

hero, and as he passed very slowly down the line, observing the men with a keen scrutinizing look, I had the fullest opportunity for indulging my curiosity. I was much struck with his countenance ; and, in his quick-glancing eye, prominent nose, and pressed lip, saw, very distinctly marked, the ready presence of mind, and imperturbable decision of character, so essential in a leader, and by which the name of this great commander has been rendered so deservedly illustrious. I returned home after the review, passed a most cheerful evening, could talk of nothing but war and Wellington — was that night stretched on the bed of sickness, and, in a few days, lay at the very point of death. Youth, an excellent constitution, and high hopeful spirits, enabled me to rally, and in three weeks I was pronounced convalescent. The old woman of my house, who had passed many an hour, during my illness, before the small shrine of the saint that adorned her bed-room, and had put up daily prayers for the health and conversion of the young heretic, was highly delighted, and considered my recovery as a

miraculous proof of her saint's power, and a gratifying one of her own worthiness. For myself, during the whole time, I had been supported by an internal feeling of the most cheerful confidence; and anticipating both honour as a soldier, and intellectual pleasure as a traveller, in my prospective service, I was unwilling to believe that I could be cut off before I had tasted of the former, or half-satisfied my thirsting curiosity. Neither is the sick-bed of a soldier lonely or deserted. It is true, the anxious care and tender offices of a mother, and the affectionate solicitude of a sister, are wanting. Those comforts, which at home are sure to be provided for the chamber of an invalid, are wanting. Yet, here, some warm-hearted friend will smooth the pillow for your feverish head; will speak to you in the manly yet feeling language of encouragement; will procure, and often prepare for you some delicacy; and, in the dark and silent hour of evening, will sit quietly by your side, consoling you by affectionate pressures of the hand, for pain and suffering, and watching anxiously that



nothing may interrupt or scare your needful slumbers. Yes,— such a picture is not romantic ; in civil life, men have homes, parents, wives, children, brothers, sisters ; but in the profession of arms they become dependent upon friends. No where is friendship more true, more warm, more exalted, than in the army ; absence from the mother-country, privation, peril, the pursuit and attainment of honor, are so many ties which bind soul to soul, in bonds bright and indestructible. Although out of immediate danger and convalescent, it was thought prudent that I should change the air, and I was ordered, by the staff-surgeon, to Elvas. My colonel, who was also a great invalid, and was going to appear before a medical board at Badajos, took me with him. This board, consisting of physicians to the forces, now changed my destination for Lisbon ; telling me that Elvas would have proved my grave, and that the staff-surgeon was highly censurable for having so inconsiderately disposed of me. I had journeyed from Torre Major to Badajos on a bullock-car, occasionally relieving myself

by mounting a led horse of the colonel's, who rode himself by my side. From Badajos to Elvas we went in a cabriolet; and from thence I had suffered so much by the motion, both of the car and carriage, that I made an effort to proceed on horseback. The accommodation which we met with on two, out of the five nights we passed on the road, is worthy of mention.

It was rather advanced in the day when we left Elvas, proposing to sleep at Estremoz, a town about six leagues distant. From my extreme debility, however, I was unable to ride at such a pace as would have ensured the accomplishment of our journey before nightfall.

At the distance of two leagues from Estremoz, the sun set with the most threatening appearances. A sky heavily overcast; a breathless, yet speaking stillness around us; far off, amid the southern hills, a low muttering sound, that faintly reached us; all foretold a violent autumnal storm. Being both invalids, we felt not a little anxious about shelter, and spurred forward; but strength was denied me, and I fell on



