in the morning, when a Portuguese caught my attention. He was resting on his elbows with his legs extended, suffering indescribable pain from a wound in his stomach; his face pale, his lips discoloured, and stifled groans issuing from his nearly lifeless body, while an almost tropical sun was shining on his uncovered head.

Soon after the third division had reached its destination, a column of French descended a hill *en masse* on our extreme right, towards the village of Miranda. Three eighteen-pounders opened on them, which took full effect, and spoiled their regularity. The enemy hesitated, while the discharges of our heavy ordnance were overthrowing all opposition. They went to the right-about to get out of range. Our columns, formed behind the Table Mountain, now debouched in double time, showing the French Marshal that the long-expected crisis was at hand. A sharp fire of mus-

ketry opened on some companies of the seventh fusileers, supported by the light companies of the foot guards, as they broke through the village of the Arapiles at half-past two. The third division had already brought up their right shoulders, and were pushing on very successfully, when the enemy's horse furiously charged the grenadiers and right of the 5th regiment, while advancing in line, which they repulsed and continued their movement. The fire gradually increasing, at half-past four the armies were well in contact. The musketry rolled without intermission, only interrupted by the still louder artillery. The fourth division, breathless, amidst showers of grape, musketry, and round-shot, had succeeded in planting their standards on the crest of the enemy's position ; but at that moment a French division, in close column, and at a run, with fixed bayonets, forced them down the hill, whilst others advanced on their left flank, which was exposed, and carried the centre of the battle again into the valley ; but our heavy cavalry, in the right centre, were bearing down all opposition, driving the left of the enemy before them, and putting them into the greatest confusion. Major-General Le Marchant was killed heading this charge. Marshal Beresford\*, Generals Leith, Cole, and Alten, were

\* Now Lord Beresford.

wounded. On the part of the French that fell, were the Duke of Ragusa, Generals Fercy, Thomieres, Desgraviers, Bonnet, Clausel, and Menne, besides their losing numerous prisoners, standards, and cannon. At six the battle was at the height—no cessation of musketry, and the cannon of both armies thundering away as if there were to be no end of it. The columns of smoke and dust were rolling up in dense volumes, so that the atmosphere became dark above the bloody scene; yet there was not a cloud to be descried, except those which arose from the battle. A Spanish peasant was looking on with his arms folded; I heard him exclaim, “*Que grandisimo mundo!*”\*

The inhabitants of Salamanca were crowding the places of public worship, to offer up prayers for the success of our arms. *A propos*, it was Sunday.

At half-past six, a brigade of Portuguese guns opened on the enemy, in front of our division. At seven, the Prince of Orange, one of the General-in-Chief's aides-de-camp rode up, and ordered our division to move on the left to attack. We moved towards the Table Mountain, right brigade in

\* He was the only peasant I ever saw in battle, except one who offered his services at Vittoria, to conduct our division over an unprotected bridge, when the second shot fired took off the poor fellow's head.

front, in open column; having passed it, we then closed to column of quarter distance. The enemy's skirmishers soon advanced, and opened a brisk fire. The shades of evening now approached, and the flashes of cannon and small arms in the centre and on the heights were still vivid, while the enemy were making their last struggle for victory. An English officer of General Paak's brigade passed us, covered with dust and perspiration; he complained of the rough usage of the French. They allowed the Portuguese to approach nearly to the summit of the point of attack, then charged them, and used the bayonet without remorse, taking that part of the field under their especial protection.

The enemy's light infantry increased, and retired very deliberately; the ascent was gentle. The first brigade deployed, supported by the second; the first division was marching in reserve.

Our skirmishers were obliged to give ground to the obstinacy of the enemy; and nearly ceased firing. The line marched over them, dead and alive.

Appearances indicated a severe fight, for we were near the enemy's reserves. The Earl of Wellington was within fifty yards of the front, when the adverse lines commenced firing. The General-in-Chief ordered us to halt within two

hundred yards of the enemy. They gave us two volleys with cheers, while our cavalry galloped forward to threaten their right flank. At this time I heard that a musket-ball had perforated the Earl's cloak, folded in front of his saddle. As we were about to charge, the enemy disappeared, not being in sufficient force to withstand the attack. This advance was beautifully executed.

Night coming on, the firing died away. Thus ended a battle which bore on the destinies of Europe, by showing the decline of French power in Spain, and leaving the British army for the first time free to pursue their enemy at pleasure. It lasted six hours.—Our line continued its movement. A French cavalry picquet fired on us at ten; the *ruse de guerre* would not do\*. We continued to advance until midnight; and bivouacked round a village.

The Duke of Ragusa was carried off the field by a company of French grenadiers. He had manœuvred well, from the 19th till the battle, and had moved round our flank on a half circle.

\* It has been affirmed, that the firing of the French picquet of dragoons in the forest caused us to go too much to the left. On the contrary, we were moving directly towards the ford of Huerta, on the Tormes, as it was supposed that the Spaniards left in the old castle of Alba de Tormes would prevent the enemy crossing the bridge at that place. These Spaniards, however, unknown to the General-in-Chief, had surrendered the day before.

As morning dawned on the 23rd, the light division advanced, supported by the first division, and crossing the ford, near Huerta, formed *en masse* in a valley, while the heavy German dragoons ascended the hill, moving on the left of the enemy. After some time we debouched. The Germans made a brilliant charge, and broke the French rear guard, formed on the side of a hill near La Serna. They suffered much. The whole of the enemy had not formed square. I observed five hundred stand of muskets on their left, lying on the ground in line, as if they had been piled and knocked down, and the owners had shifted as well as they could; the muskets were not grounded to the front, but lying sideways. The enemy only formed two squares. I saw a man and horse dead, the rider still in his saddle. They must have received their mortal wounds at the same instant.

On mounting the hill, the enemy's army were in full view, in one great mass. Our horse artillery threw some shot into them. The troops soon halted, and the enemy were seen no more.

## CHAPTER X.

Well-performed retreat of the French after the battle of Salamanca—Progress of the English troops—Description of the Spanish plains and towns—Custom of the *Siesta*—Movements of Joseph Bonaparte—Bivouac at Olmedo, and ball given there by Lord Wellington—Advance of the British army, and entry into Valladolid—A swimming adventure—Illness of the author, and his removal to the town of Cuellar—Timorous conduct of the Portuguese dragoons—The English army enters Madrid—Incidents attending the author's further removal as an invalid to Salamanca—General position of affairs on the Continent—Operations of Sir R. Hill—Re-capture of Valladolid—Unsuccessful siege of Burgos—Various movements of the forces.

A GREAT portion of the French army had marched more than twelve leagues\* in thirty-six hours, (advancing and retreating from the field of battle,) and had also been engaged in hard-fighting six hours out of that time; therefore, until the night of the 23d, they had hardly made a halt for any considerable time during two days and a night, and I think I may venture to assert, that the rapidity of their movements, before and after

\* About forty-eight miles.

the action, and their ultimate escape under Gen. Clausel from the very jaws of destruction, are equally astonishing.

Early on the morning of the 24th of July, we passed Pena-Aranda, from whence the inhabitants sallied out, loaded with bread, wine, and liquors, and rent the air with their acclamations in praise of the glorious victory that we had won over the French; and even the little boys straddled out their legs and bent forward their heads in derision of the enemy's soldiers, to represent to us to what a state of distress and exhaustion they were reduced. As we passed onwards, numerous objects of commiseration, lying by the side of the road, reminded us of the miseries of war in all its horrors: many of the French soldiers lay dead, exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, which had so blistered their faces, and swelled their bodies, that they scarcely represented human forms, and looked more like some huge and horrible monsters, of gigantic dimensions, than any thing else. It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of such spectacles, or of the sensations they must have endured during their last agonies. These, now inanimate, objects had marched over sandy plains, without a tree to shelter them, while suffering from fatigue, sore feet, and want of water; then crowding into the battle, covered with dust, and under a scorching sun, they had



received severe wounds, and were finally dragged, or carried on rudely-constructed bearers, from the scene of action, during excruciating torture, and ultimately left to perish by the side of the roads, or on stubble land, with their parched tongues cleaving to the roof of their mouths, and (to complete their miseries) before breathing their last sigh, to behold, with glazed and half-closed eyes, the uplifted hand of a Spanish assassin, armed with a knife, to put an end to their existence. These dreadful fates awaited the defeated French soldiers in Spain; it was impossible to gaze on the mutilated bodies of these our enemies without feelings of deep commiseration for our fellow-creatures, who, a day or two previously, had been alive like ourselves, and perhaps the admiration of their comrades.

The vast *campos* in Leon, the two Castiles, and other parts of Spain, are apparently interminable sandy plains, covered with corn or small stumpy vines. In summer, many of the principal rivers become very shallow, and numerous tributary streams are dried up, leaving their winding beds, or indentures, filled with pebbles. In many parts there is not a tree, a hedge, or a shrub to mark private or public boundaries, nor a drop of water to be procured. The shapeless roads, or beaten tracts, are ankle-deep in sand, and in some places fifty yards.

wide; at other spots branching off into three or four paths, which again join at a given point. During the excessive heat of the day a solemn silence frequently pervades these immense plains; and the high steeples of churches, or the venerable turrets of monasteries of *las villas*, or *pueblos*, alone present a land-mark, and direct the weary footsteps of the traveller.

The towns are constructed of ancient massive buildings of stone or dingy brick, (the lower windows barred with iron,) intermixed with innumerable churches, convents, and religious edifices of the most ancient construction.

During the middle of the day all shops are closed by a pair of unwieldy doors, and the inhabitants enjoy their middle sleep or *siesta*. At this hour the streets may be traversed without meeting a single person, and the great monastic edifices stand in solemn grandeur as monuments of that superstition exercised by the monks at the time of their foundation in the darker ages. As soon as the scorching heat has somewhat subsided, the doors are thrown open, and towards evening the streets are thronged by merry dancers and songstresses; the tinkling of the guitar is heard from the casements, balconies, and verandas; the servant maids go chatting and laughing to the fountains; the muleteers lead their animals to

water; the peasant girls bring in cans of goat's milk, and the shopkeepers sit at their portals without coats, having their shirt sleeves tucked up, and smoking cigars.

On the 25th we made a halt to enable the stragglers and stores of the army to come up. On the same day El Rey Joseph had arrived at Blasko Sancho, near Arevalo, with a reinforcement, principally composed of Spaniards, for the purpose of joining the Duke of Ragusa; but on gaining intelligence of the defeat his troops had sustained at Salamanca, he countermarched in the evening towards his capital, leaving a picquet of cavalry behind at Blasko Sancho, who were all taken prisoners, while carousing in a wine-house, by a corporal's party of the 14th light horse. About this time General Sir R. Hill had moved with the second division on Zafra, in Estremadura, to observe a French force in that quarter.

On the 28th our division bivouacked round the ancient town of Olmedo, where the Earl of Wellington gave a ball, with a general *invite* to all those officers who liked to attend. The Alcalde selected the different ladies as usual, whose merry hearts and supple forms were always ready for the dance.

The following morning, an hour before daylight, we advanced, and it was a droll sight to see

the officers sleeping as they rode along after the fatigues of the previous night, still dressed in their ball attire, such as crimson, light blue, or white trowsers, richly embroidered with gold or silver, velvet and silk waistcoats of all colours, decorated in a similar manner: dandies ready alike for the dance and the fight; most of them had received a wound, and others more, nor can I call to mind one of the officers present at this time, including the senior officer, who had reached twenty-five years of age. Owing to the heat of the weather, it was the fashion of the times to wear the jacket open, which was the only particle of dress left to denote to what nation we belonged; as to any other uniformity for the officers, it was quite out of the question: the fantastical dresses of those days would have confounded the most ancient or modern disciplinarians.—The enemy still continued their flight across the Douro through Valladolid, which city the Marquis of Wellington entered on the 30th, at the head of a large body of horse. The country on the banks of the Douro is remarkably sandy, and highly cultivated with vines; we forded to the left bank of the river on that day within two leagues of Valladolid. While our baggage was crossing, a batman and pony got out of their depth, and were carried down the stream a con-

siderable distance ; and so determined was the soldier to hold on, that he disdained, at the risk of his life, to quit his charge, and continued swimming until a rope was thrown to him, by the assistance of which he conveyed the little animal and his master's portmanteaus safe on shore.

We had no sooner heard of the large town in the vicinity, than we began to prepare for the visit ; however, it struck me that it would be very refreshing to enjoy a swim first, and also wishing my horse to participate in the luxury, I stripped myself and mounted its back, and together we plunged into the stream ; but, as ill luck would have it, for a moment, the provoking animal hardly made any exertion, so down he went, and thinking there was no time to be lost, I sprang from his back ; but owing to his plunging I received a slanting kick on my chest, such as most probably would have proved fatal, had the full weight of the blow struck me direct. The animal, however, soon recovered itself, and swimming with the current, it was with considerable difficulty I succeeded in getting it on shore.

Valladolid is a fine old city, (with a spacious square,) the inhabitants of which were glad to see us, but evinced none of those rapturous and warm expressions of delight displayed by those of Salamanca.

The next morning we crossed the river, and branched off in the direction of Madrid. Having halted a day or two, we again became in motion, and struck on an excellent road, leading to the capital. Many exclaimed, "Is this the road to Madrid? are we really going to the capital of Spain, the centre of romance"? My mind was filled with all sorts of illusions, and various anticipations of pleasure; my rest was disturbed, and my dreams were of Madrid; every day's march was counted, every object brought something new, and I made up my mind to dance every night when I should arrive. Continuing our route, we had reached within two days' march of the city of Segovia, in the kingdom of old Castile, and occupied a pine wood. On seeing an officer pass, who was likely to give me every information relative to the movements of the army, I issued from my small Portuguese tent, and entered into conversation with him, which lasted a considerable time. Being without my cap, I felt the top of my head extremely hot from the rays of the sun, and was about to withdraw several times for a covering, which unluckily I failed to do. When the dinner-hour arrived, composed of rice and boiled beef, (without any bread or biscuit,) my appetite failed, and I laid me down, in hopes that a few hours' sleep would restore me. At day-light, the following morning, we were

again *en route*, and had just cleared the sandy wood, enveloped in dust, when a sudden giddiness seized me, and I fell from my horse. On recovering my senses, I found myself supported by an officer. There was no water to be procured, and, on overtaking the division, I was advised to ride gently on to avoid the dust.

For the first time in Spain, I observed a Spanish grandee travelling in a carriage drawn by eight mules, escorted by fourteen servants, clothed in long yellow coats, with cocked hats, and all regularly armed, like horse soldiers. The costume of the peasantry now became somewhat different; one of that class was walking by my side, with a sort of spiral cloth cap, and clad in dark brown, who asked me if I did not admire a little girl passing on the road, whom he called a *Wappa Chica*; she wore also a stiff spiral cap of cloth, perched on the top of her head, with round balls of different colours up each side of it: her hair was plaited on each side of her head, ending in a huge pig-tail, about eight inches long, and precisely similar to those worn by British sailors; the jacket was brown, laced up the front; a yellow petticoat, reaching just below the knee, blue stockings, red clocks, shoes, and silver buckles. Having travelled some leagues,

I came to a village, where I observed one of the commissaries of our division standing at the door of a cottage, who remarked that I looked very ill, and asked me where I was going. I told him "about half a league farther on, when I intended to lie down under a tree until the troops came up, as I concluded they would not proceed much farther that day." He politely begged that I would partake of breakfast with him, as it was already prepared, which offer I thankfully accepted. My fever continued rapidly to increase, so that I could scarcely sit upright, and I soon began to talk very incoherently, which induced him to put me to bed; the division shortly afterwards filed through the village, and bivouacked half a league in advance. In the evening, the two other officers of the company with whom I messed, paid me a visit, and said, "Why, what is the matter?" when I replied, "That the commissary had used me very cruelly, and had been smothering me in blankets, to prevent my going on to Madrid." The assistant-surgeon having felt my pulse, asked whether I would permit him to throw some water on my head? which I readily assented to, entreating him to do any thing to make well. Then, being lifted out of bed, and divested of my linen garment, I was placed in a chair, while the



doctor, standing on a table, emptied two pitchers of spring water on my crown ; which produced a most painful sensation.

The following morning my companions assured me that I could not be permitted to proceed ; but that, as there was a station to be established at the town of Cuellar, it would be necessary that I should go thither, when they felt no doubt that I should speedily recover, so as to be enabled soon to rejoin them. A car was accordingly procured, drawn by two fine mules, with a blanket extended over the top as an awning.

At the expiration of two days' journey, I reached the entrance of Cuellar, when a soldier came forward, and intimated that no sick could enter the town until the commandant's permission was obtained ; and we were actually detained nearly two hours roasting in the mid-day sun, before a free passage was granted us. Much exhausted, and half suffocated, I at length obtained a most excellent billet in a gentleman's house, where I received the greatest attention from an assistant-surgeon belonging to one of the regiments quartered there ; being unable to quit my bed.

At this time the army had possessed itself of the passes of Segovia and the Guadarama, and had moved forward on the 11th of August to-

wards Madrid, having, in the course of their march, forced the enemy's advanced guard of cavalry to retire; but in the afternoon these again advanced from Malajahonda towards Rosas, to reconnoitre the Portuguese dragoons, who were drawn up on a rising ground above the latter village, and made a show of charging, but when they had arrived sufficiently near to observe the hardened-looking visages of the sturdy French heavy horse, who displayed their long shining weapons, with brass hilts, like the Highland broadsword, with the exception of being one-third longer—at such a sight these our allies simultaneously wheeled about, and scampered off as fast as their Portuguese horses could trot and gallop, followed by their unmerciful pursuers, stabbing and hacking them down, and riding past three pieces of horse artillery that had been overturned. The heavy dragoons of the King's German Legion took to horse as speedily as possible, amidst the confusion, and, after a good deal of savage sabring, the enemy retired, leaving at night the captured guns behind them. El Rey Joseph had retired with his followers behind the Tagus, and the following day our army entered Madrid, where the French had injudiciously left a garrison in the Buen Retiro, who surrendered themselves prisoners of war, just as part of the third division, and

some other detachments, were about to escalate the works. A vast quantity of stores, powder, and ball, fell into our hands, besides one hundred and ninety pieces of cannon, principally dismounted.

