

in the camp, and from their language she would be able to learn whether they were our troops or the enemy. She then ascended the hill that she considered the most likely to be the encampment of our troops, leaving poor P. sitting beside the half-drowned animal, to whose name he was inclined to think the transactions of that night gave him some claim. After waiting a considerable time in anxious suspense, he was beginning to forget his selfish considerations, in concern for the safety of the poor woman who had thus ventured on a forlorn hope, when his attention was attracted by some one descending the hill waving a light backwards and forwards, and shouting at the same time; having answered the signal, the woman soon made her appearance, with a Portuguese soldier whose division was encamped on the hill which she ascended, and they now learned that those on the opposite hill were the French. Having succeeded in raising the half-perished buro—the Portuguese lifted the baggage on his back, and the others half dragging,



half carrying the animal, they reached the top of the hill, but still no information could be got of the division. Considering it of no use to proceed farther, they seated themselves by a fire, but they had scarcely done so, when it came on a heavy shower of rain which drench them to the skin—there was no remedy however but patience. Next morning at daylight they again took the road, but they were now more fortunate, for falling in with some of the baggage they had parted with the preceding night, they reached the division by the time we had encamped.

During our campaigns in the Peninsula, it is almost incredible what the poor women who followed us had to endure, marching often in a state of pregnancy, and frequently bearing their children in the open air, in some instances, on the line of march by the road side; suffering, at the same time, all the privation to which the army was liable. In quarters, on the other hand, they were assailed by every temptation which could be thrown in their way, and every

scheme laid by those who had rank and money, to rob them of that virtue which was all they had left to congratulate themselves upon. Was it to be wondered at, then, if many of them were led astray, particularly when it is considered that their starving condition was often taken advantage of by those who had it in their power to supply them; but who were villains enough to make their chastity the price.

From this encampment we advanced to Ustaritz, where we remained until the 9th of December, when we crossed the Nive. At the point we passed, we met with little or no opposition, but some of the army were warmly engaged. We then took up our quarters in Hasparin. The day that we entered this village, one of our men cut off his right hand, under circumstances that may be worth relating.

For some time previous to this he had been low in spirits, troubled with what some people call religious melancholy, but which, at that time, was no very prevalent disease in the army. He

scarcely ever spoke to any one, and was in the habit of wandering out from the encampment, with his bible in his pocket, and seating himself in some place where he was not likely to be disturbed, he would sit for hours poring over it. While in Ustaritz, he conceived some ill will against the landlord of the house where he was quartered, and very unceremoniously knocked him down. Being confined for this offence, he remained a prisoner when we entered Hasparin. On the guard being placed in a house, he sat down, and having taken out his bible, he commenced in his usual way to read it. But suddenly rising, he laid the book down, and going over to a man who was breaking wood with a hatchet, he asked the loan of it for a few minutes. When the man gave it to him, he walked very deliberately into an inner apartment, and placing his right hand on the sill of the window, he severed it at the wrist. The first two strokes that he made, did not finish the business, and he had nerve enough not only to repeat it a third time, but afterwards to

wrench the lacerated integuments asunder, and threw the hand into the court below. He had been observed by some of the men in a window opposite, but too late to prevent the deed.

I assisted in leading him to the assistant surgeon's quarters, where the stump was dressed in a manner which I shall describe, and leave to the profession either to praise or censure, as they may feel inclined. The bone had been rather splintered than cut, and its sharp point protruded about two inches beyond the mangled integuments. Having prepared his apparatus, he placed the patient on a seat, and after half an hour's poking with a tenaculum, he succeeded in taking up and tying the two principal arteries. He then nipt off the rough angles at the point of the bone, and forcing down the retracted integuments by straps of adhesive plaster, under which he had introduced some dry lint, he rolled the whole up with a bandage, and left him, congratulating himself, no doubt, on his dexterity.

The man on being questioned as to his motive in thus mutilating himself, replied, "That he had only done what the Lord commanded, in a passage he had been reading—'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee, &c.'" which injunction he had literally fulfilled, as his right hand offended him by knocking down his landlord. This was the only reason he ever assigned. As he went to the rear some time after, and did not join the regiment again, I had never an opportunity of learning whether this *skillful* operation proved successful.

From the village of Hasparin we were removed about a mile, to the deserted palace of some Gascon nobleman, where we were quartered until the 6th of January, when we advanced and drove in the enemy's outposts; but returning on the 7th, we did not again move until the middle of February.

