to me! but when she died, I lost the only friend I had in the world; for my father was never kind to me; and, after he married again, I never had a happy minute in the house: and, if I was to go home again, even supposing that he would get me free from the ship, things would be only worse than before. But I am sure I will not live to return. There is a heavy something hangs on my mind, that tells me I will not see the end of this voyage; but I do not feel grieved at it; I rather feel a pleasure in the idea. Then I will be free from ill usage and persecution; and, what makes me almost long for my death, is the hope that I will meet my mother in heaven, never to part from her again."—I could not forbear weeping when he spoke in this manner; and I tried to cheer him as much as I could, by putting him in mind of our former schemes of happiness and fortune: but he only shook his head, and said, "This is not the world we dreamed it was; but even so, I have no friends—no prospects, and death appears to me to be the only thing that can alter my situation for the

better." Poor fellow! I daresay he little thought it was so near.

The gale still continued to increase, and all our sail was taken in, with the exception of a close-reefed fore top-sail. The wind veered about, and blew a hurricane. Some of the sails were torn in ribbons before they could be handed. The sea ran mountains high. The sky was darkened, and the flapping of the sails and rattling of the blocks made such a noise that we could scarcely hear our own voices. The sea broke over us in such a way, that boats, spars, and camboose were carried off the deck. The helm became almost totally unmanageable; and four men were constantly at it. When a sea struck the vessel, she creaked as if her very sides were coming together. The men were obliged to lash themselves to every place where they could find safety, to prevent their being washed overboard. In this manner we stood in awful suspence, waiting the issue of the storm. The one moment the vessel would rise, perched, as it were, on the verge of a precipice: the next, she would

descend through the awful opening, as if she would strike the very bottom of the sea, while vivid flashes of lightning contributed to throw a horrific glare over the scene.

Three days were we tossed about in this manner, every day expecting it to be our last; for we thought it impossible that the ship could weather the gale. During that time we could not get below; for the hatches were battened down, and we had to subsist on dry biscuit, or eat raw pork with it; for we could get nothing cooked.

On the fourth day, the storm abated, and the weather cleared up; but the vessel rolled so that we expected her masts to go overboard. After the gale we fell in with some vessels which had suffered severely, one in particular had lost all her masts. We were at this time near the mouth of the Channel; and, next day, we made Cape Clear. I could not express what I felt at again seeing the shores of Britain: my imagination was hard at work drawing pictures of the future. We ran up along the Irish coast

with a fair wind, and at last came in sight of the well-known Craig of Ailsa; and, passing it, the Cumbrays and the Cloach light house, we anchored in Greenock roads. I was in transports of joy at the idea of getting home again; but a doubt would often cross my mind, whether my father might feel inclined to get me free from the vessel, after so obstinately persisting in going to sea: I, at least, felt sensible that I did not deserve such indulgence. The day after we arrived, however, my mind was set at ease, for my mother came from Glasgow to see me, and the first words she said, were, "Well, James, are you tired of the sea?"—The tears came into my eyes but I could not speak.—"I find you don't like it," said she, "you have found out, I believe, that your father's description of a sea life was a true one—well, we must try and get you home again." A day or two after, my father came to Greenock; and, having settled matters with the owners, I went home with him on the coach, fully resolved that I would be more wise in future. I had a joyful meeting with my

friends; and, for a time, all went on pleasantly; but my restless disposition still remained the same, and I soon grew tired of home. My parents expected a miraculous change in me; and, when they found that my voyage had made me little wiser, any indiscretion was generally checked with an allusion to my former conduct. This irritated my feelings. Those boys who used to associate with me, now avoided my company: most of them, I believe, by the injunctions of their parents. There were two boys, with whom I had been on the most friendly terms—their parents and mine were very intimate—they were constant playfellows of mine before I went to sea; I had occasionally seen them after my return, without their seeming any way reserved towards me. Some months after I came home, however, I happened to be diverting myself with them in their court yard; we were playing at *hide-and-seek;* I had hid myself in the straw house; I heard their father call them and ask who was with them—when they told him, he said, "Never let me see you in that boy's

company again, for he ran away from his parents, and he may induce you to do the same." This went like a dagger to my heart. It humbled me severely in my own eyes. I waited until he went into the house, and then slunk away like a felon. From that day, I thought every one that looked at me was passing similar observations to Mr. H. in their minds. My temper became soured, and I grew melancholy and restless. I brooded continually over the indignity which I conceived I had suffered. "Then," said I to myself, "I am become an object of contempt to every one. I can never endure this. I will not remain in Glasgow: perhaps it would have been better if my parents had settled me somewhere else for a time."