About the 20th of August, a detachment of our regiment, from England, passed through Cuellar, but, as they had experienced a long march during the hot months, an enormous number of them died, and the sick continued to increase from the army in such a ratio, that most of us were ordered to proceed to Salamanca. Accordingly, on the sixth day after my arrival, I was placed in a car, drawn by bullocks, to begin another tedious journey. The sixth division was on parade, having been left at that station as a corps of observation, and to protect the sick and the stores of the army.

That night I travelled a short way, and was billeted on a very clean house, where the *patron* was most anxious to have all the particulars of the late battle recounted to him; however, finding that I was not a sufficient master of the Spanish language to satisfy his curiosity, he was determined to make up for it by entering into the history of his own country. It was in vain that I exerted all my patience, and requested he would have the goodness to leave the room, pleading my indisposition in excuse for my apparent rudeness.

Having maintained silence for a few minutes, he offered me every thing in his house, inquired if I was better, and recommenced his volubility to such a degree, that I almost became distracted, and was under the painful necessity of calling in my servant, who, in half fun and half earnest, turned him out of the room by the shoulders.

The next day I reached Arevalo, where the market was filled with fresh vegetables, a sight only to be appreciated by those who have travelled over a dry country, devoid of vegetation. A smiling *muchacha*, who sat by the side of a well-made young Spaniard, jumped up, and handed me a large bunch of grapes, with a dignified air of affability and frankness, so peculiar to the lower orders of that country. I obtained a billet on a very handsome house, situated in a luxuriant garden; and, on being supported out of the car, I was so weak that I fell down, and continued in fainting fits for some time, my servant all the while sousing me with water in imitation of *the Doctor*. The fascinating *Señorita* of the house, about seventeen years of age, very kindly administered every attention; and at night, with a small lamp, remained in a recess, in readiness to offer me liquids, for which I continually inquired. My recollection did not entirely forsake me, but my head was in a bad state, so that

I fancied I saw groups of monkeys grinning at the foot of my bed; and, as I was unable to endure the slender rays of the lamp, I begged of the young lady to retire. At such a request her countenance pourtrayed every mark of disappointment: whether she considered me as one of the deliverers of her country, or whether so young a girl, residing in so sequestered a spot, fancied me under her especial protection, I know not; but I do know that her amiable solicitude and her lovely eyes made such an impression, that she continued the mistress of my thoughts, and heroine of my fancy, for a long period afterwards.

Taking my farewell on the following morning, and apologizing to the little *Señorita* for my want of gallantry, I proceeded on my journey, and at the end of four hours reached the middle of an extensive plain, when one of the bullocks became dead lame, and the enraged driver declared vehemently that he would go no farther; my servant, therefore, dismounted from my palfrey, and placed me on its back. We made for the distant steeple, which skirted the horizon, as the point of our destination. At the expiration of a toilsome ride, we reached the *Pueblo*, and there sojourned until the next morning. In two more days we reached Alba de Tormes; I was quartered at an *apothecary's shop*, where I lay on the mattress for

twelve hours in a sort of stupor ; on recovering, in some degree, my servant fancied that I was dying, and proposed sending for the Spaniard, which I would by no means consent to, from the apprehension that he would bleed me to death.

The next day, while quietly passing through a wood, at a lonely spot, my horse made a sudden start, and, on looking to the right, I observed a dead man, perfectly naked, placed against a large piece of rock. He had been killed at the battle of Salamanca. His hair was long and grey ; his beard had grown to a considerable length ; and his arms and legs had been placed in an extended position ; in fact, he was in an exact fencing attitude, in an extraordinary state of preservation, and presenting, of course, a dreadful spectacle.

I noticed during the period that I was in Spain, that those soldiers killed in action, who were exposed to the rays of the sun, immediately became a mass of corruption, but of those, on the contrary, who fell under trees or in shady places, exposed to heavy dew or rain, the skin became as hard as leather, and they would remain in that state for a very considerable period, unless they were devoured by wild animals or birds of prey. I have often seen vultures feeding on dead horses (that had been killed in battle) so fat, that they could

scarcely take wing, or raise themselves from the ground.

On reaching Salamanca, I obtained a billet, on presenting which, I was treated with the greatest insolence by the man of the house, who declared that I might enter, but that he had no accommodation for my servant; under these circumstances, I was under the necessity of sitting down in the street, until the soldier went to seek elsewhere for better success. After some farther delay, he procured me another on a public notary, where I was civilly received; but in the middle of the day my *patron*, smelling of tobacco and garlic, came in to take a *siesta*, in one of the two beds in a large recess. I asked him if he intended to sleep there; he replied "*Si, Señor.*" To such an arrangement I objected; but he would not give up the point; a struggle then ensued between us, which lasted some minutes, although eventually I made him surrender. He was merely a diminutive old man; but I had become weak from the effects of my fever; and the scene was so amusing, that his own son, with a smiling countenance, was quietly looking on.

A hospital mate being put in requisition, the first dose administered to me was an *emetic*, and whenever I complained, the same dose was repeated; therefore, whenever he visited me, I invariably declared *that I was better*.

Our army had now occupied the heart of Spain, and the enemy, with rapid strides, were endeavouring to concentrate in the distant provinces round our centre, blowing up magazines, and eating up all before them, like a swarm of locusts. Napoleon was at this period traversing the wilds of Russia with his grand army, and his magnificent and highly-appointed Imperial guard. *The banners of Austria, Prussia, Italy, and the Germanic States, were marching under his control.* The north and south of Europe were in a blaze, and had become the extreme points of contest, which were ultimately to decide this mighty struggle for supremacy. The victory of Salamanca had shaken the combinations of the enemy in all parts of Spain, and put the whole of them in motion. On the 25th of August they destroyed their works before Cadiz, leaving behind them stores, heavy artillery, and mortars, many of the latter having been cast at Seville, by the order of the Duke of Dalmatia, for the purpose of throwing shells into the town of Cadiz.\* Some Spaniards and British immediately advanced from the lines, and took forcible possession of Seville.

On the 29th of August, Sir R. Hill, with the second division, entered Illerena, and pushed on

\* One of these mortars was brought to England, and is now placed on the south side of St. James's Park.



to Ayllones, on the borders of Estremadura ; but, finding the French were retrograding on Cordova and Granada, for the purpose of communicating with Joseph, who, in like manner, was forming a junction with the Duke of Albufera, intending to make Valencia the centre and the base of his future operations against Madrid ; Sir R. Hill, thereupon, by a flank movement, marched towards the city of Medellin, on the left bank of the Guadiana, so as to be in readiness to act wherever his presence might be required, or to open his line with the third, fourth, and light divisions, cantoned in the vicinity of Madrid.

The General-in-Chief no sooner saw a probability of his right flank being cleared of the enemy, than he set off from Madrid, and concentrated the first, fifth, sixth, and seventh divisions round Arevalo, (early in September,) with a force of cavalry and artillery, passed the Douro, and re-took Valladolid, which had been re-occupied by the enemy for a short time. On the 19th he crossed the river Arlanzon, and laid siege to the old castle of Burgos, bristled with cannon and the bayonets of its hardy defenders. Various attempts by escalade, mining, explosions, and breaching were tried for a month without success, owing to the want of a sufficiency of battering artillery, and to the obstinate defence made by the enemy, who

firmly lined the walls, and threw their balls and bullets with deadly aim against the assailants. The enemy's vanguard was at Briviesca, and his main body behind the river Ebro, during the greater part of the siege.

In the mean time the second division had moved, in the middle of September, across the river Guadiana, through Truxillo Jaraccijo, towards Almaraz, and then crossed the Tagus by a pontoon bridge, and continuing its movement on the right of that river, passed Talavera de la Reyna, and arrived on the 30th at Toledo, occupying both banks of the river Tagus. General Sir Rowland Hill pushed forward his advance to Yepes and its vicinity, taking the command of the right wing of the army, composed of the second, third, fourth, and light divisions, besides cavalry and artillery stationed in the vicinity of Madrid.

## CHAPTER XI.

The author becomes convalescent, and proceeds to rejoin the army—Guadarama mountains—Park and palace of the Escorial—An enthusiastic native—A Spanish bandit—British quarters in Madrid, and description of the city—English theatricals—Renewed activity of the contending armies—The British troops evacuate Madrid—Romantic attachments—Alba de Tormes—Re-occupation of Salamanca—Military discomforts—Skirmishing affairs—The French obliged to desist from pursuit through fatigue—Various positions of the British forces during the winter of 1812—13.

FOR my part, I had no sooner contrived to get out of bed at Salamanca, than I began to pace up and down the room, and in a very few days gained sufficient strength to be enabled to inhale the fresh air in the cool of the evening. While walking slowly along, I met one of the staff doctors of our division, who expressed much regret that he had not been aware of my being sick in that town, and offered every assistance in his power; I expressed my thanks, but informed him that I intended to join my regiment. He asked

me if I were mad, and insisted on my giving him a promise not to think of prosecuting so wild a scheme for the present ; which I was necessitated to acquiesce in, from a fear that he would effectually stop my rambles : however, two days afterwards, I presented myself to the medical board, which sat daily to examine officers : the group of *medicos* were seated round a table, and, having eyed them particularly, I experienced great relief at finding the worthy doctor did not form one of the party. I felt considerable agitation, (from a fear that they would not sanction my departure,) which gave me a colour ; in fact, I reported myself in perfect health, and obtained permission to proceed to rejoin the army with a strong detachment, who were about to depart for that purpose. At five o'clock next morning, the day before I was to recommence my journey, my servant entered my quarter, and announced that my mule had been stolen, during the night, out of the stable, and that my horse had been running about loose, with the door wide open. This unwelcome intelligence caused me to tremble so violently, that I sank down on the bed, nor do I ever recollect being so agitated in my life, for I had no means left to supply its place, and I could not have walked in my weak state half a league. Fortunately an officer, who had just come

from England to join us, relieved my anxiety, by offering to carry my baggage on one of his animals.

At daylight the next morning we started. The spangled dew still hung on the trees, the morning breeze refreshed my body and mind, and with exhilarated spirits I felt as if new life and fresh vigour had been conveyed throughout my frame. The dead French soldier was still stationary in the wood, and in exactly the same position already described. On re-entering Alba de Tormes, I passed the *apothecary's shop*, with exultation, which only four weeks before I had entered in such a miserable plight. When we passed through Arevalo, one of the narrow streets leading to the Plaza was choked up with cars from the city of Burgos, crammed to overloading with exhausted, speechless, and wounded Highlanders, covered with hot sand, and many of them slumbering unto death; their pallid countenances portended the speedy dissolution of their lingering sufferings, while their sable plumes and torn tartans hung loosely on the pointed stakes, which formed the temporary sides of the rude vehicles. I searched in vain, through every narrow avenue, and amongst the numerous convents and monasteries, for the house of the young lady who had been so attentive to me in that town. I well

recollected the high walls of one of those fabrics inclosing one side of the garden ; I was, therefore, in hopes that in some spot of difficult access, I should find the fair object of my solicitude. The whole of the following day (during our halt) was passed, however, in fruitless search.

Continuing the march, our little column consisted of three hundred and fifty men, and when within sight of the distant villages, which were surrounded by extensive plains, the church bells rang merry peals. Almost the whole of these places had been entrenched by temporary works, and the churches loopholed by the French posts of communication, to protect their small detachments from being destroyed or cut off by the *guerillas*, or surprised by the infuriated peasantry. Shortly before we reached the Guadarama mountains, we struck into the high road to Madrid ; for many miles there was scarcely a house to be seen. At length we came to a *venta*, on the right of the road, but the house had been thoroughly gutted, and it was impossible for the owners of it to procure any thing for us to eat. The country bore a very solitary aspect until we began to ascend the pass by a paved road, cut in a zigzag direction up the face of the mountain, on the top of which stands a marble fountain. The prospect from this point is very grand, com-

manding a distant view of Madrid, of the palace of the Escorial, and of the rugged mountains extending towards Segovia, which are covered with snow during the greater portion of the year. The poor village of the Guadarama is situated in a valley at the foot of the grand pass, in the kingdom of new Castile.

Towards evening, our horses being in some degree refreshed, we rode into the park of the Escorial, which is of considerable extent, and lies adjacent to the village, producing pretty good pasturage, but infested by prowling wolves and wild boars. The trees are generally of small growth, consisting of oak, carob, ash, and cork. The front of the palace of the Escorial looks towards the mountains of the Guadarama, and is built of a grey granite, in the shape of a gridiron. This culinary utensil is represented in the books of mass, on the doors, and in various parts of the building, which is perforated by innumerable windows. The pantheon of the palace is octagon, composed of marble; about fourteen niches are occupied by embalmed kings and queens; and there are a variety of other curiosities worthy the observation of the traveller. Returning towards the village, the old man of the house assured us the effect of the extraordinary edifice we had explored was nothing

to the wonder and astonishment we should experience at the grand bull fights of Spain. The tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks as he ran about the room, (which was paved with red tiles,) representing the wild Andalusian bull staring with surprise on first entering the arena; and then, getting astride of a chair, showed us how the *Picador* received the bellowing bull on his lance, and the way he was frequently tossed, mangled, and killed, by the infuriated animal. Then again, he skipped and danced about the room to represent the men insinuating the pointed darts and crackers into the animal's neck; and finally gave us the *graceful Matador*, with a red cloak slung over one arm, and a short sword in his hand, making his obeisance with a profound bend to the *señoras* and *caballeros*, who excite him by countless *vivas*, and the waving of the white hands, and whiter pocket-handkerchiefs, to dispatch the staggering bull at one thrust. At length the ancient *caballero* became so much exhausted by his exertions and feelings, that he fell back motionless in his chair, exclaiming, "Oh, *los ladrones Franceses!* they have eaten up all our Andalusian bulls, killed our poultry, corrupted all our *mozas*, and knocked all our *Santa Marias* from the altars, and out of their *sacred niches* by the road side."



During this rhodomontade we remained quiet spectators, quaffing the excellent wine which our host had extracted from a concealed deposit.

Taking our departure the next morning, two of us being some short distance behind the detachment, at a very lonely spot, we observed a Spaniard of most ferocious aspect, with huge mustachios, a capacious *sombrero*, and clad in a leathern jacket, like a cuirass, with a short broad sword by his side, and a brace of pistols in his broad belt, which was buckled round his waist. We were instantly convinced that he was a robber on the look out, in the capacity of a spy, for his hidden *camarados*; however, saluting him as we passed, which he returned by a cold and distant bend of the head, the few baggage animals being in sight, we thought it necessary to warn the soldiers in charge to be on their guard, although, generally speaking, the British might pass all over the country without danger; yet some robberies had been committed in Spain and Portugal also by banditti.

This day we halted at the village of Rosas, about two leagues from the capital. The country is bare and hilly, and even when within half a mile of Madrid, the traveller might fancy himself in a bare wilderness, as the town stands isolated in the midst of a rugged plain, skirted on the north side by distant mountains, and there is not the

least sign of traffic, with the exception of a few mules or asses loaded with chopped straw, the usual forage (instead of hay) given to animals; all other vegetation being parched up, and even the shallow river of the Manzanares having at that time ceased to flow.

After the short absence of seven weeks, having travelled, as already described, more than two hundred and thirty miles, and nearly recovered from the effects of my fever, I rejoined our first brigade quartered in Madrid, as well as the third division; the second brigade was stationed two leagues from the town, in support of those troops cantoned in the line of the Tagus. Here I received the welcome information, that since I had quitted the division they had not seen the enemy. The troops were quartered in the various convents and monasteries, and the officers were billeted on the most splendid houses; many of these had white papers stuck on the windows, to denote that the former occupiers of them had followed the fortunes and court of *El Rey Joseph*, thereby deserting their country's cause.

One of my friends, whom I had left under a tree, I found occupying the house of a marquis, and decorating and perfuming himself before a splendid toilette, previously to making his bow to the beautiful and attractive object of all his desires,

who had invited him to spend that evening at her house. He described to me their proud entry into Madrid as a conquering army; then the variegated drapery hanging from the windows, the acclamations of the people, and all the beauty of the place welcoming them, striking guitars, tambourines, and castanets, with eyes beaming love and admiration in a manner indescribable, known and felt only by those who have won the battle, after having been wandering under the heaven's bright blue canopy for sixty days, and traversing hundreds of miles over burning plains. Another officer reposed his limbs on a bed of down, (envelopéd by white satin curtains edged with long gold bullion,) encompassed by mirrors, the whole surmounted by a gilded helmet, adorned with a noble plume of ostrich feathers. The rest of the furniture in this superb mansion was composed of the most costly materials.