While in Hasparin the weather was bad, and we were much harassed, marching a distance of two or three miles every morning to the alarm post

two hours before daylight, and remaining there until it appeared. The inhabitants of the province we were now in, were different in dress and manners, from both Spaniards and French, but their language, (Patois) seemed to our ears, harsh and discordant. The round bonnets of the men, and the dress and healthy look of the women, was much similar to the Scottish peasantry.

I am not certain whether it was here or in Ustaritz, the latter, I believe, that we had two men of the division executed; one hung for robbing an officer's portmanteau, and another shot for presenting his empty piece at a sergeant of the mounted police corps, who acted as assistants to the provosts martial, and had been attached to the army since the commencement of the last campaign. Every one thought he would be pardoned, or at least his sentence commuted, as it was said that there was some unnecessary provocation given by the sergeant; but mercy was not extended to him. We were often inclined to

think that the provosts martial were possessed of more power than they ought to have had, particularly as they were generally men of a description who abused it, and were guided more by caprice and personal pique, than any regard to justice. I have known the provost martial of our division to flog a sergeant of unexceptionable character, who was on his guard, because he thought the sergeant did not pay him sufficient honour, which could scarcely be expected, considering that a provost martial is common executioner of the army. The sergeant felt himself aggrieved, and applied for redress, but he received none. In fact, they seemed to be above all control, doing what they pleased, without being brought to any account; and were often greater robbers than the men they punished.

After leaving this place, we came up with the French on the 23d of February, near the village of Sauveterre; a river ran between us and the town, over which there was a bridge that they had placed in a state of defence, their army occupy-

ing the opposite bank. On the morning of the 24th, our brigade were ordered some way down from the bridge, for the purpose of crossing a ford near a mill; our light companies, covered by a party of the 7th hussars, first took the river, in a particular part of which there was a strong current, caused by the mill stream; this, together with the large round stones that formed the bottom, caused some difficulty in getting across, but they effected it, and advancing up the bank through a narrow lane, lined a wall on the top of the height; the cavalry then returned, and the right of the brigade had crossed the river, when the enemy having detached a strong force to oppose our progress, drove in the light troops so precipitately, that in retreating through the lane already mentioned, they were wedged in so closely that they could not move; a number then struck off to the right, and attempted to swim the river, but being carried away with the current, many of them were drowned; of those who crossed at the ford many were wounded in the

river, and losing their footing sunk to rise no more. The French had by this time come close down on them, and none would have escaped being killed or taken prisoners, had not a brigade of guns been brought down to the edge of the river, and by a heavy fire of grape covered the retreat. On recrossing, the brigade withdrew under cover of some houses, and on the 25th the division crossed the river on a bridge of boats, the enemy having blown up the stone bridge, and retreated.

In the affair of the 24th a great number of our men were taken prisoners, exclusive of the killed and wounded. On the 27th, we came up with the enemy again at Orthes, where their whole army had taken up a position, their left resting on the village and heights of Orthes, the right extending to that of St. Boes. The right of our line was composed of the 3d and 6th divisions, led on by general Picton, the light division under baron Alten formed the centre, and Marshal Beresford with the 4th and 7th formed the left. The battle com-

menced by the latter attacking St. Boes and carrying it; but by reason of the difficult nature of the ground, it was found impracticable to carry the heights. Their whole line was then attacked by the 3d, 4th, 6th and light divisions, when the enemy were dislodged from the heights, and Sir Rowland Hill, who, in advancing to join the conflict, saw the French already routed, pushed forward the more effectually to prevent their escape the 2d division and cavalry; their retreat was well conducted at first, but it gradually became disorderly, and in the end a complete flight, many of the conscripts throwing down their arms and deserting.

The French had made a most obstinate resistance at the point which we had to carry, and kept up a severe cannonade on us, by which many of our men were decapitated, in consequence of their firing chain shot. In one part of the road where they had been driven from the fields, our cavalry had made a furious charge on them, and taken a number of prisoners. The road was almost render-

ed impassable by the number of arms lying on it. Near this place lay a sergeant belonging to our light brigade, extended by the side of a French grenadier, their bayonets transfixed in each other, and both dead. Passing Orthes, we followed the retreat of the enemy until we passed through another town, where part of their rear-guard lined the walls of a church-yard, situated a little above the town, and had brought out tables and chairs to stand on while they fired over upon us. In passing through this village, a shot from one of their cannon shattered the leg of an old midwife while she was crossing the street; the head doctor of our regiment, a skillful and intelligent surgeon, being passing at the time, having inspected the injury, found it necessary to amputate the limb, and although she was far advanced in years, in three weeks after, when we had occasion to pass near the village, she had almost entirely recovered.

