

excited universal admiration. He availed himself, most ably, of the only advantage which, with an army like ours, it would, perhaps, have been possible to obtain. He, by a most rapid and skilful manœuvre, threw us into a position at Buzaco, so strong and commanding, as to be alike secure from the artillery, and inaccessible to the cavalry of the enemy. Here, from the lofty ridge of one of their native Sierras, he first showed to the Portuguese levies the array of their formidable invaders; and here he allotted to them the easy task of repulsing, by the side of British soldiers, one of those desperate and hopeless assaults, which his knowledge of the French character encouraged him to expect. By this master-stroke of military skill and sound policy, the Portuguese were inspired with a confidence in him and in themselves, which never afterwards forsook them. But Lord Wellington clearly saw, that in playing for so mighty a stake as the political existence of a nation, the fate of the war should never be suffered to depend on the glorious hazards of a battle; as soon, therefore, as he found the position

of Buzaco no longer tenable, he decided on retiring to lines near Lisbon, which had been long fortifying with care, and there to defend the seat of the government, and the capital of the country. To give effect, however, to this plan of defence, it was necessary, not only that the allied army should retire to the fortified position of Torres Vedras, but that the whole country between it and the frontier, which it was at all probable the enemy might occupy, should be abandoned by all classes of inhabitants, and that every thing which might contribute to the subsistence, or facilitate the progress of their troops, should be carefully removed. My pen altogether fails me, — I feel that no powers of description can convey to the mind of my reader, the afflicting scenes, the cheerless desolation, we daily witnessed on our march from the Mondego to the lines. Wherever we moved, the mandate which enjoined the wretched inhabitants to forsake their homes, and to remove or destroy their little property, had gone before us. The villages were deserted; the churches, retreats so

often, yet so vainly confided in, were empty; the mountain cottages stood open and untenanted; the mills in the valley, but yesterday so busy, were motionless and silent. We bivouacked on the 4th of October, near Thomar: the neighbourhood of this place is exceedingly pretty, and the town itself regularly built, and beautifully clean. It had counted, a few days before, a population of nearly 4000; the morning we entered it, a few hundreds only remained, and these were fearfully hurrying their departure.

There was a remarkably fine convent in this town, of the order of Christ, richly endowed, and very superb in its church, buildings, and every thing connected with its establishment. I had no occasion to ask for admission; I followed a group of noisy muleteers, who had chosen it for their night's lodging, and whose mules were already drinking out of the marble fountain, or trampling over the neat garden, round which ran handsome, high-arched, and echoing cloisters, — yesterday responsive only to the pacing of some thoughtful monk,

now resounding with the boisterous laughter, and coarse jests of rude, merry muleteers. In the kitchen, some lay servants of the convent yet lingered, and the table in the refectory was covered with the crumbs of the last meal, which the banished fathers had that morning partaken of. The church, however large, magnificent, and gloomy, still inspired reverence and awe; and the muleteers, who walked thither with me, sunk into silence, and crossed themselves, as they knelt before the high altar, round which lamps, trimmed by some pious hand, were yet burning. The streets through which I hastened back to my home, (for cannot a tent become our home?) had an air of loneliness, quite oppressive to the heart: no one stood on the thresholds, — no face looked from the casements, — not a voice was to be heard.

The flanks of our line of march from this place were literally covered with the flying population of the country. In Portugal, there are, at no time, many facilities for travelling, and these few the exigencies of the army had very greatly diminished.

Rich indeed were those in good fortune, as in possession, who still retained a cabriolet and mules for its service. Those who had bullock-cars, asses, or any mode of transporting their families and property, looked contented and grateful; for respectable men and delicate women, of the second class, might on every side be seen walking slowly and painfully on foot, encumbered by heavy burthens of clothes, bedding, and food.

We bivouacked near Santarem on the evening of the sixth. Crowds of the inhabitants, who till our arrival were unwilling to believe that the enemy would be suffered to penetrate so far, were now, with a silent and mournful activity, preparing for flight. I walked slowly towards the house where I had been once so hospitably treated: the doors were barred; the casements shut in; the kind-hearted owner had forsaken it. I climbed the garden wall, and saw beneath it the plants and flowers, of which himself and his good wife had appeared so proud, arranged as he had probably left them not two days before, and bearing evidence of his latest care.

I returned to the camp by a circuitous path, which led across a vineyard. Here the order had suddenly broken in upon and suspended the cheerful labours of the vintage. In one part the vines were yet teeming with fruit ; in another, large heaps of grapes gathered, but not carried to the wine-press, lay deadening in the sun, with baskets half-filled near them ; and the print of *little* feet between the vine-rows showed that children had been sharing the light and pleasing toil, which at that happy season employs their parents. On the following morning our columns traversed the city, and, descending into the Lisbon road, continued their route.

