

rosity or of candour would willingly cast a shade over their heroic exertions. They had no government, no ministers, no generals; yet, under all these disadvantages, they ever remained true to the cause; and it is to their partial and continual struggles against the French detachments scattered over the face of their country, that we are indebted for our ultimate success. Had not the forces of the enemy been so constantly employed, and their communications so often menaced by the active hatred of the Spanish people, it is vain to suppose, that even the ability and genius of a Wellington, or the discipline and intrepidity of a British army, (which, however excellent in composition, was numerically feeble,) could have long resisted the combinations of eight marshals of France, and the efforts of two hundred thousand soldiers.

While my mind thus fondly dwells upon the patriotism of the Spanish people, how does my heart sink within me to think of their present wrongs, their wretchedness, their degradation! and all this heaped upon their heads by the very monarch they bled

to liberate and restore. But I am consoled by the firm belief, that the Spaniards will soon awaken the eyes of their monarch to the injustice, the cruelty, and the misrule of his detested advisers; or will, by one mighty effort, free themselves from his odious tyranny, and place the sceptre of their beautiful land in abler and more virtuous hands.

The news of this battle of Salamanca made me anxious to join my regiment, still under General Hill, with as much expedition as possible, for it was natural to suppose that this event, and Lord Wellington's advance into the very heart of Spain, would either compel Soult to raise the siege of Cadiz, and retire from Andalusia, or would lead to some offensive movements on our part to free the south from the presence of the enemy. I left Lisbon for Estremadura, happily unincumbered by any detachment. At Abrantes I met a column of three thousand of the prisoners taken at Salamanca. They were in a very exhausted state, from the length of their march, the heat of the weather, and the want of shoes and other



necessaries ; and, unlike my friends at Arroyo-de-Molinos, they had neither a word or a laugh to disguise their mortification. I never saw Frenchmen more thoroughly cut down ; and, what appeared not a little to increase their vexation, they were escorted by four hundred awkward-looking, ill-appointed Portuguese militia-men, whose air of pride and importance, as they regulated the motions of these “ vainqueurs d’Austerlitz,” was truly entertaining. It is not generous to exult over fallen foes, but it is difficult to pity them, when your eyes have rested on scenes of desolation and ruin caused by many, perhaps, whose appearance would otherwise interest you in their favour. Not a town or a village had I passed, on my route from Lisbon, but affecting traces of the invasion of this smiling country were every where to be seen. Cottages all roofless and untenanted, the unpruned vine, growing in rank luxuriance over their ruined walls, neglected gardens, the shells of fine houses, half destroyed by fire, convents and churches, too solid to be demolished, standing open and neglected, with the ornametal

wood or stone work, which once adorned them, broken down and defaced ; all proclaimed silently, but forcibly, that I was travelling through a country which had been the theatre of war, and exposed to the ravages of contending armies. Such are the scenes which, not only in Portugal, but throughout Spain, arrest the eye at every step, and make the Briton, while he sighs over the miseries of the peaceful citizens, and laborious peasants, whose towns and villages have been thus visited by violence and rapine, offer up many a grateful prayer for the secure and heaven-defended position of his happier countrymen.

From Abrantes I travelled alone, and in great comfort ; every morning, after journeying about two leagues, in some pleasant spot, under a shady tree near a stream, or by some solitary chapel or fountain, I halted for an hour, had my baggage unloaded, my animals unsaddled and fed, and making a fire to boil my kettle, sat down in great comfort to my breakfast. I carried up the country with me this time a collection of about fifty volumes, which my friend and



messmate had directed me to purchase for him in London. The best of the British poets and classics were of the number, and oftentimes would I lounge over a favourite author till the heat of the day was gone by, and pursue my route to the town, where I proposed sleeping, in the cool of the evening. A large wood, on my road from Altera de Chaõ to Monforte, was said to be much infested by robbers, and I was advised not to ride that stage alone; however, I felt protected by my uniform, and set forward, halting midway to breakfast, as usual. I took a post in a most romantic and sequestered spot, about a quarter of a mile from the road-side, near a natural fountain, from which the water welled forth with a soft and soothing sound. It was not until I was already seated at my breakfast, that I discovered at the foot of a dark mass of rock-stone, very near me, one of those rude wooden crosses, always erected in this country, to denote the spot where accidental, sudden, or violent death has overtaken some wretched traveller. It had scratched on it a very recent date, and in