Beyond this village, about two miles, we encamped by the road side, and had not been long encamped, when my

friend, the corporal of the band, whom I have already mentioned, arrived, bringing with him a child which he had found in a field under peculiar circumstances. As he and a musician of the 83d regiment were passing along the road, they were attracted by the piteous cries of a French officer, who lay severely wounded in a ditch a short distance from them; he begged for God sake (in his own language,) that they would give him a drink, and as I have already hinted, P. always ready to follow the dictates of a benevolent heart, gave him some wine from his canteen; it was then dusk, but while he stooped to give the officer the wine, he perceived something moving beneath his cloak, and on drawing it a little aside, he found a fine boy about four years old, dressed in the English fashion, nestled in beside him. Taking him up in his arms, he asked him his name, when the child replied, "James." The officer entered into an explanation of the matter, and P. understood enough of the language, to learn that the child came up the road during

a heavy fire while our army and the French were engaged. The officer, who had been wounded a little before, seeing the poor child in imminent danger, and in the midst of his own sufferings, feeling interested for his fate, had enticed him off the road, and kept him amused until he fell asleep, when he wrapped him in the corner of his cloak. The officer expressed the utmost gratitude for P.'s kindness in giving him the wine, but he seemed to feel acutely in parting with the child, nor did the child seem very willing to part with him; with the view, however, of finding out his parents, the child was brought home to the camp, and notice being sent to the different divisions of the army, in a few days the child's mother arrived. Her feelings on again finding her child, may be better imagined than described. She stated, that having come into the town in rear of where the army were engaged, the child had wandered from her knee while she was suckling a younger one, and that she had searched every part of the town for him without being able to

get the least trace of the direction he had taken, or what had become of him.

Having children certainly increased the hardships that the poor women were fated to endure; but excess of suffering, which tore asunder every other tie, only rendered maternal love stronger, and it was amazing what hardships were voluntarily endured for the sake of their offspring. I remember one poor fellow of our brigade, whose wife died, and left an infant with him of a few months old, and although he might have got one of the women to take care of it, he preferred taking charge of it himself, and for many a day he trudged along with it sitting on the top of his knapsack. Sickness at length overtook him, and he went to the rear to hospital, carrying the child with him, but what was their fate afterwards I have never been able to learn.

Next morning we left our encampment, and returning by the way we had come, we passed a man of the division on the road side, who had been hung up to the branch of a tree a few mi-



minutes before. According to the current report in the division, he had entered a mill, and asked the miller to sell him some flour; but the miller refusing to sell it, he took it by force; and being caught in the act by some one, who reported the affair to lord Wellington, he was tried by a general court martial, and sentenced to death. For a long time after his trial he was marched a prisoner with the provost guard, and he entertained hopes of pardon; but on that morning, without any previous warning, while he was sitting at the fire with some of his fellow prisoners, the provost came in and ordered him to rise, when placing the rope round his neck, he marched him forward on the road a short distance, and hung him upon the branch of a tree. Examples, perhaps, were necessary, but we were inclined to think that the time was often unfortunately chosen; it was rather an awkward sort of spectacle to greet the eyes of an army the morning after a hard fought and successful battle; and the poor wretch's fate excited more

commiseration that morning, than detestation of his crime.

Some of the men happened to make remarks on the subject—"Pshaw!" said Dennis, who was listening to them, "I don't believe my countryman would do any thing of the sort. Sure its only a dead man he has ordered to be hung up to frighten yees." "He is dead enough now," said another. "Do you remember the tickler of an order that was served out to us after the dreadful retreat from Salamanca; was that your countryman's doings?" "Troth, I don't know," said Dennis, "but it did'nt go well down with us; and if this is the sort of payment we get for beating the French, the best way is to go down on our knees, and promise never to be guilty of the like again."

CHAPTER IX.

VIC BIGORRE—BATTLE OF TOULOUSE—PEACE—
 QUARTERS—BORDEAUX—PAULHAC—EMBARK-
 ATION—PASSAGE HOME—COVE OF CORK.

IN consequence of the wet weather we were unable to proceed, and lay in camp near this place for about three weeks; and little of any moment occurred during that time, except the capture of Aire on the 2d of March, by general Hill's division.