Madrid is a compact town; the lower windows of all the monasteries and houses are defended by iron bars; many of the streets are spacious, and the whole of them are remarkably clean. The Plaza Major is a square of lofty houses, many of them stained of various colours; the windows are very close together, out of which hang mats and drapery of a variety of striped patterns, to shade

the rooms from the mid-day sun. Here is the principal market for vegetables and other commodities, and it invariably presents a bustling and busy scene. The Royal Palace is of a square form, and surrounds an interior court-yard, which has two gateways. The grand staircase rises out of the court-yard near the principal entrance; it is a most splendid work, wide and lofty, leading into the principal suite of rooms, magnificently furnished. As we passed through them, I noticed the man in charge locking the doors after us: when, therefore, the curiosity of the admiring spectators was satisfied, we were ushered into another, and again made prisoners for the time being. A picture, beautifully executed, represented Napoleon in his younger days crossing the Alps, at the head of his bare-footed army, and was considered, by those who had seen him, to be an exact likeness; the face was extremely handsome. The Callé Major and Alcala are the principal streets of the town; the latter is wide and spacious, lined by large buildings, leading direct into the *Prádo*, which is much admired for its broad walks, divided into avenues by rows of trees, and running the whole length of one side of the town, being terminated at each end by gates leading from it. On the north side stands the Buén Retiro, encompassed by temporary works,

(which had been thrown up by the French,) gardens, and pleasure grounds.

The fountains stand at certain distances from each other in the middle of the walks, and are framed after antique models. The water from one of them is esteemed the best in the town; the broad walk in the centre is adorned by these cascades, and is crowded every evening by the best company. It is here the stranger may examine, with advantage, the costume, style, and gait of the Spanish ladies. Their dress is composed of a mantilla or veil, gracefully thrown over the head, a long-waisted satin body, black silk petticoats, fringed from the knee downwards, white silk stockings, with open clocks, kid shoes, of white or black; they carry a large fan in their little hands, which they open and shut as they glide along; it serves to shade them from the sun, or to salute their different acquaintances as they pass, which they do by shaking the fan rapidly, and simpering an affable smile.

At sunset the bells of the convents and churches give notice for offering up the evening prayer to the Virgin; instantaneously the crowd becomes stationary, the *Caballeros* take off their hats and remove the cigars from their mouths, the *Señoras* cover their faces with their fans, while they inwardly mutter a short prayer. At the expiration

of a few minutes, the profound silence is broken, when all again are in motion. In this place, dedicated to pleasure, our time was so divided as to be occupied night and day, either in dancing or at the *tertúlias*; public balls were also held twice a week at the *Callé de Baños* and *el Principe*.

The officers of our division were anxious to display their powers as actors to their beloved *señoritas*; therefore, among other things, they were occupied in ordering dresses, and studying their theatrical parts. "The Revenge" was fixed upon as the tragedy to astonish the Spaniards. Capt. Kent, of the rifle corps, played the part of *Zanga*, in *El Teátro del Principe*, with due solemnity, and the piece went off in silence, until he began to move backwards and forwards, like the pendulum of a clock, his sinewy arm and clenched fist, cased in a black silk stocking, or glove, encircled by a shining bracelet—which caused the muleteers in the gallery to roar with laughter. The *señoras* tittered, and held their fans to their faces. During the remainder of the evening poor *Zanga* was treated more like a comic than a tragic character, and whenever he raised his arm, which he had frequent occasion to do, the same round of salutations greeted him on all sides, such as "*Arré Múlo,*" &c. &c. At the conclusion of the piece, a Spaniard and a girl danced

a *bolero*, in inimitable style : both of them were habited in male attire ; the black hair of the female was clubbed up behind, and tied with a bunch of ribbons hanging down her back ; she wore a richly embroidered silk jacket, white kerseymer breeches, fitting tight to the shape, white silk stockings, shoes, and buckles. She rattled the *castanets* exquisitely, and beat admirable time with her pretty little feet.

On the 21st of October our division was hastily concentrated, and first moved to some lonely villages, and then to Alcala de Henarez, one of the principal universities of Spain. On the night of the 21st the Marquis of Wellington raised the siege of the castle of Burgos, and slowly retired on the Douro, followed by Gen. Souham. Joseph and the Duke of Dalmatia had also formed a junction, and were making various demonstrations on the line of the Tagus. On the 22nd, the second division was put in motion on that river to observe the enemy's movements. On the 24th, the third division, which had continued in Madrid, moved towards Pinto, on the road to Araujuez, in support of the fourth and second divisions. On the 26th, the second division crossed to the right bank of the Tagus, and extended its left on the Jarama. On the same day we marched four leagues and a half from Alcala, and en-

tered Arganda, which is situated on the high road from Valencia. The enemy continued to make such a variety of movements, that it was impossible to ascertain positively whether he would attempt his grand push on the south or east side of Madrid, which obliged General Hill to show front on two sides of a square, for the protection of the great roads leading towards the capital, across the rivers Tagus, Jarama, and Henarez.

At ten o'clock at night (of the same day we had entered Arganda,) the bugle-horns sounded the assembly, which never occurred without the most urgent necessity, as it was not customary for the horns to sound when manœuvring near the enemy, except under peculiar circumstances. The orderlies usually passed round, and gave the word to *pack up and accoutre*, no farther questions being asked either by officers or soldiers, and all repaired to the alarm post, and patiently awaited farther orders; and that so often without seeing an enemy, owing to the variety of marches and countermarches in war, that such orders had ceased to be a novelty or any surprise to us. The division soon fell in: I had to precede the column on duty with another officer, who was mounted on a sorry lank pony, which, on being touched on the near or off side, kicked out with one leg at every mule that passed him, in the most sin-



gular manner. I never recollect laughing more heartily; the muleteers cursed and swore, and particularly one who received a severe kick on the leg.

This class of men wear a large hat, or a pocket-handkerchief of various colours, tied tight round the head, with the corner hanging down their backs, and a sort of red Moorish sash round the loins, dark blue, or green velveteen breeches, open at the knee, and leather gaiters, (with innumerable buttons up the sides,) open in the middle, so as to show the calf of the leg to advantage. The mules are very gaily caparisoned, with bells at the head, and the backs closely shaved; the tails tied up in bunch, with red or other coloured worsted binding; and when they are loaded, the men sit on the top astride, singing boisterously. They usually bivouac in the woods, when the day's journey is finished, cover themselves with a tarpauling, and allow their mules to browse about all night. These muleteers robbed the English army of hundreds of mules during the war. I lost two myself, and, during the time the light division was quartered in Madrid, the *ladrones* caused false keys to be made to fit the stable-doors, and actually, in the middle of the day, took the animals clear off, which were never afterwards heard of.

At the end of a tedious night march, the division bivouacked in the morning on a rising ground, about a mile from Alcala, watching the right bank of the river Henarez, and the cross-road leading from Arganda; the enemy, however, did not make their appearance, and at night we entered the town. The troops lay on their arms under the piazzas, which run through nearly all the principal streets; the inhabitants were so fearful that we might become engaged in the streets, that they illuminated the town for three successive nights.

On the 30th we crossed the Jarama at a bridge near St. Fernando, which was already mined to blow up, and continued our retreat on Madrid. A slight affair also took place more to the right, at Puente Largo, between the van of the enemy and our troops, who had formed a junction with us from Cadiz. The General-in-chief, on the same day, made a movement to his left towards Ruêda, on the left of the Douro, causing the bridges to be destroyed, right and left, on that river, to guard his flanks, to enable him to keep open his communication with his right wing at Madrid, and to cover its rear and left flank while retrograding from that place, through Arevalo to Salamanca.

Towards nightfall, as we approached Madrid, a

slight rain fell, and when within a league of the town, the whole of the dismounted cannon taken from the enemy in the *Buén Retiro* were blown up with a tremendous explosion, which quite convinced us that a retreat was decided on. We hastily traversed, by column of companies, the long walks of the *Prádo*, which reverberated with the tramping of the soldiers' footsteps, and on passing the last gate of the town without a halt, we observed the bright fires of a portion of our army in bivouac on the distant hills, on the road leading to the Guadarama, which sight completed the gloomy thoughts of many who had formed attachments, and had, until this moment, cherished hopes of once again passing a short time in the society of the fair objects who had captivated their hearts in Madrid. We filed to the summit of the comfortless bleak hills, and as our baggage did not reach us until two hours before daylight, we passed a tolerably uncomfortable night.

At nine o'clock in the morning, with gladdened hearts, we received orders again to advance on Madrid, but our anticipations were of short duration, as we merely halted without the walls to cover the troops who had been marching all night from the direction of Arganda and Aranjuez.

Many of the ladies came on the walks to take their last farewell, and just as we were moving

off, forming the rear guard, in the afternoon of the 31st, a beautiful girl, lightly clothed, refused to leave her lover, an English officer in the Portuguese *Caçadores*, who dismounted, tied his silk handkerchief round her neck, and placed her sideways on his horse. Towards evening the wind blew keenly, and I saw her enveloped in a soldier's great-coat. Many females left their homes in a similar manner with the French officers, and travelled about with the army, on horseback, and astride, clad in uniform of the Polish lancers, or hussars, splendidly embroidered, with crimson trowsers, made very wide, in the Cossack fashion. The ladies of Spain frequently ride astride, with pantaloons and hessian boots, with a habit buttoning up before and behind, and, when they are on horseback, it is unfastened and hangs down on each side, to conceal their legs from view.

On the 1st of November we bivouacked in the park of the Escorial, where two wild boars galloped through the lines, and caused great confusion; a soldier of the 52d was overturned by one of them, which bounded over him without doing any further damage.

During the retreat the enemy did not press us, nor were our marches unusually long; in fact, every thing went on so regularly, that several

days' march passed with merely the usual incidents. The whole army from Burgos and Madrid were now in junction, the left marching on the heights of St. Christoval, to cover Salamanca, and the right on Alba de Tormes, to take up a line of defence on the right bank of the Tormes.

On the evening of the 7th, our division reached within a league and a half of Alba, where it drew up until temporary defences were constructed, to resist the enemy at that small town. The country was perfectly open, without a house or tree to be seen, and I was contemplating the dreary prospect, and regretting the loss of my blanket, placed under the saddle of my horse, which I had sent to the rear, sick, on the previous morning. As the night closed on us, the rain began to pour down in torrents; we were without food, or a particle of wood to light fires.

Before daybreak we stood to our arms, looking out for the enemy: what a moment for an engagement, our clothes completely soaked through! At about eleven o'clock, the order came to retire, when we filed through the narrow streets of Alba, and crossed the bridge, where we found sappers hard at work, mining, and laying barrels of powder to blow up the centre arch, if necessary. The river Tormes had swollen considerably, owing to the torrents from the mountains: therefore the

fords became difficult and uncertain. Continuing our march on the left of the river, we entered a dripping wood, half-way to Salamanca, when we found our baggage waiting for us. The division being dismissed, all the trees were filled with soldiers, cutting and tearing down huge branches to build huts.

In a short time great fires blazed up in every direction, while the soldiers encircled them with joyful countenances. Having been disencumbered of our drenched clothes, and rations having been served out, we set to work making dumplings; before dark the canteens were laid with smoking tea, rum, hot puddings, and beef. This was, indeed, a relishing and luxurious meal. The whole of the spirits having been exhausted, a heavy slumber (under a tottering hut) put an end to our carousal.

The next morning, before daylight, we were again under arms, and moved towards Salamanca, to occupy that town with the first division and some Spaniards. Every morning we assembled an hour before daybreak, without its walls, waiting the approach of the enemy. I noticed the Spanish officers invariably covering their mouths, before the sun had risen, with their cloaks, and blowing the smoke of their cigars through their noses.

The Duke of Dalmatia moved slowly and with great caution, and evidently wishing, if possible, to force us to retire without coming to blows. His army had been collected at vast trouble, and by enormous marching; many of his troops had marched, within the last three months and a half, over seven or eight hundred miles of ground. On the 10th, the enemy made a strong reconnoissance in front of Alba de Tormes, but, after a heavy firing of artillery, they drew off at finding they could make no impression. On the 12th, some musketry was distinctly heard in the direction of the position of San Christoval. Our division had been dismissed as usual early in the morning, but was again formed, and ordered to crown those heights, where we remained the whole day, the alarm having been occasioned by a few Spanish *guerillas* firing at the French cavalry.

On the 14th, we all left Salamanca, and moved by the left bank of the Tormes, on the road towards Alba de Tormes, the enemy having crossed the river by some fords, two leagues above that town. As soon as this movement was ascertained by the General-in-chief, he made a reconnoissance under a fire of cannon, and found the enemy strongly posted on the left of the Tormes, at Mozarbes; the second division remained near

Alba. In the evening our advance fell back, and the whole army was collected in the neighbourhood of the Arapiles, and showed front in the same direction as at the previous battle; it was supposed during the night by every one, that a great action would be fought on the following day. The country was illuminated for miles around from the quantity of fires, which marked the line of our bivouac. All hands caroused until nearly midnight, being fully determined to make themselves happy previously to the supposed approaching struggle; then, stretching themselves under the trees or around the fires, they tranquilly slept until an hour before daybreak, when we formed and stood to our arms, and were again dismissed.

At noon the baggage animals were ordered to the rear, and soon after we observed great masses of our army, moving in dense columns from the right by echelon of divisions towards the great forest. The enemy had laboured hard to strengthen Mozarbes, as a *point d'appui*, under cover of which they continued to extend their left at a distance, to outflank our right, and to threaten our communications with Ciudad Rodrigo. At about two o'clock in the afternoon, our division followed the movements of the army. The rain had begun at mid-day, and now fell in torrents,



and we passed a miserable night under the trees. As soon as the road was distinguishable in the morning, we were again on the march, ankle-deep in mud, which tore the shoes from off the soldiers' feet; in this manner we trudged along the whole day; towards evening we saw the enemy on our left\* flank, when a little cannonading took place. One hour after nightfall, we drew up under the trees, hungry, and in the most miserable plight; the fires were kindled with difficulty, and while roasting on one side, we were shivering and perishing on the other, the rain still pouring down most unmercifully, as if the very flood-gates of the heavens had opened on us; for we were literally flooded.

On the morning of the 17th, not having received any orders to move, we were in groups roasting acorns to satisfy the cravings of hunger, when an officer, who had ridden a short way to the left, came unexpectedly on the French heavy horse, who were stealing through the wood, and would have made a prisoner of him, had it not been for the speed of his English horse, which was at full gallop as he passed us, calling out, "The enemy's cavalry!" "Fall in!" "Join the

\* On the right as we were retiring, but, when we faced about, on the left flank, *à la militaire*.

ranks!" The division were only waiting for orders to move off, and instantly seized their arms and debouched from the wood, and formed contiguous columns, with our horse-artillery filling up the intervals. A few of the enemy's horse, with polished helmets, and covered with white cloaks, appeared moving backwards and forwards amongst the trees, looking at us. Two officers of infantry, mounted on English horses, went to reconnoitre them, when the enemy tried to decoy them into the thicket. A troop of light horse were formed on our left flank, with sloped swords, but they did not throw out any skirmishers to feel the enemy in front. After a short time, the division retired, and crossed a narrow rivulet, and re-formed. One company of our regiment was left amongst some old houses on the margin of the stream, when some French dragoons slowly came forward to look at us; one in particular went to our right, as if he intended to cross the stream, when a German hussar, (I believe an orderly,) went towards him, and challenged the Frenchman to single combat, provided he would cross the water. The Frenchman laughed, and made a similar proposal to him, as he approached quite close to the edge of the water: thereupon the German advanced, but instead of fighting they entered into a jocular conversation, and parted very good friends. Our

division again went to the right about, and moved off to the rear; fortunately the road continued very wide, which enabled us to march in column of quarter distance, with screwed bayonets, and ready to form squares. The soldiers of the division bore the wet and privation with unexampled fortitude; nor did they lose their organization. At three o'clock in the afternoon, things began to look black; we heard that all the baggage had been captured, and that Lieut.-Gen. Sir E. Paget was taken prisoner; all this having occurred on the very road which it was absolutely necessary for us to traverse.

The Marquis of Wellington at this time joined us, and continued riding on the left flank, and quite close to our column, for he could not well join the main body of his army, as the enemy's horse scoured the road, and all our cavalry had retired. It was one of the chances of war, and could not be wondered at in a forest of such an amazing extent, that the army was three days passing through it. The French heavy horse continued to accompany us on each flank amongst the trees, and frequently spoke to the soldiers in the ranks. We made two halts, to keep the men fresh, and in good order to engage, and then resumed a quick march, but not so rapid as to cause any soldiers to be left behind. The column preserved

a profound silence; not a shot was discharged, for, had we begun to fire, the noise would have brought from all quarters the enemy, who could not be aware otherwise of our isolated march.

Just before we reached a break in the forest, at four o'clock, it was absolutely necessary to detach a few skirmishers to prevent the audacious French horse from almost mixing in our ranks. The enemy's infantry were now coming up, mixed with their cavalry. Owing to the reverberation in the wood and dense atmosphere, the report of each musket sounded as loud as a three-pound mountain gun. The Marquis of Wellington made a sweep round the column, to examine for the best fighting ground, while a lively firing of musketry took place close on the left, and in rear of our column, intermixed with the shouting of our assailants and the whizzing of bullets. As we emerged from the forest, to our surprise we were saluted on the left by a number of the enemy's cannon, posted on a high hill just above San Muñoz. The division broke into double time across the plain, about half a mile, and made for the ford of the river Helebra. The second brigade branched off to the right to cross elsewhere, to extend a line of defence behind its banks. The seventh division was already formed in close columns on the other side of the river, near San Muñoz, and

suffering terribly from the effect of the round shot.

