from under our feet at every step, and throwing us down; the enemy at the same time pouring their shot amongst us from above. After having gained possession of the ramparts, the enemy retreated into a square in the centre of the town, where they were pursued, and gave up their arms.

Among the prisoners taken, were 18 deserters from our army, who were subsequently tried and shot. The town was partially plundered by those who had straggled from their regiments, but the different columns remained formed on the ramparts until day light, when a party from each regiment were sent to bury the dead, and collect the wounded. I was one of the number. The first we found was captain W. a brave and good officer. He fell mortally wounded near the head of the breach, while cheering on his men to the assault.

Among the wounded lay lieutenant T. whom we used to call Robinson Crusoe, from his wearing very large whiskers, and always carrying a goat-skin haversack, in which he kept the

greater part of his necessaries, including his pipe and tobacco, of which he was very fond. The other officers rather shunned his company, from his not being very exact in his dress, and eccentric in his habits; but he was well liked by the soldiers, being an excellent officer, and brave as a lion.

In this respect he was worth a hundred dandies. A few moments before he received the wound, he dragged a miniken officer from a hiding place, and brandishing his sword over him, threatened to cut him down if he did not advance. But the poor fellow did not go many paces farther himself, when he was brought down by a grape shot; yet still he continued to cheer on, and encourage the men who were ascending.

On the ascent of the breach, lay many dead, and among the rest, my ill-fated friend, Sandy, whom I have had already occasion to mention, as parting from his wife at Jersey. When I saw him stretched lifeless on the breach, that scene flashed full upon my memory, and

I could not but remark how true his wife's forebodings had turned out.

By taking the town, we became masters of 153 piece of cannon, including the heavy train of the French army, and a great number of stores. The governor, (general Banier) 78 officers, and 1700 men, were taken prisoners.

Our division was marched out of the town in the morning, and returned to the village where we were quartered. On the way home we lost one of our men, and we never heard of him after. It was suspected that he either perished among the snow, which lay thick on the ground, or that he was murdered by some of the peasantry.

After remaining a few days in Ceridillo del Arroyo, we removed to Villa Mayor, where we remained until we received orders to march back our old route to Badajos, which we invested on the 17th of March. Our division again taking the left of the Guidiana, along with the 4th and light, while the right was occupied by a brigade of general Hamilton's division, we broke ground

rather to the left of our old trenches, within about 200 yards of fort Picurini (a strong out work.)

On the 19th the enemy made a sortie from one of the gates, a little to the right of our trenches, with two thousand men; but they were almost immediately driven in, without effecting anything, having suffered severely.

On the 25th, we opened six batteries with twenty-eight piece of cannon; and having kept up a heavy fire on fort Picurini during the day, for the purpose of destroying the defences, when it was dark, a detachment of 500 men of our division, under the command of major general Kempt, were ordered to storm it. They were formed in three parties, who attacked at different places at the same time; and they succeeded, after an obstinate resistance, in gaining possession of it. Two hundred men garrisoned the place, out of which 160 were killed, or drowned in the overflow of the river. The colonel commanding, 3 other officers, and 86 men were taken prisoners. Seven cannon were found

in the place, besides some stores. During the assault, the enemy made a sortie from the town, with a view either to recover the place, or cover the retreat of the soldiers who manned it; but they were driven in by a party of the detachment stationed to protect the attack.

In this affair we lost a great number of officers and men, some of them after the place was taken, the enemy having bombarded the fort from the town, when they found we were in possession of it.

The 2d parallel was now opened within 300 yards of the town, in which two batteries commenced firing on the 28th. During this time, the weather was so bad, and the rains so heavy, that we were working in the trenches, up to the knees in mud, and the river swelled to such a height, that the pontoon bridge, over which we crossed the Guidiana, was carried away. On the 29th, another sortie was made by the enemy on the right; but they were repulsed by general Hamilton's division. On the

31st, twenty-seven piece of cannon were opened in the second parallel, on the walls of the town; and the firing was continued with great effect until the 4th, when another battery of six guns was opened; practicable breaches were effected on the 5th, and we were turned out that night to storm the town, but the enemy having made formidable preparations for the defence, the attack was deferred until next night, during which time all the guns in the second parallel were brought to bear upon the breaches. This delay was productive of very serious feelings throughout the succeeding day, as we were warned at the time to be ready to storm the town the next night.

Various were the effects produced on various individuals. There was an unusual talking of relations, a recalling to mind of scenes forgotten; a flow of kindly feeling which softened down the rough soldier into something sadder, but more pleasing. Many letters were written during that day to absent friends, in a more affectionate style than usual; and

many injunctions given and taken, about writing, in the event of the fall of either party to their relations.

