

were large and beautiful; a most transparent brook of sweet water ran past our lines; and the men were hutted with great comfort, neatness, and regularity. Our general occupied a small chapel by the road side, the only building near us; and peasants from the distance of two or three leagues, hearing that our discipline was strict, and that we paid liberally for every thing, soon established a market in our camp, and brought us constant supplies of bread, milk, eggs, poultry, honey, and excellent country wine. He who has fed on coarse ration beef and hard biscuit, and that for two or three weeks at a time, will express no surprise at my noticing these trifles; and he who has never served, may smile at the mention of them, provided he does so with good humour, and ends by excusing me.

While we remained here an affair of cavalry took place in front of us, in which some of our 13th light dragoons captured a foraging party of the enemy. The prisoners were marched past our ground to headquarters. I had never as yet, though up-

wards of a year in the country, seen a French soldier; and I walked out alone to meet the escort. I know not how it was, but I had certainly connected very strange ideas with the appearance of the French soldiery. What I expected to see I cannot at all define; not, certainly, men of fair, fresh complexions, tall, well made, and handsome. Such, however, were the prisoners: they were chasseurs, about sixty in number, clothed in neat green uniforms, with very becoming forage-caps. Some of them seemed cast down and depressed, a few irritated and indignant; but the greater part gazed around them with fearless and careless curiosity, while their laughing blue eyes certainly indicated any thing rather than cruelty. It is true these men were very few of them natives of France; but although Germans, they were soldiers of the French army—marched with it, fought with it, and were enemies whom we often encountered. Much of Napoleon's cavalry was composed of Germans; and the very numbered regiments of France, of all arms,

contained Italians, Belgians, Dutch, and other foreigners.* They were, therefore, samples of the foe with whom we were to contend. Among them, indeed, was one man, whose horrible and ferocious countenance I shall never forget. He was of the middle size, stout, and muscular; the hair of his head and his immense mustachios were perfectly white, his face pale, his eyes small and somewhat red, and the expression of his look was at once unnatural and pitiless. His fellow-soldiers seemed to shun him; and on my questioning them, I found that he was a native of some province dependant upon Austria. His language, they said, was hardly intelligible to them: he was quite a savage, they added; but a

* Though the detachment here named was composed of Germans, I must say from subsequent experience, that I have never seen finer men than among the native troops of France. We certainly have, in England, strange prejudices even about the personal appearance of Frenchmen; nor are they at all confined to the lowest classes; few Englishmen of education are at all prepared, when they first cross the channel, for the sight of such fine, athletic, well-formed men, as are often to be met with in France.

brave one, and good food for powder. I shuddered at the very thought that such a man should be a soldier. To such a wretch, thought I, the weeping female would kneel in vain : the smile of the helpless babe, the groan of the wounded warrior, would never stay that uplifted arm. He was the only individual of the party wounded, for there had been little, if any resistance ; but such a man was to be disabled, before he could be disarmed.

On the second of September, our battalion returned to Sazedas ; on the twelfth we broke up, and marched upon Sobreira Formosa, where we halted for five days. Though the face of the country was mountainous, the weather was oppressively hot : we were, however, protected by spreading horse-chesnuts, the finest, I think, I ever saw.

A Portuguese division was encamped here, very near us : at their evening parade, I walked down their line. The time seemed fast approaching, when we might probably fight side by side ; and, on their efficiency, the possibility of prolonging the glorious

struggle in the Peninsula, would very greatly depend. The grenadiers of the brigade of Algarve particularly attracted my notice: they were all fine-sized, soldier-like men; and their brown complexions, black mustachios, and large dark eyes, gave them a truly martial appearance. I here, for the first time, heard them sing their evening hymn: the companies were formed in circles round their officers at sunset, and chaunted forth this their evening service in a strain which was, to me, alike novel, solemn, and pleasing. On the morning of the seventeenth, we were again put in motion, and marched rapidly to the Mondego, on the southern bank of which, somewhere near the Ponte de Murcella, we halted. In our route we crossed the Zezere, near Villa del Rey; our bivouack near which town was wretched in the extreme. It rained in torrents, and the tent was hardly any protection: thunder too, and lightning, which frightened our cattle, and a high wind beating against our canvass, completed our misery. And yet with a mind amused and spirits elated we suffer

little, and these discomforts are felt as nothing. I well recollect my companion mulled some wine for me, and I afterwards crept under my blankets, and throwing an oil-cloth over me, contrived to forget the tempest and its miseries, in a very sound and uninterrupted sleep. With the sun I rose; and what a change to reward us! The morning was heavenly, the weather mild, the trees and fields all glittering with rain-drops, and the face of nature looked gay and refreshed. Our march for the first two leagues, after fording the Zezere, lay through a very pretty country, well cultivated, with many neat-looking cottages and vineyards, all blushing with fruit. As we passed along, the peasants brought out wine and peaches, plums and grapes, selling cheaply to the officers, and giving fruit generously to many of the men for nothing. We encamped near some fine plantations of fir on that night, and made large and most brilliant fires: the next evening, just as we had halted and began cooking, we received orders to march forward again in an hour, and continued in motion the whole night,

over very bad roads, which greatly delayed the guns, and rendered our march a slow and fatiguing one.