Two squadrons of our heavy dragoons came forward to protect us over the valley. We had no sooner reached the river, than we plunged in up to our middles in water, (under a sharp fire of artillery,) and we were obliged to scramble up the steep bank, (having missed the ford,) by which the troops were thrown into a momentary malformation. While we were forming up in a hurried manner behind the horse-artillery, who were drawn up to protect the ford, the Marquis of Wellington rode up in front of the left of number one company, and looked placidly at them, saying, "The enemy must not cross here." At this moment a round-shot carried away one of our officer's legs, and knocked a German hussar from his horse, leaving his hands hanging by a few shreds or sinews, notwithstanding which he got up and walked off, with an agonized countenance, and his head bent forward, resting on his breast.

The three companies of our regiment who had been left in the opposite wood, now issued out at full speed, pursued by the enemy, and were obliged to run the gauntlet across the plain, with the round shot of both armies flying over their heads. The second brigade, which had already

formed on our left, were keeping up a sharp fire of musketry, to oppose the French crossing the river. A Portuguese regiment was stationary, in close column, two hundred yards behind us. I saw three cannon-balls strike in precisely the same spot, carrying away a number of men each time. The firing of artillery and musketry continued until after dark, and then gradually died away, when the soldiers of the contending armies approached the river for water, and amicably chatted to each other in their different languages.

The French infantry wore broad-toed shoes, studded with nails, wide trowsers of Spanish brown, a brown hairy knapsack, a broad leather-topped cap, decorated with a ball, and shining scales, and fronted by a brazen eagle, with extended wings. In action they usually appeared in light grey great coats, decorated with red or green worsted epaulettes, belts outside, without any breastplates, with short sleeves, slashed at the cuff, to enable them to handle their arms, and prime and load with facility. Their flints were excellent, but the powder of their cartridges coarse; that of the British army was remarkably fine, but their flints were indifferent.

During this day the rain had held up for eight hours, but after dark it again fell heavily. Beef was served out, without biscuit; our cooking was

speedily made, as we toasted it on ramrods. After another wretched night, about two hours before daybreak, the soldiers began to clean their arms, by the light of the fires, to prepare for the coming morning. Day broke, but the enemy made no attempt to molest us, and for two tedious hours we continued without any order to move, owing to a stream, four hundred yards, behind us, which had detained the other division some hours in crossing it. As we moved off, the dead and the dying lay under the trees, (the trunks of many of them in flames,) pale and shivering, with their bloody congealed bandages, imploring us not to leave them in that horrible situation, in the middle of the forest in the depth of winter. However, to attempt to afford them assistance was impossible. Every individual had enough to do to drag himself along, after three days' privation. The stream we had to cross was only a few yards wide, but so deep that the soldiers were forced to cross it by single files over a tree, which had been felled and thrown across; had the enemy been aware of such an obstacle, we should have had a terrible struggle at this point; but the French army had suffered so much during the pursuit that they could no longer follow, and became glad of a halt; and we equally glad to get rid of such disagreeable neighbours. Nu-

merous soldiers from the other divisions of the army, (which retired in three columns,) fell out, and kept up a heavy firing, right and left, in the wood at wild pigs, or any other animal they could see. Many hundreds of these exhausted men fell into the hands of the enemy, and when they arrived at Salamanca, *El Rey Joseph* gave the English prisoners a *pecéta* each.

During this day's march the weather was fine, but the road was overflowed, and up to the men's knees for many miles. Two hours after dark we drew up on a bare hill, clear of the forest; the atmosphere became frosty, but there was scarcely any wood to be obtained, and we spent another shivering night (without rations), gazing at the starry heavens, and counting the dreary hours.

Early on the 19th we moved off. The twentieth Portuguese regiment, eight hundred strong, which had come from the south with Col. Skerret, and had been attached to our division the morning we left Madrid, could only now muster half that number of men in the ranks, owing to the cold and not being accustomed to campaigning; and they were obliged to fall out of the column of march to halt for their stragglers. The light division still continued in wonderfully good order, and reached Rodrigo on that day, and bivouacked a mile from the walls of the town, without suf-



fering scarcely any loss, except from the enemy's balls the day they were engaged.

Six divisions of the army entered Portugal for winter cantonments; the second division crossed the Sierra de Gata, and took up its quarters in the vicinity of Coria, in Spanish Estremadura, and the light division remained near Rodrigo, on the left bank of the Agueda; the head-quarters of the first brigade being at Gallegos, and those of the second brigade at Fuente de Guinaldo.

The Marquis of Wellington established his head-quarters at Frenada, in Portugal, as usual. There Señor Fuentes, a good-looking Spaniard, used to play on the guitar, and sing romances. One air in particular I well remember hearing him sing at a dinner party at Gallegos; it was also sung by the Spanish *muchachas* in all the *puéblös* and hamlets, soon after the Duke of Ragusa's defeat at Salamanca. The conclusion of each stanza was as follows:—

Adónde vayas Marmont? Adónde vayas Marmont,  
Tan temprano de a mañana? Si te cogé Vellington:  
Ah! Marmont, Marmont, Marmont!

## CHAPTER XII.

The light division reviewed by the Commander-in-chief—Reinforcements from England—The army again in motion—Encampment of the light division between Rodrigo and Salamanca—The German hussars—March to Salamanca, the French retreating—Scene in the Cathedral at Salamanca—Crossing the Tormes, and progress of the march—Passage of the Esla—Affair at Toro with the French heavy horse—Concentration of the whole army, and march through Valencia towards Burgos—An accommodating priest—Capture of French baggage and prisoners—Details of the battle of Vittoria.

EARLY in May, 1813, the light division, commanded by Major-Gen. Baron C. Alten, formed line in the plain, near Gallegos, with one regiment of the German hussars, and a brigade of horse artillery, for the purpose of passing in review before the Marquis of Wellington, who appeared on the ground encircled by a numerous and brilliant staff.

During the winter we had remained cantoned by regiments on the Spanish frontier, on the left of the Agueda, in the different villages, during which

period we, as well as the whole army, had received various reinforcements from England, the greater proportion of whom had continued in their quarters in Portugal, and near Coria, in Estremadura. The 10th, 15th, and 18th hussars had recently landed at Lisbon, and also the household brigade, consisting of two regiments of Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards. Every effort had been made by the General-in-chief to make the infantry as effective as possible, and the great depôt was removed from *Belem* to *Santarem*. Previously to our advance, the great coats belonging to the soldiers were delivered into store, it being considered that the blanket was a sufficient covering for them at night, the more particularly as tents were served out for the use of the whole army, in the proportion of three to each company, to be carried by the mules that had formerly conveyed the iron camp-kettles for cooking;\* instead

\* The iron kettles were very heavy, and were carried on the backs of mules, one of which was attached to each company; but, when near the enemy, and the baggage had been sent to the rear, these unwieldy and capacious kettles were not at all times to be laid hold of. Besides, it occupied the soldiers a considerable time to cook their rations, particularly in the extensive plains, where only stubble could be procured; and also during the rainy season, when the forest trees were damp. I have often observed these ponderous kettles turned bottom upwards, (at a time when there happened to be a scarcity of provisions,)

of which a light tin kettle, between every six men, was substituted, to be strapped on their knapsacks, and carried alternately on the march. Each man was provided with a reasonable supply of necessaries, including three pairs of shoes, and an extra pair of soles and heels, in his knapsack. The daily allowance of rations for soldiers and officers consisted of one pound of beef, one of biscuit, and a small allowance of rum or wine; the former was invariably preferred by the old soldiers, although frequently much adulterated by the mischievous *capitras*.\*

The left of the army being already in motion from the interior of Portugal, the second and light divisions concentrated on the 20th of May; the former crossed the Sierra de Gata, near Baños, the following morning, which brought it in com-

and encircled by ten or twelve weather-beaten soldiers, who, with empty stomachs, stepped forward, one at a time, and each of them in turn rubbing his blacking-brush on the sooty part of the kettle, blacked his dusty shoes, cap peak, canteen strap, and knapsack.

\* A muleteer, so called from having the charge of five mules, for the use of which he received five dollars daily, and one for himself. The biscuit, rum, and reserve ball-cartridge, were carried by the mules;—under charge of the above men the lean Barbary bulls and bullocks followed the different divisions on their line of march—the whole originally provided by, and under the superintendence of commissaries.

munication with our right; our division forded to the right bank of the Agueda the same day, and encamped on the skirts of the extensive forest situated between Rodrigo and Salamanca. The German hussars rode up, smoking their pipes, and singing some delightful airs, their half squadrons at intervals joining in chorus. We had heard that the hussar brigade was to supersede these veterans, and to act with our division: the whole of us left our canvas, and lined the road to greet our old friends and companions of outpost duty. The hussars became so much affected by our cheering, that tears rolled down many of their bronzed faces. "Oh!" said they, "we are always glad to see the old *lighty division*, who will ever live in our hearts."

On the third day we had arrived near San Muñoz, and encamped on the river Helebra. Many of the forest trees were covered with beautiful blossoms, and the plumaged tribe hopped from branch to bough, while here and there a solitary skeleton lay bleached, and reminded us of those starved, drenched, and wounded victims, the recollection of whose cries for help still rang in our ears, as we had marched past them on our retreat from Burgos and Madrid the previous winter. Now, how changed the scene! the inmost recesses of this extensive wood resounded

with many voices, and a long line of animated troops continued to thread its mazes and winding roads. On this day the household brigade of cavalry came up; their horses' backs were in a very bad state, owing to the heat of the weather. In the evening, while sitting at our tent-door, we observed one of the Germans making up his fat horse for the night, and afterwards employing himself in sharpening his sabre with a stone. "That man," remarked an officer, "seems to be preparing for single combat."

Early on the 26th we halted on the verge of the wood, within a short distance of Salamanca; our cavalry and some guns pushed onwards, and crossed to the right bank of the Tormes by two fords above the town, where they found three thousand French infantry preparing to retrograde. Our cavalry made a demonstration to charge them, but the enemy presented so firm a front, and then retired in such good order, that it was thought advisable not to attempt to break them, until a few discharges of artillery should have shaken the resolution of these veterans: which that course failed to accomplish. They at length formed a junction with a part of the French troops retiring from Alba de Tormes.

Our dragoons were then drawn off, and the enemy continued to retreat without farther moles-

tation. In the afternoon our division moved forward, and took up their ground in a wood immediately overlooking the left bank of the Tormes, a league below Salamanca.

The next morning, as there had not been any order for the troops to move, I mounted my horse, and, in company with some other officers, rode into Salamanca. The inhabitants expressed their congratulations on seeing us again, although our reception was not of that warm character shown towards us in the preceding summer; and, indeed, it would have been out of all reason to expect to find countenances decked with joy, when contending armies had trampled down and destroyed their corn over a fertile plain of many leagues in extent.

On entering the great square, we observed the principal inhabitants, full-dressed, flocking towards the cathedral, a very handsome stone structure, where we alighted, and, following the crowd through the grand entrance, found a great multitude waiting the arrival of the Marquis of Wellington, who soon entered, escorted by a numerous retinue of Spanish generals and other staff officers, in a variety of uniforms magnificently embroidered. I was much struck with the simplicity of the Marquis of Wellington's attire, who wore a very light grey pelisse coat, single-

breasted, without a sash, and a white neck-handkerchief, with his sword buckled round his waist, underneath the coat, the hilt merely protruding, and a cocked-hat under his arm. He stood with his face towards the altar during the prayer offered up for the success of our arms in the approaching struggle, (for during this time the divisions of our centre were branching off and marching over dusty plains towards Miranda de Douro, to support the extreme left, under General Sir T. Graham, which had crossed to the right bank of the Douro, east of Lamego, had passed through the defiles of Tras os Montes, and was marching on the right of that river through Leon, towards Carvajales and Tabara, to out-flank the enemy;) the deep-toned organ played some fine pieces during the ceremony; and at the conclusion, the ladies, by way of a benediction, dipped their delicate fingers into a marble basin at the door, *and sprinkled us with holy water.*

At daylight on the 28th, we forded the Tormes, and continued a forward movement along a winding road, through a rich valley compassing the base of a hill, on the summit of which stood a number of videttes belonging to the household brigade; and although the men and horses looked gigantic, and bore a fine appearance, still the idea of out-post duty for the heavy cavalry caused



much merriment in the ranks. At the expiration of a long march, we encamped in the vicinity of Aldea de Figueras, on the high road to Toro, where we halted four days; the second division, under General Hill, besides Portuguese and Spanish auxiliaries, were encamped half a league to our right, for the purpose of keeping in check and watching the movements of the enemy stationed on the right of the Douro, and also at Pollos and Ruêda, situated about two leagues from Tor-de-Sillas, on the left bank of the river, where the French still remained in some force, hovering on our right flank. Under all these circumstances, it became necessary to be vigilant, as the left and centre of the army were now moving to pass the river Esla, under the immediate orders of the General-in-chief, who had left Salamanca to join them, and to superintend this delicate movement in person, which he had caused to be executed for the purpose of turning the enemy's right, and to threaten his northern line of communications.

Owing to this manœuvre, the French army was thrown on two sides of a square, and only possessed the chance of extending a line on the Esla, by throwing their left forward against General Hill at the moment when he was separated from the bulk of our army; (thereby making

Madrid the base of their operations). However, *El Rey Joseph* had not concentrated his army, and showed no inclination to keep open his communication with that capital; and therefore he gave up the line of the Esla and the Douro without a blow.

The passage of the Esla having been effected on the 31st, without opposition, the Marquis of Wellington moved on Toro, where he arrived on the 2nd of June, and the hussar brigade fell in with a strong body of the enemy's heavy horse between that town and Morales, where they overthrew the French, after a very vigorous charge, and made upwards of two hundred prisoners. Our division on this day made a forced march over a bare country, halted to cook during the heat of the day, then resumed its movement, and reached the vicinity of Toro in the evening, where we encamped among some luxuriant, well-watered vegetable gardens on the left bank of the Douro, the sight of which proved very refreshing after a long, sultry, and weary march; and it was most gratifying to observe with what zest and relish the officers and soldiers devoured the raw cabbages, onions, and melons.

The next morning our division crossed the fine stone bridge. The centre arch of it had been blown up and entirely destroyed. The soldiers,

therefore, in the first instance, descended by ladders placed close together, communicating by planks thrown across to the steps of the opposite ladders, by which the men again ascended, thereby surmounting the obstacle with little difficulty, and then marching through Toro, which is situated on high ground on the right bank of the river, and commands a fine prospect for some leagues over the surrounding country.

The artillery and baggage forded one hundred yards above the bridge, without difficulty; the water being only knee-deep at this season of the year. We encamped half a league from the town. In the afternoon I walked in to see the prisoners who had been taken by the English hussars on the previous day, all of whom bore a very martial appearance, and many of their countenances were so covered with hair, that it was difficult to distinguish their features: one man, in particular, had a long red beard which reached down to his middle; he wore a brass helmet, surmounted with tiger's skin, with a bunch of horse hair hanging down his back from the casque. One hundred of these French dragoons, who had not been wounded, were assembled to march to the rear. Their officer maintained a profound silence, and looked angry and highly indignant, with a large stick over his shoulder, stuck through the middle of a

four-pound Spanish loaf. The whole of the captured, raw-boned horses, were huddled together in a court-yard, and bore evident marks of bad provender, escort duties, marches, and counter-marches; and nearly the whole of them had the most horrible sore backs, almost frying in the sun, while innumerable flies settled on and irritated the poor animals. A number of English medical officers were busily employed dressing the wounds of the French cavalry; some of them were of a most shocking description, from sabre cuts on their heads and faces. A Frenchman, of enormous stature, lay extended with a dreadful thrust from a pike, which had been inflicted by a cruel Guerilla, some hours after he had surrendered himself a prisoner. A medical officer was on his knees trying to bleed him, and held his wrist, moving his arm gently, having made an incision in hopes of causing the blood to flow; but every effort to save his life was useless; the dying soldier nodded thanks to the doctor, and soon after expired.

On the 4th, the whole army being concentrated\*, it moved in three columns, the centre in

\* The British army was composed of eight divisions of infantry, as usual. The first, of two brigades of Guards, with two of the King's German Legion; the second, three brigades of British, and three of Portuguese; the third, two of British, and

the direction of Palencia. The country was beautifully diversified, studded with castles of Moorish architecture, realizing the descriptions given in the chivalric days of Ferdinand and Isabella. The sun shone brilliantly, the sky was of heavenly blue, and clouds of dust marked the line of march of glittering columns. The joyous peasantry hailed our approach, and came dancing towards us, singing and beating time on their small tambourines; and, when we were passing through the principal street of Palencia, the nuns, from the upper windows of a convent, showered down rose-leaves on our dusty heads, and the inhabitants declared, by way of compliment, that the Oxford Blues were nearly as fine as the Spanish royal horse guards. Our division took up their ground close to the town, and on the exact spot where the French had bivouacked the same morning.

Continuing our advance towards Burgos on the 12th, the right of our army made a demonstration to attack the enemy, who had taken post there, while our division brought up its left shoulder,

one of Portuguese; the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh, the same; the light division of two brigades. Total, seventeen brigades of British infantry, two of Germans, ten of Portuguese; besides other detachments. The cavalry consisted of four brigades of Heavy, and four of Light Dragoons, and two of Portuguese.

and hovered, with the hussar-brigade, on their right flank ; the left of our army halted, until the effect of this movement was ascertained, by which the enemy were again thrown on two sides of a square. The day was remarkably cold and cloudy.

Towards morning on the 13th, we heard a great noise, which we considered distant thunder, but it was soon known that the enemy had blown up part of the works of the Castle of Burgos, and had retreated. The left of our army was now pushed on in echelon, to turn by a flank movement the line of the Ebro, while our right and centre hung on the enemy's rear, ready to engage them in support of this movement. The country here was extremely wild and mountainous\*.

