

you come hither, if you could not calculate on maintaining possession? You little know the misery and terror which at this moment fill the bosoms of the inhabitants of this city. A few hours may deliver them up to the vengeance of Spain's deadly enemies, and the disaffected traitors within these walls have watched us well: they will represent every act of loyalty as a crime, every viva as a cry of insurrection against the odious government of Joseph." My heart quite sunk within me, as he spoke; I could only reply, that the policy of the French would never suffer them to punish offences so general; that they would feel their own stay uncertain, and must calculate on our return at some future period; that this mortifying abandonment of the capital was never contemplated when we advanced, and, even now, was only rendered necessary by the folly of their own countryman, Ballasteros. He pressed my hand, uttered a "viva mil annos" as I mounted my horse, and I was soon out of his sight. The people, though dreadfully dejected, showed no signs of anger or indignation,

but were respectful and friendly to the last. I left the city, encountered no General to put me under an arrest, a punishment I am free to confess I deserved, and reached the camp highly delighted at having seen Madrid ; for, after all, is it not possible to see in one half hour a scene of interest which may be remembered for ever ? I would certainly have given much to have examined Madrid at my leisure ; but for the general effect of the superb palace, the streets, the squares, the outward picture of that city, I have seen, admired them, and can speak, as to the impression produced, as well as a man who has passed weeks there as a resident.

Our bivouack, on the evening of the first of November, commanded a clear but distant view of the town and palace of Escorial. Though within two leagues of us, I could not visit them ; but I was well reconciled to this disappointment, for I examined the palace attentively with my glass, and could discover that the royal residence, and the convent attached to it, formed a shapeless, and frightful pile of building.

What, indeed, could be expected, when a whimsical monarch commanded his architect to take a gridiron for his model, and in the erection of the edifice, and the disposition of its various parts, to conform most strictly to this strange plan? The convent of San Lorenzo was, in its day, exceedingly wealthy, and could once boast a valuable library of thirty thousand volumes, and a very fine collection of paintings, among which were several masterpieces of the famous Titian: this celebrated and exquisite painter resided for upwards of five years in Spain, and left many precious works behind him. Indeed, at one period of her history, Spain, from her intimate connection with Italy, was not only embellished by the labours of Italian architects, but the saloons of her kings and nobles were furnished with many a rich production of the Italian pencil. The names of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Guido, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Caraccis, were well known in Madrid, while the works of Murillo, and other natives of Spain, attest, that there was a time when the divine art of painting met with honour and

encouragement among Spaniards of rank and affluence.

On the 2d of November, after a delightful march through a romantic country, we took up our ground at the foot of the Guadarama pass; on the following morning we ascended these rude* mountains, and moved upon Villa Castin. The ascent to the top of the pass is four miles, but the royal road is so fine, and so admirably laid down, that your cannon meet with no obstacle, which an additional pair of horses, or a drag-rope cannot overcome. The descent into the plains of old Castile is not less than eight miles, and eight more bring you to Villa Castin. Descriptions of scenery are, at best, but feeble, for to describe material objects with the pen is difficult, if not impossible. I shall therefore content myself with saying, that the southern face of the Guadarama mountains is bare, brown, and rocky, but the northern side most majestically wild; large projecting masses of rock,

* The most elevated points of the Sierra de Guadarama are eight thousand feet above the level of the sea.

dark, and thick plantations of the mountain fir; tumbling torrents, and steep patches of the liveliest verdure, all boldly blended, are the features of this grand and uncommon scene. Our march this day was rendered still more interesting by the distinct view, which, from the top of the pass, you enjoyed of the various columns, defiling by the beautifully winding road, on which not less than thirty thousand men might be seen in motion. The plains of old Castile are very extensive, and their extreme flatness is fatiguing to the eye, but they are in general well cultivated, and filled with towns and villages. We traversed them rapidly. On the 5th we were in communication with Lord Wellington, who had broken up from before Burgos, and was retiring on Salamanca, followed by Clausel.

On the 6th we halted, for one day, on the heights of Cantaracilla, reached Alba de Tormes on the evening of the seventh, and the whole of the allies were posted on the eighth in and near Salamanca, and along the line of the Tormes, occupying the town of Alba on the right, with some British, and a division of

Portuguese. The French armies of the north, south, and centre, which had followed us from Burgos on the one side, and Madrid on the other, successively arrived in our front; and it was generally thought that Lord Wellington would try the fate of a battle. On the 10th, a column of infantry, with cannon, attacked the town and castle of Alba; it was repulsed. On the 14th, Soult, who commanded for Joseph, caused an immense force to pass the Tormes above Alba. Our division immediately fell back, on its right, from that neighbourhood, and drew nearer Salamanca. From a high rocky ridge, behind which our division was formed in contiguous close columns, we saw the enemy's infantry, occupying a low wooded height, about a mile from us. They showed about five thousand of their horse on the plain below us, while on that to our rear, the whole of our cavalry was formed and ready to act. There was some skirmishing and cannonading, but no affair of moment. On the fifteenth, at daylight, the whole of our army was in order of battle; our division was posted behind the