Our men had received lately rather a short allowance of bread; and although they were all gaiety and good humour, this forced march a little tired them. I shall never forget the speech of one of our men to his comrade, as they toiled on stumbling in the dark just before me, and it certainly does describe a soldier's share of campaigning very wittily: "Bill," said he, "the parliament and the great men at home, they do know all about the movements of the army and the grandè lord, but they don't know any thing about indivijals (individuals); for instance, now, they don't know that you are damned tired, and that I hae got no pong"* (paõ). There is more in such a speech than at first strikes upon the ear, and the man of reflection might philosophise on it with advantage.

We took up our ground near a small vil-

* "Paõ," — in Portuguese, "bread." The English soldiers vulgarly pronounced it "pong."

lage behind the Sierra de Murcella, on the twenty-third, and remained three days stationary; our picquets occupying posts on the very crests of those stupendous mountains, and overlooking an immense and beautiful tract of country to the north-east. I was twenty-four hours at one of these posts. Unless the elevation of a mountain is so considerable, as to enable you to look down upon the country below you, as upon a map drawn by nature, I confess I am no great admirer of what are termed open and extensive prospects: the eye is strained and fatigued, and the fancy never much delighted. But here, to look down upon the winding course of the calm and tranquil Mondego, and to watch the romantic Alva hurrying gladly along to pour its tributary waters into her peaceful bosom, was a scene beautiful, as rare. Could a day pass heavily where the eye might rest on such a landscape? impossible! — Nor is a night on outline picquet without its charms: when all around, or near you is hushed and silent; when no sound meets the ear, but the soft foot-fall of your watchful sentries,

— the mind, rejoicing in its freedom, and undiverted by any outward objects, looks in upon itself with grateful rapture. All is still, yet you seem to listen to many a well-known voice ; all is dark, yet the features of the absent, whom you love, beam brightly upon you, and happy and distant scenes rise busily before you, and gild these lonely hours with pleasures the most enviable, and the most refined.

On the twenty-sixth we again moved, and fording the Mondego, climbed the lofty Sierra de Buzaco ; and found ourselves on the right of Wellington's army, and in order of battle. Our position extended nearly eight miles along this mountainous and rocky ridge, and the ground on which we formed inclining with a slope to our own rear, most admirably concealed both the disposition and the numbers of our force. My regiment had no sooner piled arms, than I walked to the verge of the mountain on which we lay, in the hope that I might discover something of the enemy. Little, however, was I prepared for the magnificent scene which burst on my asto-

nished sight. Far as the eye could stretch, the glittering of steel, and clouds of dust raised by cavalry and artillery, proclaimed the march of a countless army; while, immediately below me, at the feet of those precipitous heights on which I stood, their picquets were already posted; thousands of them were already halted in their bivouacks, and column too after column, arriving in quick succession, reposed upon the ground allotted to them, and swelled the black and enormous masses. The numbers of the enemy were, at the lowest calculation, seventy-five thousand, and this host formed in three distinct and heavy columns; while to the rear of their left, at a more considerable distance, you might see a large encampment of their cavalry, and the whole country behind them seemed covered with their train, their ambulance, and their commissariat. This, then, was a French army: here lay, before me, the men who had once, for nearly two years, kept the whole coast of England in alarm; who had conquered Italy, overrun Austria, shouted victory on the plains of Austerlitz, and humbled, in

one day, the power, the pride, and the martial renown of Prussia, on the field of Jena. To-morrow, methought, I may, for the first time, hear the din of battle, behold the work of slaughter, share the honours of a hard-fought field, or be numbered with the slain. I returned slowly to the line; and, after an evening passed in very interesting and animated conversation, though we had neither baggage nor fires, we lay down, rolled in our cloaks, and with the stony surface of the mountain for our bed, and the sky for our canopy, slept or thought away the night. Two hours before break of day, the line was under arms; but the two hours glided by rapidly and silently. At last, just as the day dawned, a few distant shots were heard on our left, and were soon followed by the discharge of cannon and the quick, heavy, and continued roll of musquetry. We received orders to move, and support the troops attacked: the whole of Hill's corps, amounting to fourteen thousand men, was thrown into open column, and moved to its left in steady double quick, and in the highest order.

When within about a furlong of one of the points of attack, from which the enemy was just then driven by the seventy-fourth regiment, I cast my eye back to see if I could discover the rear of our divisions: eleven thousand men were following; all in sight, all in open column, all rapidly advancing in double quick time. No one, but a soldier, can picture to himself such a sight; and it is, even for him, a rare and a grand one. It certainly must have had a very strong effect on such of the enemy as, from the summit of the ridge, which they had most intrepidly ascended, beheld it, and who, ignorant of Hill's presence, thought they had been attacking the extreme of the British right. We were halted exactly in rear of that spot, from which the seventy-fourth regiment, having just repulsed a column, was retiring in line, with the most beautiful regularity, its colours all torn with shot. Here a few shells flew harmlessly over our line, but we had not the honour of being engaged. The first wounded man I ever beheld in the field was carried past me, at this moment; he was a fine young