\* On the 15th we descended by a narrow pass, about a league in extent, which had the appearance of being scarped ; the road was extremely rugged, and, winding suddenly, we found ourselves in the valley of the Ebro, which extended some distance to our right. The beauty of the scenery was far beyond description, and the rocks rose perpendicularly on every side, without any visible opening to convey an idea of any outlet. This enchanting

\* The enemy left in the Castle of Pancorbo, (which commands the narrow and tremendous pass through which the high road runs towards Miranila,) a small garrison, who soon afterwards surrendered themselves prisoners to the Spaniards.

valley is studded with picturesque hamlets, orchards of cherry trees, and fruitful gardens, producing every description of vegetation. We crossed the river by the Puente Arenas, where we saw a number of sturdy, thick-legged women, loaded with fresh butter, from the mountains of the Asturias. I had not tasted that commodity for more than two years, therefore it will be unnecessary to describe how readily I made a purchase, and carried the treasure in front of my saddle, until we had encamped; but, as ill luck would have it, there was not any biscuit served out on that day.

The next morning we ascended by a most romantic winding road for a league, and obtained a view of the tents of the fifth division, who had made a *détour* to outflank the enemy, and to secure the passage of these narrow defiles. While passing a village, I asked several of the inhabitants to sell me some bread; a shake of the head was the only answer returned. I at last caught a glimpse of a priest, and, as I was determined to have bread to eat with the fresh butter, I made towards him, saluted him by a most gracious bend, pulled out a *pecéta*, and requested he would procure me a loaf; he very good-naturedly acquiesced, and soon again made his appearance with a three-pounder, and also returned half my money: he seemed pleased, so was I, and, more

courteous salutes having been exchanged between us, I rejoined the ranks. Travelling onwards, we perceived a large building on the side of a hill, with something white waving at each window, which, on a nearer view, we perceived to be a convent, and the nuns shaking their white handkerchiefs to greet our approach. On taking up our ground for the day, the baggage made its appearance, and ample justice was done to the bread and butter by myself and companions.

On the 18th, while we were advancing left in front, along a narrow road, shrouded by overhanging woods and high mountains, a hussar informed us that the enemy were at hand. On reaching a more open space, we observed a brigade of the French drawn up behind a rivulet, and their front covered by a few houses. Two battalions of the rifle corps, supported by the 52nd, instantly attacked them, and, after some smart firing, the enemy gave ground. During this skirmish our regiment turned off the road to the left, and formed line on a hill, as a rallying point, in case of need; when, to our astonishment, we observed the head of another column of the French issuing, by a road parallel to us, out of an opening between two perpendicular rocks, and in rear of our second brigade, already engaged. The other regiments composing our brigade scrambled over



the rocks, to endeavour to attack their left, which the enemy perceiving, turned off the road, and made for a hill: the 52nd brought up its left shoulder, and actually formed line facing to the rear, at a run, and encountered the enemy on the crest of the hill, who, the moment they met that regiment, turned round, and, throwing off their packs, fled to the mountains, keeping up a running fight. The second brigade was now engaged front and rear.

During this desultory *fusillade*, the baggage belonging to the French division debouched from the already described outlet. The whole of the enemy's escort huddled together, and made a most desperate resistance amidst the rocks, while their affrighted animals ran loose, and were seen on the highest pinnacles of precipices. Nearly the whole fell into our hands, besides three hundred wounded and prisoners. The position of the division became singular after the fight, with its centre at the village St. Millan, and keeping a look-out to the front and rear. The enemy had also attacked the left of our army, near Osma, in hopes that, by causing such a delay, it would enable these two brigades, marching from Frias, to form a junction with their main body.

On the 19th we moved forward, and, at about ten o'clock in the morning, part of the fourth

division became engaged with the light troops of the enemy. Our division then made a short *détour*, and turned the left of the French, who precipitately retired towards Vittoria. The next day we halted, and the army took up a line on the river Bayas, after long and arduous marching. The Marquis of Wellington approached the river Zadorra, which covered the enemy's position, for the purpose of examining the ground they occupied, and pointing out to different generals the various debouches, and their necessary line of attack, in the event of the French continuing to occupy the same ground on the following day.

On the 21st, we stood to our arms, and moved forward in darkness, some time before daybreak. A heavy shower of rain fell; but, as morning dawned, the clouds dispersed, and the sun arose with fiery splendour. A towering and steep ridge of mountains rose abruptly from the valley on our right, which the Spaniards climbed early in the morning, at first unopposed; the ascent was so steep, that, while moving up it, they looked as if they were lying on their faces, or crawling. They were supported, and soon followed across the river Zadorra, and through the town of Puebla de Arlanzon, by part of the second division, for the purpose of attacking the

left of the enemy, who were posted on the heights above Puebla de Arlanzon and Sabijana de Alava, where the contest, at the former place, began at nine o'clock, amongst deep ravines, rocks and precipices. The second division becoming heavily engaged with the enemy, under all these disadvantages it could only maintain the ground already won, and the firing seemed to die away in that quarter. Our right centre, composed of the light and fourth divisions, continued to advance, as also the great bulk of our cavalry.

At about ten o'clock, on ascending a rising ground, we observed the French army drawn out in order of battle, in two lines, their right centre resting on a round hill, their left centre occupying a gentle ascent, and their left hid from view on the heights of Puebla; the river Zadorra ran at the foot of this formidable position, and then took a sudden turn, embracing and running parallel to their right flank, towards Vittoria.

*El Rey Joseph*, surrounded by a numerous staff, was stationary on the hill, overlooking his own right and centre. The French army was unmasked, without a bush to prevent the sweeping of their artillery, the charging of their cavalry, or the fire of their musketry from acting with full effect on those who should attempt to pass the bridges in their front, and which it was absolutely

necessary to carry before we could begin the action in the centre. When within a short distance of the river, five of the French light horse advanced on the main road to look out, and were overtaken by an equal number of our dragoons, when they wheeled about and attempted to make off, without effect; they were assailed on the near side, when three instantly fell from their saddles, covered with sabre wounds, and their affrighted horses galloped at random.

The light division left the road when within one mile of the river, and drew up in contiguous close columns behind some shelving rocks near Olabarre, with the hussar brigade dismounted on the left; the fourth division made a corresponding movement, by branching off to the right, and took post opposite their intended point of attack; the greater part of our heavy cavalry and dragoons remained in reserve, to succour the central divisions, in case the enemy should advance before the third and seventh divisions should have taken up their ground on the enemy's right flank. The first and fifth divisions, with two brigades of Portuguese, a Spanish division, and two brigades of dragoons, were making a *détour* from Murguia, to place themselves on the line of the enemy's retreat, towards St. Sebastian; the sixth division remained some leagues in the rear of our army to

guard the stores at Medina. Gen. Clausel's division was manœuvring on our right, but not sufficiently near on this day to give much cause of apprehension.

All the movements of our army required the nicest calculations, both for the attack and defence; for at this time the four great columns advancing were separated by difficult rocks and a rugged country, interspersed with deep gulleys, narrow roads, and scattered hamlets. The enemy were again under the painful necessity, for the third time in one month, of manœuvring on two sides of a square; and the first cannon fired by General Graham, at Abechicho and Gamarra Major,\* must have been to Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, (his Major-General,) like a shock of electricity: all in an instant was riot and confusion in Vittoria; the baggage stuck fast, blocking up all the roads, and even the fields.

At half-past eleven o'clock the Marquis of Wellington led the way by a hollow road, followed by the light division, which he placed unobserved amongst some trees, exactly opposite the enemy's right centre, and within two hundred yards of the bridge of Villoses, which we

\* We could not see the extreme right of the enemy, stationed near Arunnez, in front of Abechicho and Gamarra Major.

understood was to be carried at the point of the bayonet. I felt anxious to obtain a view, and, leisurely walking between the trees, I found myself at the edge of the wood, and within a very short distance of the enemy's cannon, planted with lighted matches ready to apply to them. Had the attack begun here, the French never could have stood to their guns so near the thicket; or at least the riflemen would have annihilated them. The General-in-chief was now most anxiously looking out for the third and seventh divisions to make their appearance. We had remained some time in the wood, when a Spanish peasant told the Marquis of Wellington that the enemy had left one of the bridges across the Zadorra unprotected, and offered his services to lead us over it. Our right brigade instantly moved to its left *by threes*, at a rapid pace, along a very uneven and circuitous path, (which was concealed from the observation of the French by high rocks,) and reached the narrow bridge which crossed the river to Yruna. The 1st rifles led the way, and the whole brigade following, passed at a run, with firelocks and rifles ready cocked, and ascended a steep road of fifty yards, at the top of which was an old chapel, which we had no sooner cleared, than we observed a heavy column of French on the principal hill, and com-

manding a bird's-eye view of us. However, fortunately, a convex bank formed a sort of *tête de pont*, behind which the regiments formed at full speed, without any word of command. Two round shots came amongst us; the second severed the head from the body of our bold guide, the Spanish peasant. The soldiers were so well concealed, that the enemy ceased firing. Our post was most extraordinary, as we were at the elbow of the French position, and isolated from the rest of the army, within one hundred yards of the enemy's advance, and absolutely occupying part of their position on the left of the river, without any attempt being made by them to dislodge us; scarcely the sound of a shot, from any direction, struck on the ear, and we were in momentary expectation of being immolated; and, as I looked over the bank, I could see *El Rey Joseph*, surrounded by at least five thousand men, within eight hundred yards of us. The reason he did not attack is inexplicable, and, I think, cannot be accounted for by the most ingenious narrator.

Gen. Sir James Kempt expressed much wonder at our critical position, and our not being molested, and sent his aide-de-camp at speed across the river for the 15th Hussars, who came forward singly, and at a gallop, up the steep path, and

dismounted in rear of our centre. The French dragoons coolly, and at a very slow pace, came within fifty yards to examine, if possible, the strength of our force, when a few shots from the rifles induced them to decamp. I observed three bridges, within a quarter of a mile of each other, at the elbow of the enemy's position. We had crossed the centre one, while the other two, right and left, were still occupied by the French artillery; at the latter, the enemy had thrown up an earth entrenchment.

We continued in this awkward state of suspense for half an hour, when we observed the centre of the enemy drawing off by degrees towards Vittoria, and also the head of the third division rapidly debouching from some rocks on our left near the hamlet of Mendoza, when the battery at Tres Puentes opened upon them, which was answered by two guns from the horse artillery on the right of the river. Some companies of the rifle corps sprang from the ground, where they lay concealed, and darted forward, opening a galling fire on the left flank of the enemy's gunners, at great risk to themselves of being driven into the water, as the river ran on their immediate left, while the French cavalry hovered on their right; however, so well did this gallant band apply their loose



balls, that the enemy limbered up their guns, and hastily retired; and the third division, at a run, crossed the bridge of Tres Puentes, cheering, but unopposed.\*

The enemy withdrew the artillery from the bridges in their centre at two o'clock, P. M., and were forming across the high road to Vittoria. The third division had no sooner closed up in contiguous columns, than General Picton led them forward in very handsome style, in column, by a flank movement, so as to place them exactly opposite the French centre. The fourth division directly after crossed the river by the bridge of Nanclara, and were hurrying forward to support the right flank of the third division; the seventh division also crossed the bridge of Tres Puentes,

\* The French did not defend any of the seven bridges across the Zadorra, except the two lying north and N.E. near Vittoria, although it was their original intention to do so. The able manœuvres of the General-in-chief threw the French generals into doubt: they knew not whether to defend their left, their right, or their centre; so they gave up one after the other, in conformity with the threatened attacks of the Marquis of Wellington—which was exactly what he wished, and most accommodating of his opponents, who thus left this intended great battle without beginning or without end; for the French infantry were not half beaten, before disjointed orders and crowds of baggage blocking up the different roads, completed their confusion past all remedy.

supported by the second brigade of the light division, and faced the small village of Marganta. Our heavy horse and dragoons had deployed into line, on the other side of the river, so as to communicate with the rear of the second division, (in the event of their being driven back from the mountains,) or to support the centre of the army, in case of any disaster. They made a brilliant display of golden helmets and sparkling swords, glittering in the rays of the sun.

Three divisions being in motion, the centre and left supported by the light division and the hussar brigade, the battle began by a terrible discharge on the third division, while they were deploying into line. We closed up to them, behind a bank; when, with loud huzzas, they rushed from behind it, into the village of Ariyez, with fixed bayonets, amidst flashing small arms and rolling artillery, and, after a bloody struggle, carried it. The enemy's artillery was within two hundred yards of us, ploughing up the ground in our rear: fortunately, the bank nearly covered us, during the time it was necessary to remain inactive, to support the front attack, if needful. A Portuguese regiment, attached to our brigade, had been detached for a short time, and rejoined in close column; but, just before they reached the cover, some round shot tore open their centre,

and 'knocked over many men ; and such was the alarm of a Portuguese officer, at the whizzing of balls and bursting of field shells, that he fell into an officer's arms, weeping bitterly. For ten minutes at this point, what with dust and smoke, it was impossible to distinguish any objects in front, save the shadows of the French artillerymen serving the guns, and the shouts of troops while forcing their way into the village. The smoke had no sooner cleared away, than we came on the bodies of many dead and gasping soldiers, stretched in the dust. The sharp fire of musketry and artillery in the centre, announced it to be the point of contest. The "advance" of the second division had been severely handled on the mountains to our right, but they were now getting on as speedily as the nature of the ground would admit, it being composed of deep ravines, and such natural obstacles, as almost to delay their progress unopposed.

The first and fifth divisions were engaged at Gamarra Major and Abechicho, in front of the bridges over the Zadorra. These villages were carried after a smart action, by which a position was gained threatening the enemy's line of retreat by the high road to France, running N.E. some distance close on the left of the river. The bridge was attempted, but was found to be im-

practicable, until our centre had forced the enemy to give up Vittoria. The different divisions in the centre were exposed to a desultory fire, while passing the villages of Gomecha and Luazu de Alava, and over broken ground, forming lines, columns, or threading the windings of difficult paths, according to the nature of the country, or the opposition of the enemy. The fourth division pushed back the left centre of the French, and were fighting successfully, and performing prodigies of valour, among crags and broken ground. The seventh division now came in contact with the enemy's right centre, which resisted so desperately, and galled them from a wood and the windows of houses with such showers of bullets, that victory for a short time was doubtful; however, the second brigade of the light division coming up fresh and with closed ranks, assisted by the seventh division, broke through all opposition at a run, and routed the enemy at the point of the bayonet. The four divisions of the centre continued to gain ground, shooting forward alternately, leaving the killed and wounded scattered over a great extent of country. At six o'clock in the evening, by a sort of running fight, with hard contests at certain points, the centre of the army had gained five miles in this amphitheatre; for General Hill's corps was on the mountains,

and General Graham was still on the right of the Zadorra.

The Marquis of Wellington was in the middle of the battle, vigorously driving the enemy, to finish that which the wings had so well begun. First, General Hill's movement in the morning had caused the enemy to weaken his left centre; then General Graham's attack induced him to give up the front line of the Zadorra, without a shot (hardly) being fired.

At half-past six we were within one mile of the city of Vittoria, the capital of Alava, situated in a fruitful valley; but the French army now drew up, and showed such an imposing array in front of the town, that our left centre facing *Ali* was completely kept at bay, owing to the blazing of one hundred pieces of cannon vomiting forth death and destruction to all who advanced against them. This roaring of artillery continued for more than an hour on both sides, with unabated vigour: the smoke rolled up in such clouds, that we could no longer distinguish the white town of Vittoria; the liquid fire marked the activity of the French gunners. During this momentous struggle, the left centre of the French covered a bare hill, and continued for a considerable time immoveable; while, pouring their musketry into the now-thinned ranks of the third division, it was doubtful whether the latter would

be able to keep their ground, under such a deadly fire from very superior numbers : however, they maintained this dangerous post with heroic firmness, having led the van throughout the thick of the battle.

At this period of the action, it was absolutely necessary to strain every nerve to win it before night-fall. The fourth division, on our right, shot forward against a sugar-loaf hill, and broke a French division, who retired up it in a confused mass, firing over each other's heads, without danger to themselves, owing to the steepness of its ascent. I was laughing at this novel method of throwing bullets, when one struck me on the sash, and fell at my feet, thereby cooling my ardour for a short time : however, when a little recovered from the pain, I picked it up, and put the precious bit of lead into my pocket.

The scene that now presented itself was magnificently grand : the valley resounded with confused sounds like those of a volcanic eruption, and was crowded with red bodies of infantry and the smoking artillery, while the cavalry eagerly looked for an opening to gallop into the town. On one side of the field rose majestically the spiral and purple-capped mountains, rearing their pinnacles on high ; on the other ran the glassy waters of the Zadorra : and the departing sun

threw his last beams to light up the efforts of those struggling in dangerous strife for the deliverance of Spain. The enemy sacrificed all their cannon, with the exception of eight pieces, while withdrawing the right of their army behind the left wing, under cover of this tremendous cannonade, which was the only chance yet left them to quit the field in a compact body. This movement being executed in strange confusion in and about Vittoria, their left wing retired by echelon of divisions and brigades from the right, while delivering their fire; and finally, their last division quitted the field with nearly empty cartridge-boxes, and taking the road towards Pampeluna. The greater portion of our army then brought up its left shoulder, or rather wheeled the quarter circle to its right; which movement brought us on the road to Pampeluna. The French managed to drag the eight pieces of artillery across the fields for nearly a league; but, coming to marshy ground, they stuck fast, and three of them rolled into a ditch, with mules struggling to disentangle themselves from their harness. Two pieces the enemy carried clear out of the action, leaving their numerous cannon behind them, owing to the roads being so blocked up with waggons.