the neck of my horse, nearly fainting: the colonel would not leave me, and bidding me recline on my saddle, made his groom lead my animal by the bridle. Here you may frequently travel from one town to another without passing a village, a country-house, a cottage, or indeed a human being. No clean ale-house as in England; no rustic auberge, as in France, invites you to refreshment and repose. If you are benighted, and the weather be fine, you must betake yourself to the first tree: if it be stormy, and you have no baggage or conveniences for encamping, you must wander on. Luckily, however, for us, we espied a light at some distance from the road, and made towards it. It proceeded from a solitary cottage; and a woman, who answered to our knocks, expressed her willingness to receive us. Wretched as was her appearance, I never saw more cordial, more fearless hospitality: she heaped up her little fire, killed, and stewed for us two out of the few chickens she had, spread for us two straw mattresses near the hearth, and regarded us the while with looks of the

most benevolent pleasure. Seated on a rude bench of cork, near this cottage fire, I thankfully partook of the repast she prepared; and while the thunder burst in peals the most loud and awful over our heads, and the pouring rain beat rudely on her humble dwelling, with a heartfelt sensation of gratitude I composed myself to rest.

Comfort is ever comparative; and, after all, if his wishes be moderate, how little does man require! Sick, hungry, and exhausted, I wanted shelter, food, and repose: I enjoyed all these blessings; the storm raged without, but not a raindrop fell on me. I never ate with a keener relish, I never passed a night in more sweet or refreshing slumbers. Yet where, let me ask, was the hotel in England which, in the caprice of sickness, would have satisfied all my wants and wishes? When we rose with the morning to depart, our good hostess was resolute in refusing any remuneration, though the wretched appearance of her hovel, and the rags on her children, bespoke the extreme of poverty. "No,"



said she; "the saints guided you to my threshold, and I thank them. My husband, too, was journeying yesterday, perhaps last night, amid that thunder-storm; he also knocked at some Christian's door, and found shelter."

We caught one of the children outside, and forcing some dollars into its little hands, mounted, and rode off. I shall never forget that night, or that speech; and no sermon on the charities of life could be more instructive.

At Estremos I was obliged to give up all idea of riding farther, and was borne the rest of my journey on a creaking bullock-car. We stopped for one night at a common posada, about five leagues from Aldea Gallega, the town where, in travelling down by this route, you generally embark on the Tagus, and cross to Lisbon. This posada is a building, in size and appearance not much unlike an English barn. It is very simply divided. Below is stabling for fifty or sixty mules or more; and at the farthest extremity, without any partition between it and the space allotted to the animals, is the

kitchen. Above is a large loft, with one or two corners boarded off, dignified with the name of chambers, and furnished with dirty mattresses and iron lamps. The stable was filled with mules, the kitchen with muleteers, and the loft with vermin; yet here, for want of better accommodation, were we compelled to pass the night; I need hardly add, it was a sleepless one. People of any rank or condition in life, both in Spain and Portugal, when necessitated to make journeys, always lodge in private houses, to which they gain admittance, either by regular billets, recommendations, or by hiring chambers for the night. These posadas, of which I speak, are seldom resorted to by any but muleteers; for whose accommodation, and to more equally divide the journeys of their trains, we often find them built in spots two or three leagues from any town or village.

The life of the muleteer is very hardy, and pretty much the same in all parts of the Peninsula. He is exposed to all weathers, for he is ever on the road. Each individual has the charge of three or four



mules ; and the labour of loading and unloading them daily, and foraging for them, is not trifling. The food of the muleteer is coarse ; a large dish of chick-pease, boiled with a morsel of pork ; a sausage, or some dry salt fish, fried in strong oil, are his most common and favourite dishes. He drinks more than the Spanish peasant, and generally carries a large leathern bottle or bag, filled with wine. He never undresses at night, but sleeps either in the stable with his mules, or on the floor of the kitchen ; indeed, in the summer, more generally in the open air, for he often bivouacks. In all places, a pack-saddle is his pillow, and a mule-cloth his coverlet. He is an honest, good-tempered, cheerful creature, and you almost always hear him singing on the road. A train of mules is seldom less than fifty ; but it is not uncommon to meet two or three trains, or more, travelling the same road, and laden with the same merchandize. Each train has its captain or leader, who is invariably a trust-worthy man of the best character.