Arripeles, and every one anticipated a fierce and general engagement. The French had ninety thousand men, and nearly two hundred pieces of artillery. Our division had not been present at the glorious victory of Salamanca, and longed eagerly for the battle; for they naturally thought that a brilliant and successful contest, on a much grander scale, and on the same ground, would give them a right to speak of the field of Salamanca with a soldier's pride. This jealousy of fame, this "avarice of praise," is common in camps; and I need hardly add, incalculably useful to sovereigns and commanders-in-chief. Soult, however, had no intention of fighting; he declined the challenge, manœuvred on our right, and threatening our communication with Portugal, compelled us to retreat. It is evident that Lord Wellington, who, from the 8th to the 15th, kept all his forces concentrated on the Tormes, anxiously desired and expected a general engagement. Indeed, it has been said, and is probable, that on the morning of the 15th, could he have supposed that Soult

would refuse fighting, he would himself have been the assailant, and have marched boldly on the heights of Mozarbes. It was not until ten o'clock in the forenoon that the retreat was ordered, which, had it been the original intention of his Lordship, would, no doubt, have been entered upon six hours earlier. About two in the afternoon, our column, having moved by its right, arrived on the high road to Ciudad Rodrigo, and marched towards the Agueda. About noon, on this day, the rain began to fall in torrents, wetting us to the skin, yet not being without its use, for it most admirably masked our movements.

I have, in the course of these pages, often painted the bivouack as a scene of enjoyment and pleasure, and many will accuse me of exaggeration; but I have spoken as I felt, and I can truly declare that, in nine cases out of ten, we enjoy rather than suffer. But it is not to be denied, that we occasionally endure what a person, unacquainted with service, can ill conceive, and would with difficulty, be persuaded to credit. From the 15th to

the evening of the 19th, our sufferings were of this description. On our march we were deluged with rain, the roads were deep and miry, and we had repeatedly to ford rivers and streams, some of which were breast high. In our bivouacks the ground was soaked, no dry wood to be had, and our fires, if any, were smoky and cheerless. In addition to this we were miserably provided, having neither bread, biscuit, nor flour.* Lean bullocks, which travelled with us, were slaughtered daily as we halted, and putting your miserable ration on a stick, or the point of your sword, you broiled it on wood-ashes, and ate it gree-

* Such was the scarcity of bread, that a friend of mine, a paymaster, who lost our column, and was wandering for two days on another road, overtook a Spanish peasant, who was journeying with his wife and children towards Ciudad Rodrigo, and seeing a loaf of bread on the mule he was leading, he begged to purchase it, but the man refused to sell it. Faint and almost wild with hunger, he pulled out a doubloon, and offered it as the price of the loaf, but the man still declined, saying, pithily, "My little ones cannot eat gold." What a lesson for the pampered citizen, who thinks there is nothing gold cannot buy!

dily, half-smoked, and half-raw, without knife, fork, or any conveniences, the whole of our baggage having, of course, preceded us. On the 16th, indeed, my regiment was posted as a picquet on a small plateau, just above the village of Matilla, and we certainly had some prospect of comparative comfort. In this hamlet, though there was no bread, we luckily found a few potatoes, which having eagerly purchased, we were boiling at a tolerable fire, in a mean hovel, and chuckling at our good fortune, when the sound of a few shots caused us to run out, and we found about two squadrons of our German Hussars retiring before a large body of the enemy's horse. As we had only piled arms in column at quarter distance, we were instantaneously formed, and the enemy halted about musket-shot from us. We stood, for about fifteen minutes, calmly looking at each other. They were about two thousand in number, all covered with large white cloaks, and looked remarkably well. It certainly was a sight, which, on any ordinary occasion, it would have been worth losing a dinner for ; but

hungry and exhausted as we were, the bustle they caused was very unseasonable. They suffered us to retire through the village, and across the plain to the wood, where our division lay, unmolested; for as they had no guns, it would have been a ticklish affair to attempt any thing against a steady battalion of infantry; but they pushed down about six squadrons to the left of the village, and had a trifling brush with some of our cavalry, who came up hastily from their camp, after which they retired, and occupied for the night Matilla and the heights.