The nearer the time drew for the intended attack, the more each individual seemed to shrink within himself, yet still nothing of fear or doubt of our success was expressed, every feeling displayed was natural and manly; at length night came, and the appointed hour for turning out. It was dark and gloomy, not a single star showed its head; the air was still, not a sound could be heard, but the noise of the field cricket, and the croaking of frogs; every word of command was given in a whisper, and the strictest silence enjoined, which I believe was unnecessary; few felt inclined to speak. At last the order was given to advance, and with palpitating hearts we commenced our march—slow and silent, a dead weight hanging on every mind; had we been brought hurriedly into action it would have been different, but it is inconsistent with the nature of man not to feel as I have described, in such a situation.

The previous warning; the dark and silent night; the known strength of the place; and the imminent danger of the attack, all conspired to produce it.—Yet this feeling was not the result of want of courage, for I never witnessed any thing like the calm intrepidity displayed in the advance, after we came within range of the enemy's cannon. Being apprized of our intentions, they threw out fire-balls in every direction, and from total darkness, they changed the approaches to the garrison, into a state light as day; by this means they were enabled to see the direction of our columns, and they opened a fire of round and grape shot on us, which raked through them, killing and wounding whole sections. A circumstance occurred at this time, which may be worthy of notice:—A man who had been always very remarkable for his testy disposition, and inveterate habit of swearing on all occasions, happened to hit his foot against a stone, and stumbled, this vexed him, and uttering an oath, he wished a shot would come and knock his brains

out; he had scarcely finished these words, when a grape shot struck him in the forehead, and literally fulfilled the rash wish. We still advanced, silent as before, unless the groaning of our wounded comrades, until we reached a sort of moat about fifty feet wide, formed by the inundation of the river; here we had to pass, rank entire, the passage being only capable of admitting one at a time. On this place the enemy had brought their guns to bear, and they kept up such a fire of grape and musquetry on it, that it was a miracle any of us escaped. When we reached the other side we formed again, and advanced up the glacis, forcing our way through the pallisades, and got down into the ditch. The ladders by which we had to escalade the castle were not yet brought up, and the men were huddled on one another in such a manner that we could not move; we were now ordered to fix our bayonets. When we first entered the trench we considered ourselves comparatively safe, thinking we were out of range of their shot, but we

were soon convinced of our mistake, for they opened several guns from angles which commanded the trench, and poured in grape shot upon us from each side, every shot of which took effect, and every volley of which was succeeded by the dying groans of those who fell; our situation at this time was truly appalling. The attack had commenced at the breaches towards our left, and the cannon and musquetry which played upon our troops from every quarter of the town attacked, kept up a continual roll of thunder, and their incessant flash one quivering sheet of lightning; to add to the awfulness of the scene, a mine was sprung at the breach, which carried up in its dreadful blaze, the mangled limbs and bodies of many of our comrades. When the ladders were placed, each eager to mount, crowded them in such a way that many of them broke, and the poor fellows who had nearly reached the top, were precipitated a height of thirty or forty feet, and impaled on the bayonets of their comrades below; other ladders were pushed aside by the enemy on the

walls, and fell with a crash on those in the ditch; while more who got to the top without accident were shot on reaching the parapet, and tumbling headlong, brought down those beneath them. This continued for some time, until at length a few having made a landing good on the ramparts, at the expense of their lives, enabled a great number to follow. When about a company had thus got collected together, we formed and charged round the ramparts, bayoneting the French artillery at their guns; in the direction that the party I was with took, they had drawn out a howitzer loaded to the very muzzle, pointed it towards us, and a gunner had the match ready to fire, when he was brought down by one of our party; in this direction we charged until we reached the sally-port communicating with the town, In a short time the whole division were established in possession of the castle, but the contest at the breaches was still severe.

The light and 4th divisions had advanced from the trenches a short time

after us, until they reached the covered way; their advanced guards descended without difficulty into the ditch, and advanced to the assault with the most determined bravery, but such was the nature of the obstacles prepared by the enemy at the head of the breach, and behind it, that they could not establish themselves within the place. Repeated attempts were made until after twelve at night, when lord Wellington finding that success was not to be obtained, and that our division had succeeded in taking the castle, they were ordered back to the ground where they had assembled, leaving the breach covered with dead and wounded. When the governor (Philipon) found the castle was taken, he retreated into fort St. Christoval, and at day light in the morning he surrendered with all the garrison; it had consisted of five thousand men, of which number twelve hundred were killed during the siege.