Two days after my arrival in Lisbon, I

suffered a severe relapse, and was for six weeks confined to my bed, during one of which my life was altogether despaired of. To nature, and a most careful attendant, I was indebted for that favourable change, which medicine had in vain laboured to produce. This attendant, a valuable private servant of my colonel's, was placed over me by him, with orders never to leave me till I died or recovered: though himself a delicate invalid, he had resigned what he most wanted to my service. Such kindness I can never forget; and life, preserved to me by such generous friendship, became an increased blessing.

To feel yourself daily regaining health and strength is, under all circumstances, delightful. At Lisbon, the period of my convalescence glided away with the most pleasing rapidity. I dined daily in a most agreeable society; I passed my mornings in studying the Portuguese and Spanish languages; and oftentimes, of an evening, muffled up as an invalid, I stole, in a cabriolet, to the theatre of San Carlos, or to the Opera Buffa, and enjoyed the sweet music of Portugallo, and



the pleasing voices and admirable acting of Vaccani and Scarameli.

Lisbon too, at the beginning of the year 1810, independent of its usual gaiety as a metropolis and a large commercial city, presented a novel and interesting spectacle. The note of preparation had already sounded, and it was well known that the invasion of Portugal, a measure long and avowedly contemplated by France, could not be far distant. The French armies, victorious in the field of Ocaña, had burst through the vaunted defiles of the Sierra Morena, entered Seville, Cordova, Jaen, and Grenada, without resistance, and two corps were actually blockading Cadiz, the last and only refuge of the patriot government. The most active operations were carrying on in Catalonia by Suchet ; and troops from the corps of Ney, then stationed between the Tormes and the Douro, were marched against Leon and Asturias, with a view to the complete and secure reduction of those important provinces. It was plain, however, that though the armies of France, aided by skill, courage, and discipline, could

march triumphantly from the Pyrenees to the Pillars of Hercules ; and though they held the capital for the Usurper, and overawed both the Castiles ; still it was plain, that they could never hope effectually to subdue Spain, or even to retain possession of it, until they had subjugated Portugal, and driven out British soldiers from her camps, and British influence from her cabinet. The clouds were already gathering, and the storm was distinctly foretold ; submitting themselves to the able guidance, and prudent counsels of their faithful, and more experienced allies, the Portuguese manfully girded their loins for the contest, and resolved bravely to abide the issue of a struggle. The discipline of their army was daily improving. The uncommon exertions of Marshal Beresford, and the British officers under him, were rewarded by the praises of all who witnessed the miraculous change in the appearance, movement, and general conduct of the soldiers committed to their charge. The old, incorrigibly indolent, and useless Portuguese officers were



placed on the retired list, and their commissions were given to young men, full of zeal, willing to learn, and able to discharge the active duties required of them. The streets of Lisbon glittered with uniforms; the shop-windows of all the embroiderers furnished a grand display of military ornaments. The magazines of the gun-smiths and the sword-cutlers were constantly filled with customers: even the peaceful merchants formed themselves into corps, and volunteered to perform the duties of the garrison. These corps, both horse and foot, were most handsomely clothed and appointed; their cavalry wore hussar jackets of brown, covered with gold lace, and were, generally speaking, well mounted. The commercial regiment of infantry furnished a grand guard, daily, near the exchange. I often attended the parading and mounting of their duties, all which was conducted in the most orderly and soldier-like manner. Their band was excellent; it was composed entirely of professed musicians, and they were all masters of the instruments on

which they performed. I have had the good fortune to hear many very fine bands; never any, however, superior to this.

There were, as may be supposed, in the ranks of these commercial corps, many awkward and uncouth figures; but any disposition to smile at them was immediately repressed by the reflection that they might, perhaps, in the hour of approaching peril, be called upon to prove the sincerity of their patriotism, and the nature of their respect for those sacred obligations, which a voluntary drawing of the sword had imposed on them.