On the 18th March, the enemy having retired in the night upon Vic Bigorre, we advanced on the 19th, and came up with their rear guard, which was posted in great force in the vineyards in front of that town. Our division, under general Picton, advanced up the main road to the attack, until the enemy's artillery, which commanded it, forced us to strike into the fields to the right and left, when we drove them

from one field to another, while they contested every inch of the ground with the greatest obstinacy, at every hedge and ditch giving us a volley as we came up, and then retreating to the next fence. While advancing upon one of these temporary defences, a French soldier, through some cause, was rather tardy in retreating, and our men were close upon him before he started out of the ditch. His comrades had, by this time, lined the fence farther on, and being a remarkable object, a number of our skirmishers directed their fire against him, but he did not seem much incommoded, for after running a few paces, he turned about and fired on his pursuers; and re-loading his piece, continued this running fire for some distance. His daring conduct having attracted the attention of all, a great number joined in trying to bring the poor fellow down; and the shot was flying about him in every direction—but he seemed invulnerable. At length coming near to where his own party was under cover, he walked up to the edge of the embankment, and after

firing at the party who were in his rear, he clapped his hand very contemptuously on his breech, and jumped down into the ditch. Those to the left of the road being brought to a point by a river, were obliged to cross the main road, where they suffered severely: a sergeant of our brigade received a dreadful wound here—a cannon shot having struck him, carried away the fleshy part of the thigh, leaving the bone perfectly bare, to the extent of twelve or fourteen inches. A little farther on, a lad belonging to the band of the 83d regiment, lay killed. The band in general accompanied the baggage, but he never would submit to this; and when near the enemy, he always did duty with the light company.

Having driven the enemy from the vineyards, in retreating through the town they killed a number of our men, from the various places they had got under cover. One poor fellow of the 5th regiment received a shot, which passing through his temples, cut the strings of his eyes, and we saw him sit-

ting on a stone with them hanging out of their sockets. The whole of our army having assembled that night at Vic Bigorre and Rabastains, the enemy retired in the night upon Tarbes, and we came up with their advanced posts in that town on the 20th; their centre and left had retired, and their right was attacked by the 6th division under general Clinton, while general Hill attacked the town by the high road from Vic Bigorre.

The 6th division being successful, general Hill passed through the town, and disposed his columns for attack, when the enemy retreated in all directions, having suffered severely, while our loss was but trifling, following them up the Garonne as far as Grenada. On the 8th of April a pontoon bridge was thrown across, and the 18th hussars, with a Portuguese and Spanish brigade, crossed, and drove in a body of the enemy's cavalry, taking about 100 prisoners.

The town of Toulouse is surrounded on three sides by the canal of Langue-

doc, and the Garonne. They had fortified the suburb on the left of that river, with strong field works; they had likewise formed works at each bridge of the canal, defended by artillery and musquetry. Beyond the canal, to the eastward, and between that and the river Ers, there is a range of heights extending for some distance, over which pass all the roads to the canal and town from the eastward, which it defends; and the enemy, in addition to the outworks at the bridges of the canal, had fortified the heights with five redoubts connected by lines of entrenchments; they had also broken all the bridges over the river Ers within our reach, by which the right of their position could be approached. When the Spanish corps passed, the pontoon bridge was moved higher up, in order to shorten the communication with general Hill's division, and this was done so late on the evening of the 9th, that the attack was delayed till next day.

Our division crossed on the evening of the 9th, and next morning the troops

under marshal Beresford attacked the enemy's right, while the Spaniards under general Frere assailed the centre, but the latter were soon repulsed, and being with a heavy loss driven from the ground, were pursued to some distance; by the exertions of their officers, however, they were formed anew, when our light division, which was immediately on their right, took up their place. In the mean time, Beresford with the 4th and 6th divisions, attacked and carried the heights on the enemy's right, and the redoubt which covered and protected that flank, and lodged his troops in the redoubt. The enemy, however, still occupied the others. As soon as the Spaniards had re-formed, and were brought back to the attack, general Beresford continued his march along the ridge, and carried, with general Pack's brigade, the two principal redoubts, and the fortified houses in the enemy's centre. The enemy made a desperate effort from the canal to regain these redoubts, but were repulsed with considerable loss, and the 6th division continu-

ing their movement along the ridge, and the Spanish troops on the front, the enemy were driven from all their redoubts and intrenchments on the left, and the whole range of heights were in our possession.

While these operations were going on on the left, general Hill drove the enemy from their exterior works in the suburb on the left of the Garrone, within the old wall. Our division charged the works at the bridges, but in consequence of their strength were unable to carry them, and suffered severely in the attempt.

During the 11th not a shot was fired on either side, and the French bands were playing the greater part of the day, ours were also brought down, and a sort of conversation was kept up by the different tunes played; the French would listen attentively while ours played the downfall of Paris, and in turn gave us a reply of the same kind. Next morning, to our surprise, we found them gone; they had retreated during the night, leaving in our