When the town surrendered, and the prisoners were secured, the gate leading into the town from the castle was open-

ed, and we were allowed to enter the town for the purpose of plundering it. We were scarcely through the gate when every regiment of the division were promiscuously mixed, and a scene of confusion took place which baffles description; each ran in the direction that pleased himself, bursting up the doors and rumaging through the houses, wantonly breaking up the most valuable articles of furniture found in them;—small bands formed, and when they came to a door which offered resistance, half a dozen musquets were levelled at the lock, and it flew up; by this means many men were wounded, for having entered at another door, there was often a number in the house, when the door was thus blown open. The greater number first sought the spirits stores, where having drank an inordinate quantity, they were prepared for every sort of mischief. At one large vault in the centre of the town, to which a flight of steps led, they had staved in the head of the casks, and were running with their hat-caps full of it, and so much

was spilt here, that some, it was said, were actually drowned in it. Farther on a number of those who had visited the spirit store were firing away their ammunition, striving to hit some bells in front of a convent.

The effects of the liquor now began to show itself, and some of the scenes which ensued are too dreadful and disgusting to relate; where two or three thousand armed men, many of them mad drunk, others depraved and unprincipled, were freed from all restraint, running up and down the town, the atrocities which took place may be readily imagined;—but in justice to the army, I must say they were not general, and in most cases perpetrated by cold-blooded villains, who were backward enough in the attack. Many risked their lives in defending helpless females, and although it was rather a dangerous place for an officer to appear, I saw many of them running as much risk to prevent inhumanity, as they did the preceding night in storming the town. I very soon sickened of the noise, folly and wickedness around me,

and made out of the town towards the breach. When I arrived at where the attack had been made by the light and 4th divisions, what a contrast to the scene I had just left! here all was comparatively silent, unless here and there a groan from the poor fellows who lay wounded, and who were unable to move. As I looked round, several voices assailed my ear begging for a drink of water; I went, and having filled a large pitcher which I found, relieved their wants as far as I could.

CHAPTER IV.

MARCH BACK TO BADAJOS—SIEGE—STORMING—SCENES—HOSPITAL—POLLOS—SALAMANCA—BATTLE OF SALAMANCA—ADVANCE TO MADRID—MADRID.

When I observed the defences that had been here made, I could not wonder at our troops not succeeding in the assault. The ascent of the breach near the top was covered with thick planks of wood firmly connected together, staked down, and stuck full of sword and bayonet blades, which were firmly fastened into the wood with the points up; round the breach a deep trench was cut in the ramparts, which was planted full of musquets with the bayonets fixed, standing up perpendicularly, and firmly fixed in the earth up to the locks. Exclusive of this they had shell and hand grenades ready loaded, piled on the ramparts, which they lighted and threw down among the assailants. Round this

place death appeared in every form, the whole ascent was completely covered with the killed, and for many yards around the approach to the walls, every variety of expression in their countenance, from calm placidity to the greatest agony. The sight was awful:—anxious to see the place where we had so severe a struggle the preceding night, I bent my steps to the ditch where we had placed the ladders to escalade the castle. The sight here was enough to harrow up the soul, and which no description of mine could convey an idea of. Beneath one of the ladders, among others lay a corporal of the 45th regiment, who, when wounded, had fallen forward on his knees and hands, and the foot of the ladder had been, in the confusion, placed on his back. Whether the wound would have been mortal, I do not know, but the weight of the men ascending the ladder had facilitated his death, for the blood was forced out of his ears, mouth and nose.

Returning to the camp, I had passed the narrow path across the moat, where

many lay dead, half in the water. I had scarcely reached the opposite side, when I perceived a woman with a child at her breast, and leading another by the hand, hurrying about with a distracted air, from one dead body to another, eagerly examining each. I saw her come to one whose appearance seemed to strike her (he was a grenadier of the 83d regt.) she hesitated some moments, as if afraid to realize the suspicion which crossed her mind. At length seemingly determined to ascertain the extent of her misery, releasing the child from her hand, she raised the dead soldier (who had fallen on his face) and looking on his pallid features, she gave a wild scream, and the lifeless body fell from her arms. Sinking on her knees, she cast her eyes to heaven, while she strained her infant to her bosom with a convulsive grasp; the blood had fled her face, nor did a muscle of it move, she seemed inanimate, and all her faculties were absorbed in grief.