The dark shades of evening had already veiled the distant objects from our view, and nothing of

the battle remained, save the lightning flashes of the enemy's small arms on our cavalry, who continued to hover and threaten their rear guard. The road to Pampeluna was choked up with many carriages, filled with imploring ladies, waggons loaded with specie,\* powder and ball, and wounded soldiers, intermixed with droves of oxen, sheep, goats, mules, asses, *filles de chambre*, and officers. In fact, such a jumble surely never was witnessed before; it seemed as if all the domestic animals in the world had been brought to this spot, with all the utensils of husbandry, and all the finery of palaces, mixed up in one heterogeneous mass.

Our brigade marched past this strange scene (I may well assert) of domestic strife, in close column, nor did I see a soldier attempt to quit the ranks, or show the most distant wish to do so; our second brigade had not yet joined us, when we bivouacked a league from Vittoria, on the road towards Pampeluna. The half-famished soldiers had no sooner disencumbered themselves of their knapsacks, than they went to forage; for even here the sheep and goats were running about in all directions, and large bags of flour lay by the side of the road: in fact, for miles round the

\* Some excesses were committed, although the greater part of the booty, as usual, was bagged by the followers of the army.



town, the great wreck of military stores was scattered in every direction.

Night put an end to the contest : the growling of artillery ceased, the enemy were flying in disorder, the British army bivouacked round Victoria, large fires were kindled and blazed up, and illumined the country, over which were strewn the dead and suffering officers and soldiers : strange sounds continued throughout the night, and passing lights might be seen on the highest mountains and distant valleys.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Pursuit of the enemy after the battle of Vittoria—Curious spectacle and adventure in a French bivouac—Advance towards Pampeluna, and repulse of the French rear-guard—Retreat of the main body of the enemy into France—Reflections on the policy of King Joseph—Change of the British route, and encampment at Sanguessa—A casual dance—Return to Pampeluna—Expulsion of the French from the valley of Bastan—The Basque peasantry—Town of Bera—Position for covering Pampeluna and St. Sebastian—Preparations for the attack of the latter place—The command of the French assumed by the Duke of Dalmatia—A family scene—Position of the French army.

ON the morning of the 22d the atmosphere was overcast, and, being without either cloaks or blankets to cover us, our uniforms were very damp, owing to the heavy dew which had fallen during the night; notwithstanding this, we arose from the ground exceedingly refreshed, and gazed around, in mute amazement, at the prodigious wreck of plundered Spain; for, beneath the French caissons, tumbrils, and brass cannon, lay scattered *los doblones de oro, of the same virgin gold* which had been extracted in former times from

the peaceful Incas of the new world, by those vindictive Spanish adventurers, whose avaricious veins boiled at that epoch with the hot blood of the Moors.

At nine o'clock the rolling of the tenor and bass drums, and the clank of cymbals, beating the marching time, announced that the leading regiments of the division were in motion for the purpose of following the enemy. During the rest of the day we marched through a valley, enclosed by highlands, but did not overtake the enemy; the corn was trampled down in many places, which showed they had moved in three columns, whenever the ground would admit of it. Soon after dark, the division bivouacked in a wood, a drizzling rain began to fall, and we laid down under a tree to enjoy a nap, until the arrival of our sumpter mules, heavily laden with flour and live stock, which we had industriously scraped together from the refuse of Vittoria's field. At midnight we were awakened, with keen appetites, by the well-known neighing of the horses, and braying of donkeys; but none of the baggage animals came our way, and during our anxious and broken slumbers the night passed away, and the morning was ushered in by a sweeping rain, which thoroughly saturated the troops before they began their march. As I

chanced to be for the duty of bringing up any stragglers who might happen to lag behind, and my hungry messmate being also for the baggage guard (of those who had come up), we journeyed together along the sloppy road, when the conversation naturally turned on the splendid victory gained over the French legions two days before, and we remarked how gladdened the people of England would be on the receipt of such a piece of glorious intelligence, while they would little imagine that the greater portion of the victors would willingly lay down half their laurels for a good breakfast.

At the close of the evening we came to the remains of a French bivouac, consisting of doors and window shutters torn from a neighbouring village by the enemy, and propped up to screen them from the inclemency of the weather. The sole person to be seen was a draggled-tailed old woman, with a ragged petticoat, who, without noticing us, or once raising her eyes, continued to pursue her interesting employment of stirring up with a stick the mud (which was interspersed with fragments of books and French novels,) or handling the broken fragments of earthenware pots. Our curiosity was so much excited, that we reined in our steeds to watch the progress of the wrinkled and copper-coloured old dame, who,

stretching out her bronzed and shrivelled arm, at last laid hold of a whole utensil, and as she hastily splashed off, I caught a glimpse of a chicken, resting on one leg, behind a shutter, which somehow or other had escaped the ram-rod of the enemy, and the hawk-eyed soldiers of the pursuing column. Unsheathing my sabre, I jumped to the ground, and sprang forward either to grasp or maim the destined prize; however, the ground was in such a slimy state, that my speed availed not; on the contrary it hastened my fall. My companion, disdain- ing to take warning at my mishap, must needs himself begin a hot pursuit; however, the practical experience convinced him of the slippery obstacles; he soon lay sprawling on his face, plastered with mire: suffice it, the bird escaped, and we resumed our wet saddles, in a condition and appearance nowise enviable.—Soon after dark we came to a river, but as the enemy had not sufficient time to blow up the bridge, they had set fire to many of the houses in the main street of the town, (which were still in flames,) in hopes of blocking up the way with the burning rafters, which they had hurled from the roofs of the houses, in expectation of preventing our artillery from passing through, and thus harassing our retreat. The rain still falling in torrents, by degrees extinguished the

red embers of the smoking ruins, and prevented the place from being entirely consumed to ashes. The soldiers of the division crowded the houses, and huddled under cover wherever they could find shelter. We were obliged to content ourselves by squeezing into a small hovel, where the smoke found egress through the broken roof; the floor was composed of slabs of rocks, in some places rearing their primitive heads amid flints and loose stones. During the night a ration of meat and six ounces of mouldy biscuit were served out, which was greedily devoured by the victorious troops. It was in vain that we scraped into a heap the stones of this macadamized lodge, for the purpose of lying down; for bumps and holes only increased our difficulties, and we were forced to ascend a broken ladder into a wretched loft; swarming with vermin, to prick for a soft plank, whereon to stretch our chilly limbs.

At dawn, on the 24th, we were again on the road; the weather cleared up, and the cheerful rays of the sun sparkled in the crystal drops, which fell on our heads as we glided beneath the wet foliage. Having advanced a few miles, we found the enemy's rear-guard posted at a bare and steep pass, which covered the high-road, two leagues from Pampeluna. The column having closed up, two battalions of the rifle corps

(supported by the horse artillery\*) pushed forward, and, after a sharp skirmish, they succeeded in pushing back the French rear-guard; the guns then galloped up the road, and plied the round shot with such effect, that they succeeded in dismounting one of the only two cannon which the enemy had extricated from Vittoria's entangled field. They had rolled the gun over a steep bank on the right of the paved causeway, on which were regular league stones, and the first I had noticed in Spain. One round shot had struck down seven of the enemy on the left of the road; some of them were dead; others still alive, with either legs or arms knocked off, or otherwise horribly mutilated, and were crying out in extreme anguish, and imploring the soldiers to shoot them, to put an end to their dreadful sufferings. A German hussar, in our service, assured them that they would be kindly treated by our medical officers. "No! no!" they vociferated, "we cannot bear to live. Countryman, we are Germans, pray kill us, and shorten our miseries."

Continuing onwards, we soon after drew up on the slope of a hill, within sight of Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre; it is well fortified, with

\* Lieut.-Colonel Ross of the Horse Artillery, as usual, commanded this troop.

a strong citadel, and situated near the banks of the river Arga, in a fertile plain abounding with wheat, the ears of which we rubbed between our hands to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Just before our arrival, the enemy's scattered army had clustered beneath the ramparts of the fortress, where they were in hopes of entering to obtain rest and provisions; but the place was so scantily supplied, that the gates were ordered to be barred against all intruders. From this place an excellent road branches off in a north-westerly direction to Tolosa; but as General Graham, with his corps, was marching direct on that town, by the great road to France, it was of no avail to the main body of the enemy, who were obliged to continue their retreat into France, by Roncesvalles and other roads, merely leaving a rear-guard in the valley of Bastan.

The following morning we filed over a rugged and flinty mountain, south-west of Pampeluna, from the summit of which we almost commanded a bird's-eye view into the very heart of the town, garrisoned by four thousand of the enemy. This place, well provisioned, should have been fixed on for the grand base of Joseph's defensive and offensive movements; for, had he made it the pivot of his operations, and opened his line on Aragon, (and the strong holds in Catalonia, held



by the Duke of Albufera), his flanks would have been secured by the Ebro and the Pyrenees, and would have thrown our army on two sides of a square, and entangled it between two strong fortresses, and the labyrinths of the Pyrenees. Most probably such a movement would have kept the war from the immediate frontier of France, whence fresh troops, under favourable circumstances, could debouch and attack our left face. From political reasons, the time had not arrived for the decided invasion of that country; besides, if it had, such an invasion could not have been executed, so long as the enemy hovered in force on our right flank.

Continuing our route, we crossed the river Arga, and entered the town of Villalba: our baggage at last came up, and the Casa in which we were quartered was enclosed by a good garden, well stocked with vegetables, which was considered a piece of good fortune in those times. This day, the 25th, General Graham overtook General Foy, retiring from the vicinity of Bilboa, who, on hearing of the unhappy extent of the French disasters at Vittoria, made an effort to block up the passage through Tolosa, but the victorious English broke through all obstacles, and continued to advance. In a few days the

small garrison of Los Passages surrendered themselves prisoners. Thus it was that the left wing of the army had hardly halted since issuing from the *bowels of Portugal*, until the precipitous bank of the river Bidassoa (which divided France and Spain), put a stop for a time to its memorable march and victorious career.

On the 26th we had an idea that we should halt, but during the day we were again under arms, (marching by an excellent road running S. S. E., leading direct on Tafalla,) accompanied by the third and fourth divisions, with a proportion of cavalry and artillery, to endeavour to cut off General Clausel's corps, which had approached Vittoria the day after the battle; but he also, being made acquainted with the total route of *El Rey Joseph*, immediately countermarched on Logroño, and thence to Tudella.\* During the movements of the right and left wings of the British army, General Hill, with the centre, showed front, and *masked* Pampeluna.

\* There he gained information of our movements, which forced him to follow the right bank of the Ebro, until he reached Saragossa, where, crossing the river, and leaving a small garrison behind, he moved towards the pass of Jaca, and entering France on the 1st of July, he at last succeeded, after a round-about march, with the loss of the greater part of his *matériel*, in forming a junction with the French army.

The weather now cleared up, but continued variable during the whole summer; the seasons here being totally different from the dry and scorching heats in the more southern provinces, where the sun-burnt mountains and vast plains, are covered, at this time of the year, with a parched vegetation, or the remains of many cindered forests.

Continuing our movement, we became once again extricated from the mountainous regions, which had every where enclosed us for more than a fortnight. The country was now open, and highly cultivated, with groups of bold peasantry lining each side of the way, and greeting us by crying *Vivan los Coluros, y viva el Réy Fernando séptimo*; and, while moving in the direction of Tudella, our enthusiastic hopes were raised to the highest pitch, at the probability of reaching the venerable and renowned city of Saragossa; but our line was all at once changed, and by a forced march we entered the province of Aragon, passing through a barbarous-looking country, barely peopled, (the forlorn *pueblos* lying wide asunder, the poor dwellings being mostly constructed of dried mud, and plastered over with the same substance;) and at the expiration of five days we reached Sanguessa, and encamped.

Here we halted one day,\* and, while promenading the town in the evening, the soft notes of music floated in the air, and on a nearer approach to the place whence the sounds issued, we were agreeably saluted by the scraping and cheerful notes of violins. A crowd of Spaniards had assembled round the door of the *Casa*, and on being questioned by another officer and myself whether the ball was public, “*Oh si señores,*” answered they, “*es muy público:*” so, bustling up the stone steps, and feeling our way along a dark passage, we found ourselves, on opening a massive door, amongst many *señoritas*, with a scarcity of *caballeros*. A staff-officer, who was the promoter of the dance, expressed his gladness at so opportune an arrival. Although a friend, we apologised to him for the apparent intrusion; but he was a man of no ceremony, and declared it to be a lucky mistake; which turned out to be the case, for we beat good waltz time during the whole night, to the great satisfaction of the *señoritas*.

\* There was a great scarcity of wood in the neighbourhood of this place, and as the third division followed ours, Sir Thomas Picton cast his eye on a pile ready cut, and, as soon as he had dismissed his division, sent a regular party, with a *vat*, to secure it, when, lo! it had all vanished!

On reaching the camp the following morning, the tents were already struck, and the troops moving off on their return to Pampeluna. What with the overpowering rays of the sun, the rising clouds of dust, and our overnight's exertion, we were so overcome, that had it not been for the kindly arms of the soldiers, we should have dropped from off our horses, while fast asleep, dreaming of black-eyed *señoras*, *waltzing*, and *precipices*!

In two days we reached Pampeluna by a more direct road, but the men began to flag, owing to irregular and poor feeding; besides which, we had been marching for thirty-two days, with only two regular halts, since quitting our camp between Toro and Salamanca; therefore, those plagued and suffering from sore feet were under the painful necessity (unless totally unable to proceed), of going on until they got well again. I have often seen the blood soaking through the gaiters, and over the heels of the soldiers' hard shoes, whitened with the dust.

The general-in-chief having cleared his right flank, and again condensed his right and centre round Pampeluna, debouched thence on the 4th July, for the purpose of taking possession of the passes of the western Pyrenees, and pushing the enemy's van-guard out of the valley of Bastan

into France ; which was executed by part of the second division, on the 7th. Our division, forming the left centre of the army, flanked this movement.

Our route at first lay through verdant and luxuriant valleys, abounding with apple orchards, groves of chesnut trees, and small fields of Indian corn ; from thence we ascended by broken roads, over rugged mountains, which were cracked in many places into vast chasms, overhung with oak trees of enormous magnitude, whose ponderous and wide spreading branches cast their dark shadows over the dried water-courses and natural grottos, formed by the intricate mazes of the underwood, entwining around the peaked and overhanging rocks, which in many places were garnished with wild strawberries.

The third day after leaving Pampeluna, we descended from the mountains into the compact little town of St. Estevan, situated on the rocky and woody bank of the clear stream of the Bidasoa, over which a good stone bridge communicates with the opposite side of the river : here we halted, with full leisure to explore the lovely scenery, which on every side encircled this secluded valley.

Our curiosity was much excited by the peculiar method of washing in this part of the country, the women squatting, or rather sitting on their bare

heels, with their lower garments tightly pulled about them, whilst others stood in the river rinsing the linen, with their only petticoat tied in a knot very high up betwixt their legs, displaying the most perfect symmetry; and it was morally impossible to refrain from admiring the natural and graceful forms of these nymphs.

The dress of the Basque peasantry is totally different from that of other provinces, and many of the females possess very fair complexions and are extremely beautiful, being a happy mixture of *las brunas y las blondas*; their hair is combed back without any curls, and plaited into a long tail, which hangs down below the hips; their jackets are of blue or brown cloth, and pinned so exceedingly tight across the breast, that the bosom seldom swells to any size; the woollen and only petticoat worn by them is of a light or mixed colour, reaching to the middle of the calf of the leg; and, with the exception of the bosom being so compressed, they are divinely formed. They are also remarkably nimble of foot, and always carry their little merchandize on the top of the head; they seldom wear shoes or stockings, except on Sundays and saints' days. The men go bare-necked, and wear a blue cap, or bonnet, (precisely similar to those worn in the highlands of Scotland,) with bushy hair hanging in ringlets on their shoulders. In hot

weather they usually carry the short blue, or brown jacket, slung over the left shoulder, and with long and rapid strides, or at times, breaking into a short run, they traverse the steep acclivities with their shoes and stockings frequently slung on a long pole, which they either carry sloped over the shoulder, or grasped in the middle like a javelin, and use it for the purpose of assisting them in scaling or descending the crags, or frightful precipices. Their waistcoats are double-breasted, without a collar; the breeches are of brown cloth, or blue velveteen, fitting tight over the hips, (without braces), and reaching to the cap of the knee, where they are usually unbuttoned, to give full play to the limbs; a red sash is twisted round the loins. They are a gaunt, sinewy, and remarkably active race of men, of sallow complexions; their limbs are admirably proportioned, and they are as upright as a dart.

After a rest of two days, we marched towards Bera by a narrow road, running parallel on the right bank of the river Bidassoa, the greater part of the way being blocked up with large stones, or fragments of rock, which had tumbled from the overhanging cliffs, that were rent in many places into terrific chasms, partly choked with huge trunks or roots of trees, through which overwhelming torrents gushed from the mountains during the heavy



rains and formed vast cataracts, often swelling the river into a foaming and angry torrent. Its rocky bed is fordable at this time of the year, and varies from thirty, to more than a hundred yards in breadth. Owing to the badness of the road, a number of infantry soldiers were employed in clearing away obstacles, or lifting the wheels of the cannon, with handspikes, over the loose fragments or projecting slabs of rock, which, at every few paces for three leagues impeded their progress.