One evening, in January, 1809, I had been at home to dinner, and was returning to school, brooding over my real and imaginary evils—my mind in such a state of despondency that I could almost have taken away my life. I determined to leave Glasgow; for I thought, if once out of it, I would be happy. In this state

of mind, walking down the High Street, I met a soldier. The thought struck me instantly that I would inlist, although I rather felt a prejudice against the army. Yet by inlisting I would get out of Glasgow, and to me that was every thing. I followed the soldier, and asked him where his officer lodged. He showed me the place; and I inlisted with the proviso that he would send me out of the town immediately. I was sent to Paisley, and remained with the party there until the recruits were ordered to march for head-quarters. When I came into Glasgow to join them, in passing through the Bridge-gate, I met my mother. I had never written to my parents, nor had they heard of me from the time I inlisted. I could scarcely define my feelings. Shame, grief, a sort of sullen despair, a sense that I had cut myself off from the world—that I had done my worst, and a determination to push it to the utmost, were mingled together in my mind. My mother first broke silence. "Poor, infatuated boy!" said she, the tears flowing down her cheeks; "what new calamity have you brought on

yourself by your wild, inconstant disposition?" I told her I had inlisted, and was going that day to join my regiment.—"Alas!" said she, "you have now finished it. Now you are lost to us and to yourelf; but will you not come home, and see your father before you go?" I hesitated. "Perhaps," said she, "it will be the last time you may ever see him. Come, you had better go with me." I consented, and we went home together. It was near four o'clock. My father generally came home at that hour to dinner. My mother met him as he came in, and explained matters to him. He strove to assume an air of calmness; but his countenance showed the emotions that were working in his mind. We sat down at the table to dinner; but no one seemed inclined to eat. My father cut some meat on his plate; but instantly pushed it from him. He rose from his seat, and walked about the floor with a rapid pace. He opened his waistcoat. He seemed suffocating. I could no longer endure to see the convulsive agony with which his whole frame was agitated. I sunk on my

knees at his feet, and cried out, "Forgive me, O father—forgive me!" He looked at me for a moment; then, bursting into tears, he said, "God forgive you! God forgive you! my poor unfortunate boy. Alas!" said he, "I had none but you. I had formed schemes for your advancement in life. I saw you had some talent, and was determined to spare no expense in making you fit to fill a respectable situation. I had figured to myself you going in and out with me, happy and contented—a credit to yourself and to your parents; but, alas! those hopes are now fled for ever: for the first news I hear of you, may be that your corpse is bleaching on the Continent—a prey to wolves and eagles." Then, as if correcting himself for drawing such a picture—"But your life is in the hands of God. But even now, are you not lost to me? May I not say that I am childless? I give you my forgiveness freely, and also my blessing; and, if you should survive, oh, may you never have a son that will cause you such agony as I feel at this moment. Farewell! my poor boy: I am

afraid I may say, Farewell for ever." With these words he rushed into an adjoining room, and threw himself on his knees, I suppose to pray for that son who had repaid all his kindness with ingratitude and disobedience. My mother was wild with grief. It was the hour at which we were to march. I tore myself out of the house in a state of distraction, and joined the party, who were now on the road to Airdrie. My mind was in such a state of agitation, that I scarcely knew where I was going. I walked on before the party, as if some one was pursuing me, anxious, as it were, to run away from my own feelings.

