

hands 3 generals and 1600 prisoners, with much stores of all descriptions.

On the evening of the 12th an express arrived from Paris, to inform lord Wellington of the peace; marshal Soult would not believe it, but he agreed to a cessation of hostilities. We were now encamped at the outside of the town, where we remained for a few days. When advancing about three leagues, we met count Gazon on his way to Toulouse, on a mission from the government, and it was now that we got full confirmation of the joyful news—each heart beat light at the intelligence, but we could scarcely dare to believe it, we had been so often deceived, that we thought it too good news to be true—nothing, however, was now talked of but home.

We were quartered in Le Mas, a short distance from Toulouse, where we remained until the order came for us to march to Blanchefort, situated in one of the sandy plains of the Landes. The land was incapable of cultivation, but they fed numerous flocks of sheep on it, and the shepherds were mounted on huge

stilts to enable them to see for some distance around. The whole army being collected here, the different individuals who had formerly been acquainted, had an opportunity of seeing each other, and our meeting was the happier that we could now congratulate each other on the return of peace.

In marching from Toulouse to this place, we parted with the Portuguese army at Condom. They were then well regulated and well disciplined troops; the English mode of discipline had been introduced among them for some time, a number of English officers were attached to them, and acting always in concert with us, they were now little inferior to ourselves; a kind of friendship had thus arisen between us, and caused us to feel sorry at parting. On the morning that this happened, they were ranged upon the street, and saluted as we passed, and the hearty "vivas" and exclamations of regret, evinced that they really felt; but a scene of a more affecting nature took place in the Portuguese and Spanish women parting

with the men of our army, to whom they had attached themselves during the miserable state of their country. The generality of them were not married, but the steady affection and patient endurance of hardship which they exhibited, in following those to whom they belonged, would have done credit to a more legal tie. Being here ordered to return to their own country with the Portuguese army, and strict orders given to prevent any of them from proceeding farther, the scene which ensued was distressing. The poor creatures running about concealing themselves, in the vain hope of being allowed to remain, but it was all to no purpose, although they were willing to have sacrificed country and relations to follow us, the sacrifice could not be accepted.

From Blanchefort camp we proceeded to Pauilhac, from whence, in a few days, we embarked in small vessels, which took us down to the Corduan light house, where we were put on board the San Domingo, 74, and after a pleasant

passage arrived at the Cove of Cork, where we disembarked.

Our regiment was nearly 900 hundred strong when we first went out to the Peninsula. During the time we remained there, we received at various times recruits to the amount of 400, and when we left the country our strength was about 250, out of which number, not more than 150 remained who went out with the regiment.

CONCLUSION.

I have thus endeavoured as far as my recollection served me, to give a simple and faithful recital of those scenes in which I was myself an actor, without partiality to any class. Some may think I have been too severe on the officers, but I am well convinced that I have only dared to tell the truth, and scarcely the whole truth. There were three classes of officers in the army—the first was the gentleman in education and manners, who chose it as a profession—the other was

composed of the profligate sons of rich families—and the third needy adventurers, who had, by servility and fawning, gained some great man's interest, and thereby procured a commission—others by means even more equivocal. The first of these, as may be imagined, were the best officers. The lower grades of rank, although not exactly distributed in the same manner, were too often bestowed on the petty tyrant, the fawning tale-bearer, and another class more dishonourable than either, those who winked at the prostitution of their wives to superior officers.

It must be regretted that there is not some general and more equitable mode of distributing promotion in the army, or more opening left for ability and zeal. This is not exclusively confined to those who hold commissions; but he must be a lucky fellow indeed who rises from the ranks to be a commissioned officer by superior merit; and the individual who does, has an aristocratic feeling to contend with, which must render his situation very uneasy, as if he who