During the march we passed near the bridges of Sunbilla, Yansi, and Lazaca, which cross to the left bank of the river, where some Spanish sentinels were posted on the cliffs, who called out to us, "*miren ustedes, miren los Franceses,*" and on casting our eyes upwards, we observed three of the enemy's *chasseurs à cheval*, looking down on us as if from the clouds. Part of the division had been already detached, for the purpose of keeping a look out up the narrow road to the right leading to the heights of Echalar. Just before we reached the mouth of this contracted defile, a buzz from the head of the column proclaimed the enemy's infantry to be at hand, and the musketry had no sooner commenced, than an officer, who had been amusing himself by the perusal of a volume of *Gil Blas*, hastily placed it under the breast of his grey pelisse: almost at the same instant a musket ball

buried itself in the middle of the book, and displaced him from his horse, without inflicting any further injury; it is a curious fact, that the exact pattern of the silk braiding of the pelisse\* was indented in the leaden bullet.

Our front being speedily cleared of the enemy's skirmishers, the firing ceased, and we entered a pleasant valley, within half a mile of Bera, which on this road is the frontier town of Spain, and is situated at an elbow, on the right bank of the Bidassoa: it has a good church with a lofty steeple, and consists of one long straggling street, a quarter of a mile in length, and immediately at the foot of the mountain de Comissari, over which a steep road, three yards broad, crosses the summit, which is called the *puérta de Bera*, and leads N.N.E. to St. Jean de Luz, in France; two other roads, if they may be so designated, branch off right and left from Bera, the first running easterly along the valley, (parallel with a small rivulet which empties itself into the Bidassoa), and passes between the great rock of La Rhune and the opposite mountain of St. Bernard, to St. Barbe and

\* Many of the officers of our corps wore red and grey pelisses, similar to those of the Hussars. The bullet which I have described was afterwards shown as a curiosity, and I examined it myself; the silk braiding had been carried into the compressed leaves of the book, and remained twisted tight round the ball.

Sarré, into France; at this point the rugged defile is very narrow, and almost causes a complete *break or separation* in the western Pyrenees: the other road from Bera runs across the Bidassoa, over a narrow stone bridge, four hundred yards from the town, to Salines, thence branching off through gloomy forests and over steep mountains to Oyarzun, Passages, and Saint Sebastian.

From Salines there is also a narrow rugged pathway, which traverses N.N.W. by the winding current, on the left bank of the Bidassoa; it is intersected with loose stones, and in many places ascends the steep and difficult acclivities over the naked rock, and finally enters the great road beyond Irun, which leads across the Bidassoa (where the enemy had broken down the bridge) into France, thence passing over the river Nivelle to St. Jean de Luz, and on to Bayonne, a distance of about twenty-four miles from Irun, which is the frontier town of Spain by that route.

The right of the enemy immediately opposed to us rested on a nearly perpendicular rock, at an elbow of the Bidassoa, and overlooking the small market place of Bera, so much so, that, if inclined, they might have smashed the roofs of the houses, at the west end of the town, by rolling down upon them huge fragments of rock. This post was decorated with a variety of fancy flags, or strips of

cloth, of various colours, tied at the top of long poles while groups of French tirailleurs, who encircled them, sounded their small shrill trumpets, and *jocosely invited us to the attack.*

Their centre or reserve, composed of black columns, crowned the heights on each side of the *Puerta de Bera*, and also the wooded heights extending to the base of the rock of La Rhune, on which their left was stationed in an old ruin.

The ground having been fully examined, and the picquets properly placed, we re-entered the mouth of the pass, and, having cut down two or three small fields of Indian corn, and stored it up as provender for the animals, we encamped on the stubble close to the river. The day was fine, but during the night the rain descended in torrents, and continued to fall so heavily for two days, as to swamp the ground on which our tents were pitched, and it was with the utmost exertion that we could keep them upright, owing to the frequent gusts of wind tearing the pegs out of the liquid mud. In these damp and chilly regions the tents proved of incalculable service to the army. The weather again clearing, our first brigade ascended the bare heights of Santa Barbara, the second brigade occupied a rising ground to protect the entrance of the defile leading to St. Estevan, and the picquets were pushed into the town of Bera,

(within half a stone's throw and beneath those of the enemy), and into the farm houses in the valley, enclosed by orchards.\*

The stupendous and lofty chain of the western Pyrenees being now taking up for the purpose of covering Pampeluna and St. Sebastian, the second division occupied the various rugged paths and passes winding up the steep sides of the mountains near Roncesvalles and Maya; the seventh division those of Echalar; the light division the heights of Santa Barbara, and the road leading to St. Estevan, opposite to Bera; and the first division and Spaniards guarding the left bank of the Bidassoa to the sea-coast. The latter troops helped to block up the numerous *gaps*, all along the crest of the position, such as mountain paths, goat tracts, and dried water-courses, as well as the numerous fords across the Bidassoa. This extended position is about thirty-eight miles in extent, as the crow flies, running north west from 'Roncesvalles to the town of Fontarabia, (which is situated near the mouth of the Bidassoa, where this river empties itself into the sea,) but necessarily following the rugged and zigzag flinty roads, along the winding or crooked valleys, or over difficult mountains, intersected with deep glens, chasms, craggy defiles, tremendous precipices, and through almost im-

\* These produce an abundance of small tart apples.

penetrable forests. The distance may be fairly calculated at sixty miles for troops to march from right to left.

On the 13th, the Duke of Dalmatia came from the north for the purpose of taking the command of the French army. The 15th being the anniversary of Napoleon's birth-day, the enemy at night illuminated their bivouac, by ingeniously festooning the branches of the trees with thousands of paper lamps, which produced a very bright glare, and of course presented a very novel appearance.

Four days after this, the fifth division began to dig the trenches at St. Sebastian, for the purpose of erecting batteries to batter *en brèche*. The third and fourth divisions, which had been kept in the neighbourhood of Pampeluna in reserve, and also to assist the Spaniards in drawing a line of circumvallation round that place, for the purpose of hemming in and starving the garrison into a surrender, now moved forward (leaving a Spanish corps to guard the lines); the former went to Olacque, and the latter to Biscarret; the sixth division was at St. Estevan: *these three divisions being the reserve*, and ready to succour at those points where their assistance might be required. The cavalry and artillery were cantoned in rear of the centre and left of the whole army.

One evening, while reclining on the parched and

sun-burnt turf at the tent door, our milch goat nibbling particles of hard biscuit out of my hand, on looking around, I was much struck with the beauty of the scenery; the azure sky was reddened and glowing with a variety of brilliant tints, reflected from the glare of the setting sun, whose bright rays glided the rugged peaks of the towering and great bulging mountains which every where inclosed us. A long line of grey-coated French sentinels lined the opposite ridge, and one of their bands was playing a lively French air. In the valley below us, the little active Basque boys and girls were pelting each other with apples,\* be-

\* This was a usual pastime among them, throughout the mountains, which abounded with vast quantities of apple trees. One day another officer and myself were enjoying a rural walk, when we met two of our friends, whom for amusement we pelted with apples, and drove them at full speed out of the orchard. All of a sudden, we were assailed by a number of the Basque boys, led on by a girl, who had witnessed our sport at a distance, and, although we piqued ourselves on being pretty good throwers, we found it a difficult matter to contend with them, from their dexterity in dealing out such irritating blows on our faces and legs; until, being ashamed to ask for quarter of such diminutive and laughing antagonists, we made a last effort, and succeeded in hitting one of their leaders on the bare heel, when they all ran away, to our exceeding satisfaction. My companion had been a Cadet at the Royal Military College at Marlow, and declared that he had never experienced a warmer rencontre in his more juvenile affrays at that place.

tween the hostile armies, while the straggling and half-starved Spanish soldiers, who dared not pluck the fruit) pretending to enjoy the sport, but in reality were picking up the apples, and carefully depositing them in their small forage bags. In the back ground sat our tanned and veteran batman,\* employed in mending a pack-saddle, after a long day's forage, and casting an eye of affection towards his animals, which were tied round a stake, feeding, with ears turned back, on some fresh heads of Indian corn. In the meanwhile my messmate was conversing with, and drawing a caricature of, a dowdy woman,† (from the Asturias,) loaded with an oblong basket of fresh butter, with her arms akimbo, and

\* The batmen of the army were hard-working and privileged characters, who, after unloading at the end of harassing marches were obliged to go a great distance in search of forage, and armed with a sickle ready to cut down even rushes, or any thing they could lay their hands upon, for their famished animals. If all happened to be right, after a long day's journey when questioned by the anxious officers (no matter of what rank), they would negligently turn away, and scarcely give any answer; but if one of their horses or mules happened to be lame or suffering from a sore back, or had cast a shoe, they would fret, fume, curse, swear, throw the ropes about, and give such a catalogue of evils, as to terrify the master with the idea that all was going to rack and ruin.

† These hardy women are in the habit, thus heavily loaded, of walking thirty or forty miles a day.



her nut-brown knuckles resting on hips which supported no less than four short coarse woollen petticoats ; from underneath these branched out a pair of straddling legs, of enormous circumference, the feet being wrapped in brown hairy skins, by way of sandals. In this position of things my contemplative mood was all at once interrupted by an officer of the *rifle corps* riding up, who, with a mysterious air, whispered me, by way of a profound secret, that he had become acquainted with a Spanish family, residing in the town of Bera, and offered to introduce me, provided I would agree to limit my attentions to the eldest daughter, *Maria Pepa*, who, he acknowledged, was endowed with very ordinary attractions, whereas her sister, *Ventura*, of seventeen, possessed charms of a far superior description. As a matter of course, not wishing to throw any impediments in the way of so liberal an offer, I readily acquiesced in the proposal, and forthwith accompanied him to the *destined Casa*, for as such I may justly nominate it, as I may affirm that this introduction was subsequently the means of the life of a wounded brother officer being preserved, owing to the kind attention of its inmates, who watched over his mattress night and day, until he was out of danger : his hurt in fact was so severe, that when a doctor was asked

how he found the patient, he replied. "Pretty well, but no man can ever recover from such'a wound."

On alighting from our horses we entered the house, and having ascended the staircase, we found *el Padre, la Madre, y las dos hijas* seated in a spacious apartment, with the casements open, and a French sentinel, who was posted on a projecting grey rock, so thoroughly overlooking the house, that we could almost fancy he could overhear the lamentations of the anxious parents, who, devoutly crossing themselves, prayed that the siege of St. Sebastian might be speedily brought to a conclusion, to enable them to return to their house at that place, and secure the valuable plate and property, which they had been forced to abandon in great haste, to escape being confined in that town during the siege. Having passed some hours with them in a very agreeable manner, we took our departure, with a promise of shortly renewing our visit.

The left and main body of the French army, being now concentrated, formed a line at the foot of the Pyrenees, in the vicinity of Forage and St. Jean Pied de Port, in France, with its right wing occupying the mountains from the Rock of la Rhune to Bera, thence by the right of the Biddassoa to Andaye, and flanked by the Bay of

Biscay. This ridge immediately covers the country in front of St. Jean de Luz and Bayonne.

Preparatorily to offensive movements, the French marshal issued a flaming proclamation to his troops, in which he reminded them that the standards of Britain waved aloft, and that her army, from the summits of the Pyrenees, proudly looked down on the fertile fields of France,—an evil which he attributed to the want of decision in the late French commanders. “Let us then,” said the Marshal, “wipe off the stain from our faded laurels, by chasing the English beyond Vittoria, and there celebrate another triumph, to add to the many victories which have so often decorated your brows, in all parts of Spain, *and on many a hard-fought day.*”

## CHAPTER XIV.

Offensive operations of the Duke of Dalmatia—Partial retrogression of the British—Ill success in the storming of the breaches at St. Sebastian—Movements of the various divisions—Great extent of the British line along the Pyrenees—Interesting domestic scene attending the departure of the Author's Division from the town of Bera—Battle of Pampeluna—Embarrassing situation of the light division through an accidental separation from the army—Successes obtained over the French, and their consequent retreat—Active movements, and capture of the enemy's baggage—A trait of character—Continued advantages gained over the French, who are driven beyond the Pyrenees.

THE Duke of Dalmatia, on the 25th of July, assaulted the passes in the neighbourhood of Roncesvalles,\* and the Count d'Erlon that of Aretesque, four miles in front of Maya. The result of this day's combat obliged Generals Cole,

\* Pampeluna is about thirty-five miles from the extremity of the principal pass at Roncesvalles, forty-five from that of Aretesque, in front of Maya, and fifty miles from the pass of Bera; all these points it was necessary to occupy on the right of the Bidassoa; which clearly demonstrates the advantage the enemy possessed by attacking principally at Roncesvalles.

Byng, and the Spanish General Morillo, to fall back from Roncesvalles; owing to which retrograde, the British army were taken in reverse. The fifth division, at day-break, had stormed the breaches of St. Sebastian without success; two thousand men had fallen, or were made prisoners, at the various points of contest; and General Hill fell back; during the night, from the pass of Maya. So far every thing seemed propitious to the views of the French marshal. Under all these circumstances, General Campbell, (who was stationed with a Portuguese brigade at the pass of Los Alduides,) finding his flanks laid bare, retired from that post, and, during the 26th, formed a junction with General Picton, who, by a flank movement to the right, had marched from Olacque to Lizoain, for the purpose of succouring the troops falling back from Roncesvalles.

During these operations, General Hill had taken up a strong position at Irrueta, sixteen miles from the pass of Aretesque, where he opposed, for the time being, the farther progress of the Count d'Erlon. This position covered the flank of General Picton's column, retrograding from Zubiri, and prevented the Count d'Erlon from uniting with the Duke of Dalmatia; and also enabled the sixth division to march direct to

the rear from San Estevan, and to unite at the well-arranged point *d'appui*, five miles in front of Pampeluna, where, on the 27th, the general-in-chief joined those troops which had retired from Zubiri, under the command of Generals Picton, Cole, Byng, Campbell, and Morillo, and who were now drawn up on a strong ridge in front of Pampeluna, and flanked by the rivers Arga and Lanz. General Picton was in a manner thrown back on the left of the Arga, in front of Olaz, and supported by General Cotton, with the cavalry in reserve, for the purpose of preventing the enemy from taking the right of the army in reverse by the road from Zubiri. The enemy, who had followed the march of the troops by that road, had no sooner arrived opposite the third division, than by an oblique prolongation to their right, they began to extend their line across the front of the General-in-chief, under a fire of small-arms,—by which manœuvre they succeeded in cutting off General Hill's retreat by the Maya road, running through Ortiz; he, therefore, having passed through Lanz, hedged off diagonally in a westerly direction, and, by an oblique march, formed a junction with the seventh division (from St. Estevan) at Lizasso, thence to co-operate, if possible, with the left of the General-in-chief,

whose position in front of Pampeluna was about eighteen miles from that place. During these various movements, General Graham, with the first and fifth divisions; and a corps of Spaniards, remained stationary on the left bank of the Bidassoa, for the double purpose of covering St. Sebastian, (the siege of that place was now converted into a blockade, and the battering train embarked at the port of los Passages,) and watching General Villate. The latter lined the opposite bank of the river, to be in readiness to assume the offensive, for the purpose of raising the siege of St. Sebastian, or hanging on General Graham's rear, in the event of the Duke of Dalmatia gaining a victory at Pampeluna, or succeeding in cutting off in detail the various divisions of the British army, now thrown into echelon, and extending from the banks of the Bidassoa, in front of Irun, to seven miles in an easterly direction beyond Pampeluna; a distance of at least sixty miles for the army to unite to either flank, (between two fortresses, whose ramparts were garnished with the cannon and small-arms of the enemy,) on an irregular quarter circle: amid multifarious barren rocks, towering mountains, and extensive forests, over whose inhospitable regions it was necessary, amongst other things, to convey provisions, ammunition, and biscuit

bags, for the daily consumption of the moveable divisions,—an operation attended with great difficulty under such circumstances.

Although the right of the army had been retiring for two days, the light division still tranquilly remained unmolested in front of Bera; but on the morning of the 27th, on finding that the seventh division had quitted the heights of Echarlar, and uncovered our right flank, the first brigade quietly descended from the heights of Santa Barbara, and the whole division concentrated behind the defile on the road to Lazaca, the picquets being left to mask this movement, and form the rear-guard. As soon as the division had got clear off, the picquets evacuated the farm-houses in succession from the right; and lastly, at ten o'clock, A. M., quitted the town of Bera within pistol-shot of the enemy's sentinels, who pretended not to notice this retrograde, probably being apprehensive of bringing on an action without being able at this point to display a sufficient force to assume offensive movements, and also conjecturing that the division might meet with a reception little anticipated, on reaching the neighbourhood of Pampeluna. The Duke of Dalmatia, at this moment, was still pursuing the troops from Roncesvalles and Zubiri, and actually within a few hours of the vicinity of Pampeluna, *two days'*



march behind the second and seventh divisions, and three in rear of the light division, and even threatening to intercept the sixth division from St. Estevan.

As I was left with the picquets at Bera, I had a good opportunity of witnessing the *sang froid* of the French outposts. They made no forward movement, and as I was loitering behind, within a short distance of the bridge of Lazaca, over which the troops had crossed to the left bank of the Bidassoa, I observed the Spanish family, (with whom I had recently become acquainted,) with rapid strides trudging along the flinty road, having rushed from their only dwelling through fear of the French, the instant they perceived the sentries retiring from their posts. They now presented real objects of commiseration, clad in thin shoes and silk stockings; the glossy ringlets were blown from off the forehead of *la Señorita Ventura*, and a tear from her dark blue eye, (shaded with raven eye-lashes), rolled down her flushed cheek, into the prettiest pouting lips to be imagined; a *mantilla* loosely hung across her arm, fluttering in the breeze, and a black silk dress, hanging in graceful folds around her delicate form, gave her, with all her troubles, a most enchanting appearance. *El Padre* accepted the offer of my horse, and, sticking his short legs into

the stirrup leathers, composedly smoked a cigar. The mother took my arm, the other I offered to *Ventura*, who smilingly declined, saying, "It is not the fashion for *las Señoritas* to take the arm of *los Caballeros*," but politely offered her hand. While crossing the bridge, "Here," said the little heroine, "why do you not call back *los soldados*, and tell them to *tirár las balas a este puente?*" I endeavoured to explain that our flank was turned, and all the grand manœuvres of an army; little to her satisfaction, for she could not comprehend any other than the front attack.