I am scarcely conscious of what passed between that and Dunbar. It seems like a confused dream. But the parting scene with my father often recurred to my memory; and, although it is now fifteen years since it took place, it remains in it as fresh as yesterday. The step I took at that time has been to me the source of constant and unavailing regret; for it not only destroyed my prospects in life, and fixed me in a situation that I disliked, but

I believe it was the means of breaking the heart of a parent, whose only fault was, that he was too indulgent. I felt sensible of his tenderness, and I am sure I loved him. But mine was a wayward fate. Hurried on by impulse, I generally acted contrary to the dictates of my own judgement—"my argument right, but my life in the wrong."

He has long gone to his eternal rest; but, while he lived, he was a man—take him for all in all—whose equal would be difficult to find; for it could truly be said of him, that "even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

CHAPTER VII.

HEAD-QUARTERS—PAY OFF—DRILL—TREAT TO THE SERGEANTS—DENNIS—HIS CHARACTER—A SPONGE—HIS TREATMENT—BUILDING AIRY CASTLES AGAIN—CHARACTER OF MY COMRADES—OBSERVATIONS.

When our party arrived in Dunbar, where the regiment lay, after being finally approved, and the balance of my bounty paid me, which was about four guineas (after deducting necessaries), I was conducted by the sergeant to the room where my birth was appointed. When he left me, I sat down on a form, melancholy enough. An old soldier sat down beside me; and, remarking that I looked dull, asked me where I came from, when I replied, "Glasgow." I was immediately claimed as a townsman by some of the knowing ones, one of whom had the Irish brogue in perfection, and another the distinguishing dialect and accent of a cock-

ney. "You don't speak like natives of Glasgow," said I. "Och! stop until you be as long from home as me," said Paddy, giving a wink to his comrades, "and you will forget both your mother-tongue and the mother that bore you." "Ha' you got yere boonty yet, laddie?" said an Aberdeen man. "Yes," said I. "Than you'll no want for frien's as lang as it lasts." So I found; for every little attention was paid me that they could devise. One brushed my shoes, another my coat; and nothing could equal the many professions of good-will and offers of service I received. There was a competition amongst them who should be my comrade, each supporting his offer by what service he would render me, such as cleaning my accoutrements, teaching me my exercise, &c. It appeared to me that I was set up at auction to be knocked down to the highest bidder. But I paid little attention to them. My mind was taken up, thinking of my folly, and ruminating on its consequences.

After holding a private consultation amongst themselves, one of them took me

aside, and told me it was the usual custom for each recruit, when he joined the company, to give the men of the room he belonged to a "treat." "How much?" said I, putting my hand in my pocket; for, in the passive state of mind I was then in, they would have found little difficulty in persuading me to give them all I had.—"A guinea" was the reply. "Why didn't you ask two?" said an old fellow aside to the spokesman (when he saw me give the one so freely). He seemed vexed that he had not.

It was then proposed to go into the town, to purchase the liquor; and I, of course, must go along with them. Four or five accompanied me to town, and we met two or three more as if by accident. As we returned home, they lingered behind me a little, and appeared to be consulting about something. When they came up to me, one of them said, as I had been so free in giving my treat, they could not do less than treat me; and led the way into a public-house for that purpose. One half pint of whiskey was called in after another, all protesting that they

would be their share; but, when the reckoning came to be paid, which amounted to seven or eight shillings, each asked his neighbour to lend him until he went up to the barracks. It turned out, however, that none of them had any money; and it ended in a proposal that I should pay the whole, and they would repay me on pay-day. This opened my eyes a little. I thought I could see a great deal of meanness and trick in their conduct; but I took no notice of it.

When night came, the room was cleared, and the forms ranged around. An old Highlander in the room had a pair of bagpipes, which with two fifes constituted our music. When all were assembled, the drinking commenced, handing it round from one to another. After a round or two, old Donald's pipes were called for, and the men commenced dancing with the women of the company.—The stamping, hallooing and snapping of fingers which ensued, intermingled with the droning sound of the bagpipes, was completely deafening. In the confusion some of the thirsty souls took the

opportunity to help themselves out of their turn, which, being observed, caused a dispute; and, the liquor being expended, a join of a shilling a man was proposed, to "carry on the glory." I was again applied to for my shilling; and, aided by this fresh supply, they kept up "the spree" until one o'clock in the morning. When some of them who had got drunk began to fight, the lights were knocked out, and pokers, tongs, tin dishes, &c. were flying about in every direction. At last, the affair ended by the officer of the guard sending some of them to the guard-house, and ordering the others to bed.