spite of the attractions of Johnson's *Raselas*, and a good breakfast, I will own that I swallowed my meal with what haste and appetite I could, and again set forward. However, my day's ride passed over very quietly; I had not the bad fortune, or good, as some would have considered it, to meet with any banditti, or even an adventure, if I except encountering, in a dark and narrow glen, a monk and a muleteer, who came pricking on at a sober pace, and gave me full time to decide, that they might have sat very well for Schedoni and Spalatro, and would have made an admirable frontispiece to Miss Radcliffe's *Italian*.

It was not without a feeling of deep and mournful interest, that, on the evening I halted at Badajos, I walked round the walls of that dearly-purchased fortress. At the time I saw it, the works were rapidly repairing; but the town presented a wretched appearance, most of the loftier buildings, and all those near the breaches, having been demolished by the fire of our batteries. The murderous assault of the 6th of April must have been dreadful to look



upon. At the main breach alone, upwards of two thousand men are said to have fallen, and, at this point, not one soul penetrated into the town. Some of our officers, who were wounded, and taken on the breach, and carried through it, represented it as provided with defences, through which the most intrepid soldiers could never have forced their way; a ditch, cutting it off from the body of the place, a breast-work, and strong chevaux-de-frize of sword-blades were the obstacles opposed to us, and to these must be added a heavy and incessant fire of musketry. The escalade at the castle was a fine bold effort, and was indeed eminently successful. Some out-works also were carried at the bayonet's point in a gallant style; and the division, which penetrated into the town by the bastion of San Vincente, deserves uncommon credit. I leant long and silently over the parapet at that angle by which it ascended. What a scene, on the night of the 6th of April, must these walls have presented! Blazing cressets, fire balls, rockets, the explosion of shells, and the red flashes of

cannon and musketry, must have spread around a terrific illumination ; terrific, for it lighted up a scene of wild confusion and reeking slaughter. The reports of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the shouts of the assailants, and the drums and trumpets of the garrison, were the sounds which, that night, scared sleep from the pillows of the wretched citizens ; and the huzza of victory was to them the prelude of a scene of violence and plunder. Happy are ye, my countrymen, who read only of these things, and are spared such trials ! How cheerful, how grateful should ye be to that presiding Power, which keeps from your humble and boasted castles, war and its dark train of miseries ! In the morning, before I left the city, as I was passing a large church, I heard the sound of hammers and anvils, and, on entering, I found that this handsome building had been converted by the French, during the siege, into a work-shop ; by us it had still been applied to the same purpose, and there, where a peaceful congregation had often met to offer up their prayers, blacksmiths, armourers, and car-



penters, were now busily occupied in their noisy labours.

On my road to Zafra I stopped, for one hour, in the ruined village of Albuera, and walked alone over the field. Some redoubts had been lately constructed on it by General Hill, as a measure of precaution, in the event of his corps ever being compelled to fight upon this ground ; but for these works, there was nothing which spoke of war, or soldiers. All was rural and sunny, and silent. No marks of feet, or hoofs, upon the plain ! the grass grew thick and strong, and wild flowers were springing from that turf, which had been moistened by valour's purest blood. Not a vestige of the memorable battle remained. As I was mounting to pursue my journey, a rude inscription, scratched with charcoal on the chapel wall, caught my eye ; it ran thus : —

“ La Guerre en Espagne est la Fortune des Généraux, l'Ennui des Officiers, et le Tombeau des Soldats.”