On entering the town, the family stopped at a large stone mansion of a relation, where they intended to take up their abode for the present: the parents urged my departure, through fear that I might fall into the hands of the enemy. I then took my farewell of them, (as I thought, for the last time), and galloping through the town, soon came within sight of the division, threading its march up a steep defile, enclosed on all sides by an extensive forest. Towards evening we encamped, one league and a half W. N. W. of San Estevan, on the mountain of Santa Cruz, from whence we still commanded a view of the French bivouac. Here we halted during the night.

On the following day, the battle of Pampeluna

took place thirty miles in our rear, but, being entangled amongst the mountains, we did not hear of the event until three days afterwards. The combat began in a singular manner: the sixth division, under Gen. Pack, while on its march over a rough country, intersected by stone walls, within a few miles of Pampeluna, suddenly encountered the grey-coated French columns in full march, debouching from behind the village of Sauroren for the purpose of out-flanking the left of the fourth division. The consequence of these two hostile bodies clashing was, that the enemy's van were driven back by a hot fire of musketry. The French, being thus foiled in this manœuvre, turned their grand efforts against the front of the heights on which the fourth division was stationed, commanded by Sir L. Cole. The valour of the red regiments shone transcendant, and the Marquis of Wellington repeatedly thanked the various corps, while they were recovering breath to renew fresh efforts with the bayonet, in driving the enemy headlong from the crest of the rugged heights; thus forcing them, after a most sanguinary and furious contest, to desist from farther offensive movements on that position.

The General-in-chief could only collect, at the end of three days, two brigades of the second division, General Morillo's, and part of the Count

d'Abisbal's Spaniards, and *the three reserve divisions*, to oppose the Duke of Dalmatia; which clearly demonstrates the great difficulty of occupying such a vast and rugged range of country. The *first, second, fifth, seventh, and light divisions*, were too far distant to join in the action of the 28th; and even the third division, only a few miles to the right of the field of action, could not take part in it, as the enemy had a corps of observation opposite General Picton, backed by a numerous train of artillery and a large body of cavalry, in readiness to engage him, should the *sixth and fourth divisions* lose the day.

The light division continued in position at Santa Cruz during the whole of the 28th, having completely lost all trace of the army; and, during these doubtful conjectures, at sun-set we began to descend a rugged pass, leading W.S.W. near Zubieta, to endeavour to cut in upon the high road between Pampeluna and Tolosa, as it was impossible to know whether General Graham, by this time, was not even beyond the latter town. To add to our difficulties, the night set in so extremely dark that the soldiers could no longer see each other, and began to tumble about in all directions; some became stationary on shelvings of rocks, or so enveloped in the thicket, that they could no longer extricate themselves from the trees and

underwood. The rocks and the forest resounded with many voices, while here and there a small fire was kindled and flared up, as if lighted in the clouds by some magic hand. For myself, I at length became so exhausted and out of temper, at the toil of lugging along my unwilling steed, that in a fit of despair I mounted, and keeping a tight rein, permitted the animal to pick its own steps. The branches of the trees so continually twisted round my head that I expected every minute to find myself suspended; at last the trusty horse made a dead stop, having emerged from the forest into a small hamlet, where I encountered a few harrassed soldiers, enquiring of each other where the main body had vanished to, or what direction to pursue, for they no longer knew whether they were advancing or retiring; and, without farther ceremony, they began to batter with the butt-end of their firelocks the strong and massive doors of the slumbering inhabitants, demanding, with stentorian voices, if any troops had passed that way?—a difficult question for people to answer who had just risen from their mattresses, and now timidly opened their doors, in considerable alarm, being apprehensive that we had come at midnight hour to rob and plunder

them. At last a resolute Spaniard\* threw a large capote over his shoulder, and, stepping forward, said, “ *Señores Caballeros*, only inform me whence you came or whither you are going, and I will be your guide ;” but we were so bewildered, owing to the crooked path, and the intricate windings of the forest, that no one could take upon himself to point towards the direction of the bleak mountain we had come from, or the name of the place we were going to ; as a matter of expediency, therefore, we patiently awaited the coming morn.†

At daybreak, a scene of complete confusion presented itself, the greater part of the division

\* It was a frequent custom, when in want of a guide, to employ a peasant, who received a dollar at the end of his day’s journey. These *Pizanos*, being accustomed to pastoral lives, were well acquainted with every inch of ground or by-path for leagues around their habitations, as well as the various fords across rivers and tributary streams, the depth of which depends on the season of the year, or the quantity of rain that might happen to fall at uncertain periods on these mountains.

† On the 29th, at the end of four days’ fighting, both Marshals desisted from hostilities in front of Pampeluna. The French employed themselves in edging off to their right to assist the Count d’Erlon, who had followed the march of General Hill by Lanz. The Marquis of Wellington, on the other hand, was drawing in the seventh division to insure a communication with General Hill, and also watching his adversary’s movements, to take advantage of what might accrue on the morrow.

being scattered over the face of a steep and woody mountain, and positively not half a league from whence they had started on the previous evening. As soon as the various corps had grouped together, they followed the only road in sight, and soon met a mounted officer, who directed them towards Leyza: near that place one-half of the division were already bivouacked, having reached the valley before the pitchy darkness had set in. It was now the third day since we had retired from Bera, and Gen. Baron C. Alten became so uneasy, that he ordered some of the best-mounted regimental officers to go in various directions to ascertain, if possible, some tidings of the army, with which he had had no communication for three days, being now isolated amongst the wilds of the Pyrenees, on the left of the river Bidassoa, half-way between St. Sebastian and Pampeluna. At six o'clock the same evening we again broke up and marched two leagues in the direction of Arressa, and then bivouacked in a wood, with an order not to light fires, thus to prevent any of the enemy's scouts or spies ascertaining our route. Two hours after nightfall, the troops were again put in motion, and I was left in the forest, with directions to continue there all night, to bring off in the morning any baggage or stragglers that might happen to go astray. At daylight on the

30th, having collected together a few women (who dared not again encounter another toilsome night-march along the verge of precipices); it was a droll sight to see this noisy group defiling from the forest, many dressed in soldiers' jackets, battered bonnets, and faded ribbons, with dishevelled locks hanging over their weather-beaten features, as they drove along their lazy *borricas* with a thick stick; and, when the terrific blows laid on ceased to produce the desired effect, they squalled with sheer vexation, lest they might be overtaken, and fall into the hands of the enemy's light horse. Having travelled for two hours as a sort of guide to these poor women, I perceived an officer at some distance in front, and, on my overtaking him, he expressed the greatest joy at seeing me, and declared that he had been wandering for some hours in the most agitated state of mind, not knowing whither to bend his footsteps. The division had drawn up again during the night, and he having, lain down on the flank of the column, had fallen into a profound slumber, out of which he had awoke at broad daylight, with the rays of the sun shining full on his face; and, when somewhat recovering his bewildered recollections, he wildly gazed around for the column which had vanished, and springing on his feet, hallooed with all his might; but no answer was returned, a



solemn silence reigned around, save the fluttering of the birds amongst the luxuriant foliage of the trees; the morning dew no longer bespangled the sod, nor did the print of a single footstep remain to guide his course: at length, in a fit of desperation, he hastily tore a passage through the thicket, and luckily reached the road, and at random sauntered along in no very pleasant mood, until I overtook him.—Soon after this we heard to our left sounds like those of distant thunder; as the sky was perfectly serene, we concluded that the noise must be caused by a heavy firing of musketry.\* On reaching Arriba, we found most of the doors closed; however, we succeeded in

\* This firing was near Lizasso, where the enemy endeavoured to turn General Hill's left flank by the road to Buenzu, and while the Count d'Erlon was striving to execute this movement, the light division, unknowingly, were marching on his right flank: however, the General-in-chief being still in position in front of Pampeluna, finding that the Duke of Dalmatia had weakened his left and centre, to support the Count d'Erlon, immediately countermancœvred, and attacked the right of his opponent with the sixth and seventh divisions, under Lord Dalhousie, and the left with the third division, and then pierced the centre of the enemy with the fourth division and General Byng's brigade of the second division, and thus before sun-set pushed back the enemy beyond Olacque. By this attack the left flank of the Count d'Erlon became uncovered, which obliged him to fall back during the night, towards the pass of Donna Maria, to avoid falling into the snare originally intended for his adversary.

purchasing a loaf, and then seated ourselves on the margin of a clear mountain-stream, where we devoured it, and forthwith solaced ourselves with a hearty draught of the refreshing beverage. This stream looked so inviting, that we threw off our clothes and plunged into it. Notwithstanding the cooling effects of the bathe, the feet of my companion were so much swollen, owing to previous fatigue, that with all his tugging he could not pull on his boots again; fortunately mine were old and easy, so we readily effected an exchange, and then followed the road across a high mountain, from whose summit we saw the division bivouacked to the right of the broad and well-paved road (near Lecumberri) which leads from Pampeluna to Tolosa; from this position we could march to either of those places, being half-way between them; here the division awaited the return of its scouts the whole of the following day.

The French army being completely worn out, and having suffered terribly in killed and wounded, continued to retreat during the 31st, followed by the five victorious divisions of the British in three columns, by the roads of Roncesvalles, Maya, and Donna Maria. On the evening of the same day, although obliquely to the rear of the pursuing columns, we received orders, if possible, to over-

take the enemy, and attack them wherever they might be found. Accordingly, in the middle of the night we got under arms and began our march. Towards the middle of the following day, (the 1st of August), having already marched twenty-four miles, we descended into a deep valley between Ituren and Elgoriaga, where the division drew up in column to reconnoitre the right flank of the enemy, who were still hovering in the neighbourhood of San Estevan. After an hour's halt, we continued our movement on the left of the Bidasoa, and for three hours ascended, or rather clambered, the rugged asperities of a prodigious mountain, the by-path of which was composed of overlapping slabs of rock, or stepping-stones. At four o'clock in the afternoon a flying dust was descried, glistening with the bright and vivid flashes of small-arms, to the right of the Bidasoa, and in the valley of Lerin. A cry was instantly set up "the enemy!" the worn soldiers raised their bent heads covered with dust and sweat: we had nearly reached the summit of this tremendous mountain, but nature was quite exhausted; many of the soldiers lagged behind, having accomplished more than thirty miles over the rocky roads intersected with loose stones; many fell heavily on the naked rocks, frothing at

the mouth, black in the face, and struggling in their last agonies; whilst others, unable to drag one leg after the other, leaned on the muzzles of their firelocks, looking pictures of despair, and muttering, in disconsolate accents, that they had never "fallen out" before.

The sun was shining in full vigour, but fortunately numerous clear streams bubbled from the cavities and fissures of the rocks, (which were clothed in many places by beautiful evergreens,) and allayed the burning thirst of the fainting men. The hard work of an infantry soldier at times is beyond all calculation, and death, by the road-side, frequently puts an end to his sufferings, —but what description can equal such an exit?

At seven in the evening, the division having been in march nineteen hours, and accomplished nearly forty miles, it was found absolutely necessary to halt the second brigade near Aranaz, as a rallying point. Being now parallel with the enemy, and some hours a-head of the van-guard leading the left column of our army, our right brigade still hobbled onwards; at twilight we overlocked the enemy within stone's throw, and from the summit of a tremendous precipice: the river separated us; but the French were wedged in a narrow road, with inaccessible rocks enclos-

ing them on one side, and the river on the other : such confusion took place amongst them as is impossible to describe ; the wounded were thrown down during the rush, and trampled upon, and their cavalry drew their swords, and endeavoured to charge up the pass of Echalar, (the only opening on their right flank,) but the infantry beat them back, and several of them, horses and all, were precipitated into the river ; others fired vertically at us, whilst the wounded called out for quarter, and pointed to their numerous soldiers, supported on the shoulders of their comrades in bearers, composed of branches of trees, to which were suspended great coats, clotted with gore, or blood-stained sheets, taken from various habitations, to carry off their wounded, on whom we did not fire.

Our attention was soon called from this melancholy spectacle to support the rifle corps,\* while they repulsed the enemy, who had crossed over the bridge of Yanzi to attack us, to enable the tail of their column to get off. Night closed on us, and the firing ceased ; but, owing to our

\* One of the first I saw wounded was Capt. Perceval, of the rifle corps. "Well," said he, "I am a lucky fellow, with one arm maimed and useless by my side from an old wound, and now unable to use the other."

seizing the bridge, we cut off the whole of their baggage, which fell into the hands of the column of our army following from St. Estevan.

In this way ended the most trying day's march I ever remember. On the following morning, soon after daylight, we filed across the bridge of Yanzi, held by our pickets, and detached a small force to guard the road towards Echalar, until the troops came up from the direction of San Estevan, which had hung on the enemy's rear for the then three previous days. Continuing our march, we once more debouched by the defile opposite Bera, where the French sentinels were still posted, as if rooted to the rocks on which they were stationed the day we had taken our departure.

As soon as the second brigade came up, we again ascended the heights of Santa Barbara, where we found a French corporal, with a broken leg, his head resting on a hairy knapsack, and supported in the arms of a comrade, who generously remained behind to protect the life of his friend from the *cuchillo* of the Spaniards. As soon as he had delivered him to the care of the English soldiers, he embraced the corporal, saying, "*Au revoir, bon camarade Anglais,*" and, throwing his musket over his shoulder, with the

butt-end *en l'air*, he descended the mountain to rejoin the French army on the opposite range of heights. Of course, no one offered to molest this *simple soldat*, who easily effected his escape. As our picquets could not enter the valley until our right was cleared, and the enemy pushed from the mountain of Echalar, as soon as another division attacked those heights, the 1st rifles moved on and clambered the mountain of St. Bernard, supported by five companies of our regiment. The soldiers had been for two days without any sustenance, and were so weak that they could hardly stand; however, an excellent commissary had managed to overtake us, and hastily served out half-a-pound of biscuit to each individual, which the soldiery devoured while in the act of priming and loading as they moved on to the attack.

The summit of the mountain was wrapped in a dense fog: an invisible firing commenced, and it was impossible to ascertain which party was getting the best of the fight; the combatants were literally contending in the clouds. When half-way up the side of the mountain, we found a soldier of the rifles lying on his face, and bleeding so copiously that his havresack was dyed in blood: we turned him over, and, being some-

what recovered before he was carried off, he told us, in broken monosyllables, that three Frenchmen had mistaken him for a Portuguese, laid hold of him, thrust a bayonet through his thigh, smashed the stock of his rifle, and then pushed him from off the ledge of the precipice under which we discovered him.

The second French light infantry were dislodged, before twilight, from the top of this mountain; but the sparkling flashes of small-arms continued after dark to wreath, with a crown of fire, the summits of the various rocks about Echalar.

Thus, after a series of difficult marches, amongst a chaotic jumble of sterile mountains, the enemy were totally discomfited, with an enormous loss, by a series of the most extraordinary and brilliant efforts that had been made during the Peninsular War. For three days the French indeed had the vantage ground, owing to their superiority of numbers at a given point; but on the fourth day, the same divisions which had so heroically fought while falling back, sustained, with their backs to a hostile fortress, (whence the enemy sortied during the battle,) a most desperate assault made by the Duke of Dalmatia, over whom the Marquis of Wellington gained a memorable victory, and



ceased not in turn to pursue the French marshal, until he was glad to seek shelter from whence he came. The standards of Britain again waved aloft, and flapped in the gentle breeze over the fertile fields of France.

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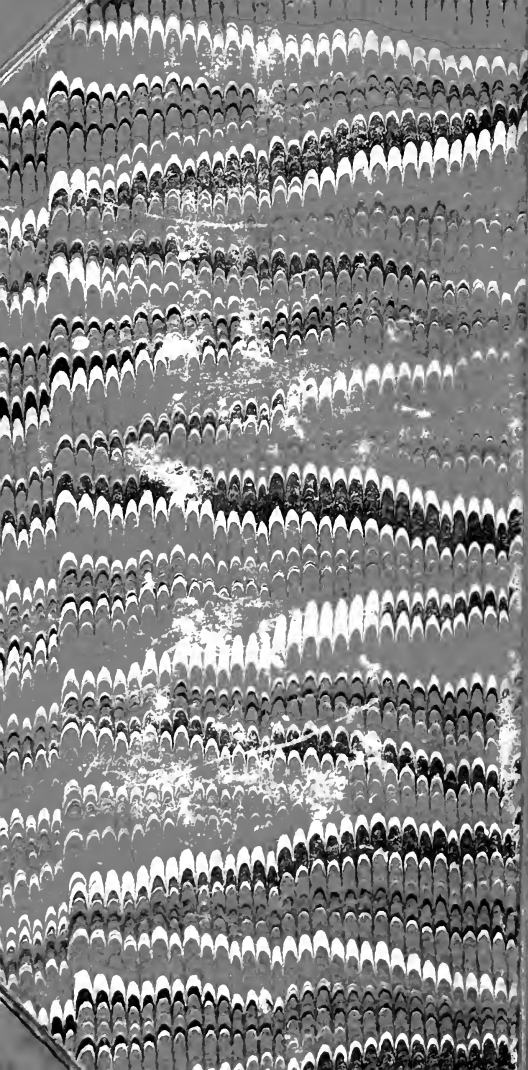
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