Immediately below the town the bank of the river was crowded with fugitives, waiting to be transported across, and the most affecting groups of families sat weeping on the ground. I well remember a serious thoughtful-looking man, of about fifty, seated on a horse, and carrying before him a very aged mother, who had been bedridden for many years, and who lay upon his arm so helplessly, and with an aspect so

pale and withered, that you might have thought the grave had yielded up its dead. Here monks, gentlemen, peasants, and mendicants, were all crowded together: the silent nun and the complaining damsel sat side by side. There was a strange, yet natural, familiarity among them: *natural*, for it was the offspring of misery. How soon can the arrows of misfortune level the paltry distinctions of this world! Here vanity was stifled, rank forgotten: all was agitation, anxiety, and alarm.

This melancholy picture was forcibly contrasted by the gay and careless security of our cheerful soldiery. For what, let me ask, does the soldier suffer, compared to the wretched inhabitant whose country is made the theatre of war? The soldier's wants are all provided for: he is fed and clothed; he sleeps, too, in comparative tranquillity; for, wrapt in his watch-cloak, he reposes in a camp, surrounded by arms and comrades, and ever prepared for resistance, which may indeed bring with it death, but a death always honourable, seldom unrevenged. But to see our dwellings

burnt, our daughters insulted, and our families driven forth houseless, this is misery, this is the curse of war; and if as men we are roused up to resist and die, our death is aggravated by all the horrors of acute mental suffering and fearful anxiety. Oh! we hardly suspect, until the dreadful moment of separation arrives, how dear is the roof, be it of marble or of straw, which has from infancy been our home. Good God! how much does that one word convey! The chamber in which we have slept, the festive board round which we have so often assembled, the garden in which we have strayed, the many little holidays of the heart we have there enjoyed. It is not the soldier, the mariner, the merchant, or perhaps even the Englishman, with his boasted fireside, who can feel this so fully as the contented and happy residents in less civilized countries, who having little necessity, and little opportunity for travelling, contract no habits of restlessness, and feel not a wish, dream not of a pleasure beyond the mountain or the vale, on which their eyes first opened. Moreover, the very practices



of their religion in the Peninsula, to them appear to sanctify their dwellings; for all their cottages have their little shrines, saints, and crucifixes, which are regarded by the people with the same affectionate reverence, that marked the attachment of the ancient Romans for their household gods.

On the afternoon of the eighth we entered Alhandra, a small pretty town on the banks of the Tagus, about four leagues from Lisbon. It lay immediately in front of the right of our celebrated lines, and was occupied as a sort of advanced post by one brigade of our division, during the whole time that the French remained before them. This town too was deserted; and here, to our very great comfort, we were put under cover, for the weather began to be wet, cold, and disagreeable. In this place a most strange though comfortable lodging fell to the lot of myself and my comrade. We took up our quarters in the sacristy of a church. This chamber was lofty, spacious, and gloomy: twelve figures, as large as life, the images of some departed saints, were placed in niches all round the walls:

they were habited, too, in the black dresses of some monastic order; and what with the glare of their eyes, the stirring of their robes, and the faint glimmering of our lamp, they seemed almost to live and move, and frown upon us. They could not, however, repress the mirth, frighten away the appetite, or scare the slumbers of men so cheerful, so hungry, and so tired as we were. Our cloaks, I remember, and some of our blankets, were excessively damp, which might perhaps have made our night's rest somewhat uncomfortable; luckily for us, however, the priests had left the drawers in the sacristy full of their vestments; and with gay and heavy pontificals spread beneath and over us, we slept as sound as any canon in the closes of York or Durham.

The day after we marched in here, a few prisoners, taken in a cavalry skirmish near Azimbuja, were brought in. They belonged to the French heavy dragoons, and I thought their appearance particularly martial. The brazen helmet, with the lofty cone, black-horse hair, and tiger-skin band, looked very noble; and the thick wiry mustachoes of

the weather-beaten men who bore them, and who were all wounded, well became these warlike casques. The head-dress of our own dragoons has since been greatly improved upon the French model; but at the time I speak of, they still wore awkward shapeless hats.