is promoted through his own merit, is inferior to those who have procured a commission without having seen service. I think it would be well for the army was every officer to serve as a cadet for a certain time, before he receives a commission. It is a great error to thrust a parcel of spoiled children into the army, without any previous knowledge of the profession, to take the command of veterans who have been employed, (though in a humble capacity) in every sort of service. It must gall such men to be subject to the caprice and insolence of those for whose knowledge and ability they must feel the utmost contempt. What confidence can they place in such officers in the field—and among the numerous wise regulations which have been lately introduced into the service, it is rather remarkable that some provision has not been made for giving deserving non-commissioned officers a thorough knowledge of the higher duties of the profession, that in the event of their being promoted, they might be able to perform these duties

with honour to their country, and credit to themselves. In addition to the other branches taught in regimental schools, might not drawing, fortification, &c. be introduced, and a class of men, formed of those who excelled in the qualities essentially necessary for command, from which promotion might be given. And would it not be an improvement to make all who purchase, or otherwise procure commissions, without having a previous knowledge of the service, *practically* acquainted with the duties of the different inferior ranks, before they assumed command as officers: those who served under them would then feel more respect for their character, and I am sure both parties would be benefited by the practice.

While in the Peninsula we were very irregularly supplied with rations, whether this proceeded from the neglect of the commissaries in all cases, I will not pretend to say, but I am very sure that it was often the cause; and I am also aware, that in no department of the service did there exist a grosser system of

peculation than in this, particularly amongst the store-keepers and muleteers, each serving themselves, and their hangers on, and deteriorating the various articles of provision, to make up for their deficiencies; so that by the time it was served out to the poor soldier, it did not equal half the allowance granted by government; and the rations we wanted, (which were not inconsiderable) were never refunded, although their value was retained. It is possible a satisfactory explanation *might* be given, but we never received any; and I remember it caused much dissatisfaction at the time.

I have been thus particular in pointing out any thing that I considered wrong, in the service to which I have been attached, since the early age of fourteen years, from the best wishes towards it; and, although I believe that there are many things that require amendment, I am at the same time aware, that much has been done, and is still doing to rectify them.

In detailing the events which took

place during the Peninsular campaigns, I have so far altered the plan I laid down at first setting out, as to give a sketch of the operations of the army at large, for the purpose of keeping the narrative unbroken; for this I have been indebted to the dispatches, or other information I could glean concerning them.

In bringing my narrative to a conclusion, it may be necessary to premise, as an apology for the errors of style or subject which may attract the notice of those who read it, that it is my first essay in writing, and has been written without premeditation, rather to amuse an idle hour, than that it should appear before the public; it was composed under various influences of feeling, often in the midst of noise and bustle; and circumstances incident to my situation prevented the greater part of it from being revised.

I was so far fortunate as to escape amidst the dangers by which I was surrounded, but I often doubt whether I have any reason to congratulate myself

on that account. Had it been my lot to fall, I would at least have been saved much bitter disappointment, and have died with a better opinion of the world than I now have led astray by a heated and unbridled imagination, I wove a thousand charms around every thing which attracted my fancy, and discarding sober calculation and reason, as only adapted for men of narrow minds, I dreamed of honour and success, which I took the wrong method to attain, and formed romantic schemes of generosity of character, which the world soon taught me were impracticable. When I look back to the state of my feelings at that time, and contrast it with what I now feel, I cannot help regretting that I was ever undeceived.

“ 'Tis not on Youth's smooth cheek alone,

“ The blush which fades so fast—

“ But the tender bloom of heart is gone,

“ Ere Youth itself be past.”

If I dreamed my early life away in fantastic visions, I am now doomed to sad reality, and the conviction that that

dreaming spirit was the cause of all my subsequent misfortunes. My errors are now irretrievable, but I hope others may be warned by them, and not allow themselves to be attracted by gaudy colours to the pursuit of a soap bubble, which bursts, and vanishes in the attempt to grasp it.

If the relation which I have given of my own follies serves to deter others who are entering on the same career, from running a similar course, it will not have been written in vain: a few more years experience will teach them
“ THAT PRUDENT, CAUTIOUS SELF-CONTROL, IS WISDOM’S ROOT.”

FINIS.

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 TROL, IS WISDOM'S ROOT."

RIVIS





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