Englishman, in the Portuguese service, and lay helplessly in a blanket, with both his legs shattered by cannon-shot. He looked pale, and big drops of perspiration stood on his manly forehead; but he spoke not — his agony appeared unutterable. I secretly wished him death; a mercy, I believe, that was not very long withheld. About this time, Lord Wellington, with a numerous staff, galloped up, and delivered his orders to General Hill, immediately in front of our corps; I therefore distinctly overheard him. "If they attempt this point again, Hill, you will give them a volley, and charge bayonets; but don't let your people follow them too far down the hill." I was particularly struck with the style of this order, so decided, so manly, and breathing *no doubt* as to the repulse of any attack; it confirmed confidence. Lord Wellington's simplicity of manner in the delivery of orders, and in command, is quite that of an able man. He has nothing of the truncheon about him; nothing full-mouthed, important, or fussy: his orders, on the field, are all short, quick, clear, and to the purpose.

The French, however, never moved us throughout the day; their two desperate assaults had been successfully repelled, and their loss, as compared to ours, exceedingly severe. From the ridge, in front of our present ground, we could see them far better than the evening before; arms, appointments, uniforms, were all distinguishable. They occupied themselves in removing their wounded from the foot of our position; but as none of their troops broke up, it was generally concluded that they would renew their attacks on the morrow. In the course of the day, our men went down to a small brook, which flowed between the opposing armies, for water; and French and English soldiers might be seen drinking out of the same narrow stream, and even leaning over to shake hands with each other. One private of my own regiment, actually exchanged forage-caps with a soldier of the enemy, as a token of regard and good-will. Such courtesies, if they do not disguise, at least soften the horrid features of war; and it is thus we learn to reconcile our minds to scenes of blood and carnage.

Towards sun-set, our picquets were sent down the hill, and I plainly saw them posted among the corpses of those who had fallen in the morning. Nothing, however, immediately near us, presented the idea of recent slaughter; for the loss, on our side, was so partial, and considering the extent of our line, so trifling, that there was little, if any, vestige of it; not so the enemy's; but as they suffered principally on their retreat down the hill, their slain lay towards the bottom of it; from whence, indeed, they had been removing their wounded.

The view of the enemy's camp by night far exceeded, in grandeur, its imposing aspect by day. Innumerable and brilliant fires illuminated all the country spread below us: while they yet flamed brightly, the shadowy figures of men and horses, and the glittering piles of arms, were all visible. Here and there, indeed, the view was interrupted by a few dark patches of black fir, which, by a gloomy contrast, heightened the effect of the picture: but, long after the flames expired, the red embers still emitted the most rich and glowing rays, and seemed,

like stars, to gem the dark bosom of the earth, conveying the sublime ideas of a firmament spread beneath our feet. It was long before I could tear myself from the contemplation of this scene. Earnestly did I gaze on it; deeply did it impress me; and my professional life may never, perhaps, again present to me any military spectacle more truly magnificent. Every one was fully persuaded that the morning would bring with it a general and bloody engagement. Our line was in a constant state of preparation: the men lay, with their accoutrements on, in a regular column of companies, front and rear ranks head to head, and every man's firelock by his side. As early as three o'clock we were roused, and stood to arms, at our posts. In a sort of gorge, between two of those rude misshapen ridges of rock which rise on the Sierras, my regiment was stationed, with another battalion. This gorge was considered one of the most vulnerable points of the whole line; and it was thought that the main efforts of the enemy would be directed against it. At about half past four, the

picquets sent word that the enemy was getting under arms: the picquets were immediately and silently withdrawn, and one staff-officer remained on the look-out. About five, he came quickly up: and, as he passed the commander of our line, said, "Be prepared, sir; they are certainly coming on. A very heavy column has just advanced to the foot of the position, and you may expect an attack every moment." My bosom beat quick, very quick; it was possible, that the few minutes of my existence were already numbered. Such a thought, however, though it will, it must, arise, in the first awful moment of expectation, to the mind of him who has never been engaged, is not either dangerous or despicable, and will rather strengthen than stagger the resolution of a manly heart. And now, thought I, as the first note of an enemy's trumpet struck my ear, — now they come: but no; it ceased, that thrilling sound, and proved only a parley, with a flag of truce, to deliver some trifling message. The sun shone forth, but not on a field of blood; the French columns returned to their ground,

and appeared, throughout the day, to busy themselves in hutting: towards evening some of them were seen moving, and, at midnight, it was ascertained, that they were all in motion, to turn our right. We now immediately broke up, and descending from our formidable position, recrossed the Mondego, and our corps of the army marched on San Miguel. We all naturally felt the deepest disappointment at having thus marched and toiled, without that sweet reward for which youth and ambition always sigh; many months, however, were yet to elapse before the valued privilege of discharging the important, perilous duties of our profession, was yet to be accorded to us. But, as a lesson in the art of war, none, perhaps, was ever more instructive and interesting than this memorable campaign. Our army, inferior both in numbers and composition to that opposed to us, could only hope for success from the prudent measures, and able guidance, of a wise and valiant general.

From the moment that Almeida fell, the dispositions and movements of Wellington