In our bivouack on the 17th, a cannonade, directed against the right column, and very distant from us, caused us to stand to our arms shivering for two hours, after which we broiled our ration, and lay down in a swamp, nearly ankle-deep in water, to repose. This same day, Sir Edward Paget, our second in command, was taken, while quietly riding in an interval between two divisions, one of which was marching in his rear. A few Polish lancers had adventurously straggled through the wood on

our flank, and coming down upon the road, carried him off through the forest undiscovered.

On the night of the 18th the rain ceased for a short time ; but just as we were composing ourselves for sleep, a handful of Indian corn was issued to each man, and they all immediately began pounding it between large stones, which strange hand-mills they passed from one to the other, keeping up such a noise throughout the whole night, that no one in camp could possibly have closed his eyes. Such were the little additions to our annoyance and misery. The sufferings of mind, however, on a retreat, are far less endurable than privation and fatigue : these last, animated by the hopes which a forward movement never fails to inspire, we cheerfully bear ; but it is distressing to feel, that if you drop, from inanition and exhaustion, you fall an easy and *unresisting* prey to the enemy. The loss of our army on this retreat was very considerable, fully equal to the casualties of a general action, and, thanks to the supineness of the French, who never

vigorously pushed us, that it was not doubled.

On the night of the 20th, our corps of the army was distributed in mountain villages, south of the Sierra de Francia, and here we halted for eight days. Here, too, we were restored to our baggage, and under cover. Miserable as were the hovels in which we were quartered, our gaiety in these chimney-corners, where we sat roasting chesnuts, and boiling potatoes, would not a little have surprised our friends at home, could they by magic have been transported from their curtained and carpeted drawing-rooms to these mountain-cots, and have seen the accommodation we thought ourselves so fortunate in procuring.

On the 28th, the whole of Hill's corps marched for the province of Coria. Our route lay through that mountainous region, which divides the Partido de Ciudad Rodrigo from that of Alcantara, in Estremadura. The scenery, as is ever the case in such a country, was truly magnificent: the passage of the rude and lofty Sierra de

Gata, and the descent from the top of the pass to the town, abound with subjects for the pencil of a Salvator Rosa. A rugged and dangerous road winds amid the thickest brushwood, and around the boldest rocks ; below it, on one side, are precipices the most frightful, while, above, on the other, huge masses of mountain-stone terrifically impend, and seem to threaten the traveller with instant destruction. We were very fortunate in our day, and saw this country to great advantage. In the very loftiest regions of the Sierra, a veil of mist enveloped us, which, as we descended, gradually cleared away, and gave to our view plains, and woods, and villages, all lighted by a glorious sun, and smiling as in summer. The little town of Gata lies immediately at the foot of these mountains, most romantically situated, and half-concealed by thick groves of chesnut trees, which grow there to a handsome and prodigious size, are found in great abundance, and whose chesnuts are indeed the principal food of the poorer inhabitants. The march, to a man of any mind or feeling, always presents

enjoyment, especially when it lies among mountains, those grand features of scenery, which are, throughout romantic Spain, thrown everywhere by the bold hand of nature in the richest and wildest profusion.

“ Oh ! there is sweetness in the mountain-air,
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share.”

BYRON.

My regiment lay at a small village in the neighbourhood of Coria, from November to the middle of May. When settled in our winter quarters, Lord Wellington addressed a sweeping and angry circular to the troops, reproaching them with having displayed a greater want of discipline on their retreat “ than any army with which,” said his Lordship, “ I have ever served, or of which I have ever read.” In this same circular, the men were told that they had suffered no privation which could justify the least irregularity, or account for the losses which had been sustained, and they were bitterly reproached for not cooking with the same expedition as the French soldiery. As to the first charge, I am con-

fidant that his Lordship was never made acquainted with the extent of their privations ; and for the latter, most satisfactory reasons might have been given for our comparative tardiness in preparing our food. The French soldiers mess by twos and threes, and have small kettles ; the English, at that time, had large camp-kettles of iron, one to every ten men. The French took wood of all sorts, and wherever they found it ; our orders, on this head, were properly, but particularly strict. Neither were the irregularities, though great, by any means general : there were corps, and many corps, who maintained their discipline, and whose casualties were comparatively trifling, and most satisfactorily accounted for. I believe the interior economy of British regiments, and the discipline of a British company, in a regiment well commanded, to be superior to that of any army in the world ; and sure I am, that the Duke of Wellington, who, since that period, has served with some, and seen troops of all the other armies in Europe, is now of the same opinion. The army felt all this

deeply, though they made every allowance for the severe disappointment which the failure before Burgos, and the loss of ground in the heart of Spain, must have naturally produced in the bosom of that commander through whose ability and valour, their situation in the foregoing August had been rendered so transcendantly brilliant.