It was in this same chapel, fifteen months before, that I had seen several hundred French prisoners, many of whom were

dying, and all of whom were dreadfully wounded, stretched in their last agonies, and groaning with anguish. How painfully and faithfully illustrative of the truth of this brief inscription, was the scene with which my memory then supplied me. I passed the night at the pretty village of Almendral; near this place, as I learned from my host, a wealthy intelligent peasant, a French corps, under the orders of Marshal Mortier, had been for some weeks bivouacked in the year 1811. In speaking of the strict discipline maintained by Mortier, and of the protection he gave them, and their property, my host used a very strong expression; for he styled him the father of the peasants. This quite corresponded with the language of the French soldiers about this same Marshal, and hearty was the blessing which I bestowed on this respected name. Yes, although we shrink from the mention of some French leaders, who appear to have gloried in oppression and cruelty, it cannot be denied that many high-minded and honourable men have marched with the armies of France; and while some



of my countrymen inveigh against all the French military with undistinguishing severity, they would do well to recollect, that a soldier cannot, under any government, choose his service, or be held responsible for the justice of that war in which he may chance to be employed. How many Englishmen served on the expedition against Copenhagen, with distinction and honor, who may have considered it a daring act of aggression, justifiable on the doctrine of expediency alone? an argument we seldom admit when speaking of the actions or politics of an enemy.

At the village of Santa Martha, I again entered the high road. This wretched place was in a sad condition; for it had been occupied, alternately, by French and English, several times in the course of the spring and summer, and its resources were completely exhausted. Provisions were dear and scarce; and, on every side, poverty and want assailed you with imploring prayers. It was really heart-breaking to look upon the squalid appearance of the children, which is always more affecting

than that of grown beggars ; for childhood is the season of careless and playful joy, and to see the roses on their young cheeks blighted by the icy touch of famine, is peculiarly distressing.

On the road from Santa Martha to Zafra, you pass a town called Feria, which is beautifully situated on the side of a lofty hill on your right, from the summit of which a Moorish fort and tower, still frowning, though decayed, look nobly down, and speak to the reflecting traveller, of men, and days, and deeds, now, as a tale, gone by.

In Zafra, I once more embraced my brother officers, and found myself at home. Wander where he will, a regiment is ever, to a single man, the best of homes. There is no manner of life, which so effectually conceals from us the cheerlessness and the helplessness of celibacy, as the desultory life of a soldier. For him, who, by the want of fortune or other controlling circumstances, is debarred the exquisite happiness of reposing his aching heart on that blessed resting-place, the bosom of a wife, — for such a man there is no life, save one



of travel or of military occupation, which can excite feelings of interest or consolation. The hazard of losing life, which a soldier is often called on to encounter, give to his existence, as often as it is preserved, a value, it would, otherwise, soon cease to possess. Frequent change of country and of scene, enliven and divert your thoughts; and if it is painful at a certain age, to think, that, when you fall, no widow, no child, will drop a tear over your grave, — it is, on the other hand, a comfort to know, that none are dependant on your existence; that none will be left unprovided and in misery at your death.

Zafra is a fine town, built at the foot of a high and steep hill, from the summit of which you command a very extensive view of mountain scenery. Near Zafra are the remains of a large and handsome convent, once the pride and the boast of the city. The French have entirely destroyed it: on one of its ruined walls, I saw “Compagnie d’élite du vingtseptième dragons,” marked in chalk. This monastery, however, was one of those which had been erected within the last century, was not hallowed by anti-

quity, and the sight, therefore, of its tottering ruins excited no feeling, but one of pleasure, unmingled with regret, and undisturbed by any recollection of interest.

The evening after my arrival in this quarter I went to a ball given by some British officer of rank. The country-dances now in use among the Spaniards, and introduced, I imagine, either by the French or Germans, are all in waltz time and to waltz movements; they are uncommonly graceful. There were some very pretty women at this assembly. My worthy countrymen do not shine in the soft and pleasing movements of the waltz; they deserve, however, to be laughed at, for why do they not sit still? I really quite pitied some of the Spanish girls, whose eyes, heads, arms, and indeed, whole frames, seemed to move in voluptuous unison with the music, when I saw their waists encircled by the arms of awkward, ungraceful partners. In the course of the evening, a handsome young Spaniard and a pretty-made little girl, danced for us the bolero. This beautiful dance is too well known to need descrip-



tion ; it has much of the ballet character ; is very expressive, and tells quite a little tale of love. The sound of the castanets, too, with which the motion of it are always accompanied, is both cheerful and animating.