The elder child looked up in her face for some time with anxiety; at last he

said, "Mother, why don't you speak to me? what ails you?—what makes you so pale?—O speak to me, mother, do speak to me!"— a doubt seemed to cross her mind—without noticing the child, she again raised the mangled corpse, looked narrowly at his face, and carefully inspected the mark of his accoutrements—but it was too true—it was her husband. —Neither sigh, nor groan, nor tear escaped her, but sitting down, she raised the lifeless body, and placing his head on her knee, gazed on his face with feelings too deep for utterance. The child now drew himself close to her side, and looking at the bleeding corpse which she sustained, in a piteous tone, inquired "Is that my father? is he asleep, why doesn't he speak to you? I'll waken him for you"—and seizing his hand, he drew it towards him,—but suddenly relapsing his hold, he cried, "Oh! mother, his hand is cold—cold as ice."—Her attention had been drawn for some moments to the child, at length bursting out, she exclaimed, "Poor orphan! he sleeps, never to wake again—never, O never, will he speak to

you or me!"—The child did not seem to understand her, but he began to cry. She continued, "O my God! my heart will burst, my very brain burns—but I can't cry—surely my heart is hard—I used to cry when he was displeased with me—and now I can't cry when he is dead!—Oh, my husband, my murdered husband!—aye, murdered," said she, wiping the blood that flowed from a wound in his breast.—"O my poor children!" drawing them to her bosom, "what will become of you?" Here she began to talk incoherent—"Will you not speak to me, William—will you not speak to your dear Ellen—last night you told me you were going on guard, and you would return in the morning, but you did not come;—I thought you were deceiving me, and I came to look for you." She now ceased to speak, and rocked backwards and forwards over the bleeding corpse; but her parched quivering lip, and wild fixed look, showed the agonized workings of her mind. I stood not an unmoved spectator of this scene, but I did not interrupt it. I con-

sidered her sorrow too deep and sacred for common place consolation. A woman and two men of the same regiment who had been in search of her, now came up and spoke to her, but she took no notice of them. A party also who were burying the dead joined them, and they crowded round, striving to console her. I then withdrew, and hastened on to the camp, my mind filled with melancholy reflections; for many days after I felt a weight on my mind, and even now I retain a vivid recollection of that affecting scene. But she was not a solitary sufferer, many a widow and orphan was made by the siege and storming of Badajos; our loss amounting in killed and wounded to about three thousand men.

The camp during that day and for some days after was like a masquerade, the men going about intoxicated, dressed in the various dresses they had found in the town; French and Spanish officers, priests, friars and nuns, were promiscuously mixed, cutting as many antics as a mountebank. It was some days before

the army could be brought round to its former state of discipline. Indeed the giving leave to plunder the town, was productive of nothing but bad consequences, and for the interests of humanity, and the army at large, I hope such licence may never recur, should we be again unfortunately plunged in war.

A few days after the town was taken, I took the fever and ague, with which I was so extremely ill, that when we marched, which we did immediately after, I was unable to keep up with my regiment, and was left, with four others, about five leagues from Castello Branco, in charge of a sergeant, who was to endeavour to bring us on; but being unable to proceed, he was obliged to put us into a house in the small village in which we were left; it was occupied by a poor widow who had two children, there was only one apartment in the house, in which there was a loom, and having crept under it, I lay there for four days without bed or covering, with the exception of an old great coat, my necessaries, which I was unable to carry having gone

forward with the regiment; the poor Portuguese widow had little to give except commiseration, and seemed to feel much for me in particular, as the others could move about a little; I have often heard her when she thought I was asleep, soliloquizing on the grief it would give my parents, were they to know my situation, and in her orisons, which she was in the habit of repeating aloud, she did not neglect a petition for the "povre rapaz Englese.*" She often brought me warm milk, and pressed me to take a little of it; I felt very grateful for her sympathy and kindness, but I was too sick to taste it. As we were here without any means of support, the sergeant managed to press five asses to carry us to Castello Branco, where there was a general hospital forming; on one of these I was mounted, and supported by the man who drove it, I took leave of the tender-hearted widow, while the tears stood in her eyes; such disinterested feeling I was at that time little accustomed to, and it was precious. We

* Poor English boy.

proceeded on our journey, but never did I endure such torture as I did on that day, and I often begged of them to allow me to lye down and die.

On the second day we reached our destination, and remained waiting in the street for two hours before the general doctor would look at us—when he did come, his countenance forboded no good, "What's the matter with you, sir?" said he to me in a scowling tone of voice, "you ought to have been with your regiment; a parcel of lazy skulking fellows, there's nothing the matter with any of you!" I said nothing, but I looked in his face, with a look which asked him if he really believed what he said, or if he did not read a different story in my pale face and sunken cheek. He seemed to feel the appeal, and softening his countenance he passed on to another; we were then placed along with others, in the passage of a convent, which was converted into an hospital, here I lay that day on the floor, without matress or covering. Night came, and a burning fever raged through my veins; I called for drink, but there was no one