Next morning I was besieged, before six o'clock, by a band of the fellows, who had got drunk the night before, begging me to treat them to a glass to "heal their head." I felt little inclined to drink at that hour, and expressed myself to that effect. They then asked me to lend them money to procure it, and they would repay me on pay-day. I gave them what they wanted, and I soon had the most of the men in the room at me on the same

errand. In the course of the day I got my regimentals served out, and was sent to drill. After drill it was intimated to the recruits who had lately joined, that they ought to treat the drill sergeant, as he would not be so hard on us if we did so. While we were talking, the sergeant who had conducted us to the regiment came up to bid us farewell. "You are not going away to night," said a recruit. "I believe I will," said the sergeant, "unless you have anything to treat me to." "You ought to give the sergeant a supper," said a man who had joined about a month before. "We gave our conducting sergeant a supper." It was therefore agreed that we could be no worse than the others, and he was accordingly invited along with our drill sergeant. When night came, and we were going into town, it was moved that the sergeants of our companies ought to be invited also; and of course it was insinuated that we would be no losers by so doing. When we were all met, between sergeants of companies and their friends, whom they had taken

the liberty to invite, we were a goodly company.

The supper came in, and was done great justice to by the guests. Next came the drink, and, when all hearts were warmed by the rum punch, numerous were the protestations of friendship and promises of favour from the sergeants to the recruits. I was sitting next our conducting sergeant: he seemed very restless, and spoke often to a very loquacious sergeant who sat near him, who replied several times that it was too soon yet. At last, however, when he found we were all pretty mellow, he rose and commenced his harangue with "I say, lads, I daresay you are all very well pleased with Sergeant A——." This was assented to by all the recruits. "Well," said he, "I just wished to inform you that it is the usual custom for the recruits to give the sergeant, who conducts them, a present when they receive their bounty." The acquiescence of all present, showed how well the sergeant had chosen his time to make the proposition. "What is the usual sum?" said one. This

question was put to our conducting sergeant: and, after some hesitation, he very modestly replied, "five shillings each." The money was soon collected, and he pocketed it with great glee.

During the entertainment, our friends the sergeants obliged us extremely, by calling for every thing they wanted, and some of them laid in a store of tobacco, that night, that served them for weeks after. At a late hour, we separated, and got home to our barrack rooms, without disturbance, having previously had leave from tattoo. Next day, I was roused for drill at day light; and, after coming in, wishing to procure some breakfast, I was surprised to find my cash dwindled to a very few shillings. During the day, I was applied to by some of my comrades for the loan of more money; but I refused, alleging that I had little left. I could soon see that this information had a great impression on them; for the things which they had formerly been so officious in doing for me were now left to be done by myself; and, amongst all those who had been so anxious to become my com-

rades, I could not find one now that would accept of me. A new party of recruits joined, and I was soon altogether forgot.

Next day, having purchased some little things that I needed, I found my money expended; but I gave myself little uneasiness about it, as I had lent so much, and the following day was pay-day. When the men received their pay, I spoke to those who had borrowed the money from me, and said that I would be obliged to them for it; but how was I surprised when some of them swore I had never lent them a farthing, and threatened to beat me for presuming to say so! Others said they could not pay me at that time; and more of them laughed at my simplicity in expecting repayment of any money borrowed out of a bounty! This is strange justice thought I; and, leaving the room, I wandered down by the sea side, thinking on the honest men that I had got amongst. I heard the step of some one behind me, and, turning round to see who it was, I perceived one of the recruits who had joined sometime before