Coria, the head quarters of Sir Rowland Hill throughout the winter from 1812 to 13, is a small town of about 600 houses, prettily situated on the river Alagon; has a cathedral, and is further adorned by the fine remains of a Moorish tower and castle. Wherever you move in Spain, the vestiges of these warlike Moors are to be traced. It is strange that more is not known, among us, about the state of Spain, under their dominion, for they were certainly a civilized and polished people, and introduced many arts and sciences among the natives of Spain, which, till their arrival, were unknown: they had knowledge of agriculture, skill and taste in architecture; had their learned men, poets, and men of science, and from what we know of the

costliness of their dress and arms, must have had precious and flourishing manufactures. Even as late as the beginning of the sixteenth century, a million of Moriscoes, who doubtless, if they did not retain the dress, customs, and manners of their ancestors, had many cherished traditions concerning their greatness and their history, still dwelt in Spain; yet nothing is known. I should anxiously have desired to visit those provinces in the south, which the Moors so long occupied, and where they have left behind them such noble memorials, as the Alhambra of Grenada, the Mosque of Cordova, and other magnificent ruins found south of the Sierra Morena. Cheerfully would I thus have employed my winter leisure, but a military man is spared the trouble of exercising his will in these matters. I therefore remained, like others, quiet under the roof of an honest peasant, and made myself as contented as I could. In the neighbourhood of our cantonment, the Alagon, a river, whose waters were more beautifully clear than any I ever beheld, pursued its tranquil course; behind

us rose some rocky heights, well wooded, where the walks were exceedingly pretty, and many leagues in our front, the eye might ever seek, and rest upon the stupendous mountains of Bejar, covered with eternal snow. Many as were the weeks we passed in the same small village, I never looked upon that finely formed Sierra, but with a feeling that almost repressed the wish to wander. The season too of winter is in that province mild as an English spring; our tables were well supplied with game and wine: we had books and newspapers; these last contained long details of the Russian campaign, and were therefore highly interesting. To be sure, in such a situation, a sigh for the fire-side, the evening concert, the ball, the play, the well remembered gaieties of England, will intrude; yet how many were the social evenings, how many the happy hours of rational and lively converse, which I enjoyed in that quiet village, with men, whom death, wounds, and distant service have now torn from my side.

Rapidly did time glide by till spring

again returned, and brought with it new hopes, and the prospect of another interesting campaign. Every effort had been made, during our long halt, to render the various corps efficient in discipline, field exercise, and equipment. An order of Lord Wellington's directed, that three tents per company should be carried for the men, on the bat mules, hitherto appropriated to the conveyance of the large iron camp kettles, the use of which was discontinued, and small ones substituted, to be carried by the soldiers themselves.

The twentieth of May found us again in the field, bivouacked at the foot of the Puerto de Baños, through which, a better road than that of Gata runs from Plasencia to Salamanca. The sun was shining fiercely upon our tents in the vale, while immediately above us, at an immense elevation, rose the snowy and frozen peaks of the Sierra de Bejar. The following morning we climbed the pass; the ascent commences at Baños, a small town, very poor, and in ruins, having been plundered, and half destroyed by a corps of the French

in 1809. It is famous for a remarkably fine natural hot bath, and was it not seated in so wild and rude a country, would doubtless have been much frequented by invalids. We halted, for one night, at the very top of the pass; the march down into Castile is romantic and beautiful in the extreme; below, meadows clothed with the richest verdure, watered with innumerable streams, and enclosed with hedge-rows, as in England, promise you delightful situations for encamping; and, ever as you raise your eye to the right, and above you, are majestic mountains covered with eternal snow; and at the rising and setting of the sun, all bright and varying with hues and tints of the most heavenly dye.

We traversed a very interesting country to Salamanca, where we arrived on the twenty-sixth: the enemy's rear-guard, consisting of 400 cavalry, 3000 infantry, and four guns, evacuated the town as we approached. We did not march into the city, but forded the Tormes a mile to the right of it. The French fired a few shots at our leading brigade of cavalry as it

formed after passing the river, and then rapidly retired along the Tormes towards Babila Fuente. They were pursued, cannonaded, and much pressed by our cavalry, and horse artillery, and sustained a loss of about 200 killed and wounded, and as many taken. We were, this day, in communication with the column which marched under the order of Wellington, who was himself present at the affair with the enemy's rear-guard.

There is scarcely a place in all Spain, the name of which is so familiar to our ears as Salamanca. Le Sage, in his admirable *Gil Blas*, has immortalized it, and we all feel acquainted with the students of Salamanca; but we looked for them in vain, as we walked under the handsome stone piazza of the most noble looking square in Spain. These were, indeed, filled with a motley crowd of people, but we could discern no youthful scholars in their academic habits; many thousands once studied in this university. A few, with some of the old professors, still lingered in the deserted colleges, or might be seen pacing in the