I found by the news here, that Lord Wellington had entered Madrid on the 12th, in triumph ; and that Joseph Buonaparte had retired upon Valencia. Soult was making preparations to evacuate Andalusia ; and it was conjectured, that he would march through Grenada and Murcia, and probably join the King.

On the 28th of August, we marched on the Seville road, to Bienvenida. On the following day, we proceeded to Ilerena ; we here received accounts, that Colonel Skerret had entered Seville, and that the French had taken the route of Cordova. Our movement southward was stopped at the small town of Ayllones ; and we counter-marched on the Guadiana, passing by Maguilla, el Campillo, and Zalamea, to Quintana, where we halted three, and then to a village about ten miles from the Guadiana, where we remained seven days. This short halt

was probably to await the instructions of Wellington.

On the 13th, the corps was again in motion ; and my brigade marched to the city of Medellin. On the high ground, before you descend to the river, on which this city is built, you enjoy one of those grand and sublime views, which fix themselves for ever in the imagination ; and of which the recollection is so lasting and so delightful. To the right is seen the bold Sierra de Guadalupe, and behind it, many a lofty range of mountains, which rise one above the other in rude majesty, ever varying to the eye of the moving traveller, in form, and height, and hue. To the left, less distant and not so lofty, rise the abrupt and precipitous Sierras de Montanches ; below you, the rich vale of the Guadiana, populous and fertile, lies smiling with corn fields and vineyards, among which, several white towns and villages are scattered in the most pleasing sites. The town of Medellin is very ancient, and not well built. A large citadel, which it once boasted, is now a heap of useless ruins ; it is famous, however, for



having given birth to the celebrated Hernan Cortez, the bold and adventurous conqueror of Mexico. They pretend to shew the very house in which he was born, and in which, three hundred years ago, he played about a disregarded child; as a young man, being idle, dissipated, and unruly, he so irritated his father, that the old man drove him in anger from his peaceful roof. Such was the origin, and such the early life of this wonderful man, upon whose exploits posterity has dwelt with so much admiration, and for whose atrocities it has so often indignantly blushed.

In the evening, I walked over that field, which, in the spring of 1809, proved so fatal to the Spaniards. This battle was most rashly and presumptuously courted on disadvantageous ground; and as naturally as deservedly lost. The victims in this disastrous battle were never buried; no charitable hands were near to perform this last kind office; at every step, human bones, bleached by the sun and wind, lay scattered in my path. It was painful and humiliating to carry the mind back to the slow de-

cay of the manly bodies which once covered them — bodies, in which the full tide of youth, and health, and spirits, was stopped suddenly and for ever, and which had lain all exposed to the wolf of the mountains, and the eagle of the rock, who left the cavern and the cliff, to make their feast on man!

On the 14th we marched to Escorial, on the 15th to Santa Cruz. The situation of this last village is very beautiful, and the neighbourhood highly picturesque. Above it rises a proud majestic mountain, whose broad sides, towards the base, are clothed with the olive and the vine in rich profusion, while the higher region has a crown of heath, and rock-stone, most beautifully variegated with colourings, such as the art of the painter would in vain attempt to imitate. On the 16th we marched to Truxillo, once a considerable city, filled with palaces and convents, and reckoning above eight hundred inhabited houses. It had been one of the richest and most flourishing commercial cities in the interior of Spain. The decay of trade gave the



first blow to its prosperity, and the French, in a three months' residence, completed its destruction. Of seventeen palaces only two remain inhabited, and five hundred houses empty, deserted, and fast falling to decay, only remind you of what it once was, what it no longer is. It still, however, looks nobly in the distance, and, ere you reach the walls, you imagine you are about to enter a magnificent city. On a hill above it stand the solid remains of a Roman castle, said by the priests to have been built by Julius Cæsar. Now, to be sure, the priests in Spain know very little about these matters; but it matters not whether I was deceived; I, for the time, enjoyed the pleasure of fancying, as I walked over the ruin, that the foot of Cæsar had once rested where I trode. The tottering walls of some later works adjoining it, shew that it has, since those days, been a station of the Moors. In the square of Truxillo stands a large, noble-looking mansion, once the residence of the family of Pizarro, and built, probably, out of the rich and precious spoils of injured and insulted Peru. The