me. His name was Denis ——: he was an Irishman. I had remarked that he took no part with the others, in their professions of kindness to me, and that on the night of the treat he had gone to bed without joining in it. When he came up to me, he said "I have waited until now to speak to you, for I would not say a word while the bounty lasted, lest you should have suspected I was like the others; but now I have come to say that if you choose you can be my comrade, for mine left me before you came to the room, to go along with a recruit, and now, that his bounty is finished, he wishes to come back again; but I hate such meanness, and would never associate with a fellow of his description; however I think you and I will agree." I was glad to accept his disinterested offer; and, for all the time Dennis and I were comrades, I never had reason to repent it; for he was of a warm-hearted generous disposition, and never flinched from me in distress. He had no education: he could neither read nor write; but he had a most vigorous natural judgement, which no sophistry

or colouring could blind, and his acute Hibernian remarks often put men who valued themselves on their education to the blush; besides this, he had a fund of honour that never would allow him to stoop to a mean action. One fault indeed he had, in common with the generality of his countrymen, and that was, when he got drunk he was a thorough madman.

After this, Dennis and I were left to ourselves, to act as we pleased, and the "knowing boys" looked out for newer hands to fleece, some of whom descended to very mean stratagems to get drink. I remember being in the town with Dennis one evening, and, having gone into a public house to get a glass, before we went home, one of those disgraceful animals came into the room where we were sitting, and, after telling some rigmarole story, without being asked to drink, he lifted the glass from before us, and, having drank to our good health, swallowed its contents. I was confounded at his impudence, and sat staring at him; but Dennis was up in an instant, and knocked him down, and, as he said

himself, "kicked him for falling." The fellow never made any resistance, but, gathering himself up, crawled out of the room. When he was gone,—"By my faith," said Dennis, "I think I gave the rascal the worth of his money—that is the only cure for a 'sponge.'" "I wonder they have no shame," said I. "Shame!" rejoined Dennis, "troth, shame and they could be married, for any relationship between them!!"

In a short time I began to recover my spirits, and when I had any spare time, I had recourse to my old favourites, which I obtained from a circulating library in town. It is true I could not now dream so delectably of the life of a shepherd or a sailor; but I had the field of honour before me. To fight in defence of one's country, thought I—to follow the example of a Bruce or a Wallace—must be a glorious thing. Military fame seemed the only object worth living for. I already anticipated my acts of valour, charging the enemy, driving all before me, and coming back loaded with honour and a stand of French colours, receiving

the praise of my commanding officer and a commission. On I went in my career of arms, and it was impossible to stop short of being a general.

In these day-dreams of promotion and honour, I did not look particularly to the situation I was then in; nor even very attentively at the intermediate ground I had to go over: but these were trifles in my estimation at that time. I must confess, however, that a damp was often thrown over these fine speculations by some harsh words from the drill sergeant, or some overbearing conduct of my superiors. Or when I saw a poor fellow taken out and receiving four or five hundred lashes, for being ten minutes late from tattoo, I could not help thinking, that the road to preferment was none of the smoothest. Be that as it may, I believe I had by this time caught a portion of military enthusiasm; and "death or glory" seemed very fine words; and often, when walking alone, have I ranted over the words which Goldsmith puts into the mouth of the Vicar of Wakefield, when his son leaves him to go into the army—"Go,

my boy; and, if you fall, though distant, exposed, and unwept by those who love you, the most precious tears are those with which heaven bedews the unburied head of the soldier."

The miserable retreat of our army to Corunna, and the account given of it by some of those who had returned, often lowered my too sanguine anticipations; but nothing could permanently keep down my ever active imagination. In this state of mind, I felt a relief from the melancholy I had previously sunk into; but still I was far from being contented: something was continually occurring which made me draw comparisons between my present way of living and that which I had enjoyed at home. There were few of those with whom I could associate that had an idea beyond the situation they were in: those who had were afraid to show they possessed any more knowledge than their comrades, for fear of being laughed at by fellows that, in other circumstances, they would have despised. If a man ventured to speak in a style more refined than the herd around him, he was told that "Every