About the close of the month of March, being perfectly restored to health, I rejoined my regiment. The corps of General Hill, to which it was attached, lay at this time distributed in cantonments in the province of Alemtejo. The General's head-quarters were established at Portalegre, in which city two brigades and a half of the second division of infantry were quartered. My regiment lay detached in Alegrete, a small town, most romantically situated, in a wild and picturesque country, about three leagues



from Portalegre, in the direction of Albuquerque. My journey to the army had quite the character of an excursion for pleasure. We had a small agreeable party, all convalescents from sickness ; and having benefited a little by experience, we carried with us many little comforts and conveniences we had the last year neglected or despised. We proceeded up the Tagus by water to Abrantes, sleeping every night in some town or village on the banks of the river ; and, from Abrantes, we, in four days, reached our destination. The soft season of the year, the mild balmy air, the rich verdure, and the various fruit-trees, clothed in their beauteous blossoms, all contributed to beguile any sense of fatigue ; and I seemed, on the day of my arrival, to have made no exertion since I left Lisbon.

Alas ! when I came again to stand on the parade, for how many a face did my eye inquire in vain : — in the space of four short months, my regiment had buried nearly three hundred men, all in the prime of life, and vigour of their manhood. They had all fallen victims to the sickly season, in

Spanish Estremadura. The officers of the army had not suffered in proportion to the men, as they were enabled to live more generously; for, at that time, wine and spirits were never issued regularly to the soldiers; and the wine, which was occasionally procured for them, was very indifferent. There was, moreover, a very great scarcity of bark in the regimental hospitals, and numbers perished for the want of it. Some powerful reason of a political or military nature, doubtless, caused Lord Wellington to occupy and maintain a position, which proved so cruelly fatal to the health and efficiency of his small army.

April, May, and June we remained stationary: once, indeed, we broke up, and bivouacked for a couple of nights about two leagues in advance, in consequence of some slight demonstration made by a moveable column belonging to the corps d'armée of Regnier, then commanding in Spanish Estremadura, but, the enemy retiring, we returned to our tranquil quarters. There is not a rock, a mountain, a stream, an orange garden, a chapel, a shrine, or a cross near



Alegrete, but I know and recollect, and can recall them all. At this very moment that I am writing, at the distance of nearly seven years, I can summon before me the fort, the church, the square, the old priest, the peasants, their wives, their children. We had become quite domesticated among them; they liked our men, and they were both kind and respectful to the officers. Fond of passing my mornings alone, each day I took my solitary ride or ramble; a practice I think delightful; and which, I find, makes me doubly enjoy society and conversation in the evening.

How strongly does the mind attach itself to any spot, where it has daily resorted to give fancy the rein, and suffered her to range undisturbed through the paths of her own fair creation. The trees and shrubs are as tender-hearted friends, who have become acquainted with your weakness, but care not to expose it. In one of my walks here, after wandering along the rude and pathless banks of a clear mountain stream, which now leaped, now run, now rippled, now smoothly flowed along its ever-varying



bed, I arrived at a small romantic chapel, such a one as you often find in the Peninsula, a league or more from any human habitation. In the shade, near the door, I observed a small basket, apparently filled only with the most beautiful flowers; I approached to take one; — when stooping, I beheld a lovely infant about a year old; it was dressed prettily and tastefully; though pale, I thought it slept, for its paleness did not appear as of death; it was, however, cold and lifeless, yet it had nothing of the corpse, nothing of the grave about it. I kissed its delicate fair face, and thought, not without a sigh, on its parents. A voice startled me, and turning, I beheld a decent-looking peasant woman, with an old man, and two or three children from ten to fifteen years of age. — “Are you the mother of this babe?” said I; “Yes, Senhor.” “I pity you from my heart.” — “How so, Senhor? To have borne and buried a Christian, without sin, I look on as a blessing, and I praise the Holy Virgin that she has vouchsafed to take him to herself.” — I gazed earnestly at the woman. Was this