About nine o'clock on the evening of the tenth, as I was turning into my strange bed, we received orders to march immediately for some fortified heights, about a league and a half to the rear and left. The rain in Portugal is almost as heavy as under the tropics, and it fell this night in continued and overwhelming torrents; it was also uncommonly dark, and I think we were about six hours groping our way as many miles. In the small mountain village where we halted, I got into a little cottage with my company; but the place was so confined, that we could neither lie down nor even sit, and we remained on our feet, crowded together till daylight, when we divided ourselves among the miserable hovels more equally. The posts and batteries in the neighbourhood, with the defence of which

we were charged for three days, were by no means in a perfectly serviceable condition; as in some, no guns were at the time mounted, and in others, the necessary ammunition had not been provided.

I confess, when I revert to this period of the campaign, I am more and more astonished that Massena never attempted to force our position. The French infantry, which was concentrated in front of us at Buzaco, might certainly, without any very prodigious exertion, have reached our lines by the tenth, and on that, or the ensuing day, might have attacked them. I shall ever be of opinion, that if the enemy had determined to sacrifice every thing to the grand object of penetrating our line, and marching on Lisbon, they might very possibly have effected their purpose. It is not to be denied that our position was provided with formidable redoubts and batteries; nevertheless it was a very extensive one, and the defence of it would not altogether have depended on the abilities of Wellington, or the bravery of the army. The confusion or misapprehension of any one

general as to what he was to provide for and protect, the fear of responsibility, and the absence of discretion in a common brigadier, might have neutralized both the talents of the leader, and the courage of the men, and proved fatal to our hopes. We should have been more particularly liable to such a misfortune, in the hurry of the two or three first days after we entered the lines, and before the grammar of their defence was thoroughly understood by all our generals. A well-conducted assault would have borne with it the character of a *coup de main*, and must have been decided by musketry and the bayonet: Massena, however, delayed for his artillery, suffered the golden opportunity to escape him; nor did he, when his guns arrived, venture to attack us.

On the thirteenth my regiment again moved to Bucellas. Near this town ran the second line of defence, and the post being considered highly important, six British battalions were stationed in it in reserve. The whole time that we remained here our line was regularly under arms two

hours before break of day every morning; and when the sun appeared above the horizon, we generally manœuvred for an hour before we were dismissed. For a few days on our first arrival in this quarter, my friend and I pitched our tent in the market-place. Here I took my meals, but slept with my company in a church, in which about two hundred of our men were accommodated. The senior officer had the sacristy, the next a little chamber or recess behind the high altar, and the rest of us made ourselves truly comfortable in the large organ-loft. I used often to lean out of this gallery, and contemplate the strange scene below me. How a sober citizen from St. Paul's church-yard would have stared to see a serjeant of grenadiers writing his reports on the communion table, a fifer lounging at his ease in the pulpit, and practising his favourite quick step, and the men dividing and calling off their rations of raw beef on tombs of polished marble. Such, however, is but too faithful a picture of an every-day occurrence on actual service.

○ Lisbon, after the first alarm, became as

it were intoxicated by a strong feeling of security: there never was a period when this city was more crowded with objects of misery, or when provisions were more extravagantly dear; yet at no time had their theatres been better filled, their societies more gay and brilliant, than when seventy thousand vindictive enemies lay within sixteen miles of the city, panting for the plunder of it. It is but justice to add, that every thing which prudence and humanity could suggest was done by the inhabitants of Lisbon, to alleviate the public misfortune. The port was open to all vessels laden with provisions, the magazines were filled with them, charitable institutions were set on foot, and food was daily distributed to such of the fugitives as were necessitous and helpless, while labour was provided for the others. The police, too, of the city was most active; and whatever secret and treasonable spirit existed among the disaffected, was compelled to remain inactive and harmless. Still, I thought it strange to see such fearless and inconsistent gaiety among people who might, in the course of a few short

hours, be placed at the mercy of a conqueror : but the truth is, we are all the creatures of custom, and a very short experience will reconcile us to any thing. Hence it is, that the inhabitants of Portici sleep tranquilly under the burning Vesuvius ; and mariners sing jovially while rocked upon the restless waves, in which the starting of a single plank might ingulph them for ever !

From a lofty height, about half a league from Bucellas, I could command a view of the Tagus ; and here I frequently walked, and distinctly saw the gun-boats stationed on the right of our position, exchanging their fire with the French cannon at Villa Franca. The immediate neighbourhood of Villa Franca is covered with handsome quintas, and on some of them I had gazed, on my passage up the Tagus in July 1809, with pardonable envy. How little did my mind, at that time, associate with scenes so smiling, the ideas of devastation and death !

Our army, during the whole of this period, was supplied with provisions from the commissariat stores at Lisbon ; and these



were conveyed to us, at times, in a manner amusingly novel.

I remember well, one day, seeing a file of about one hundred cabriolets, laden with sacks of biscuit and flour; and the evening's amusement of many a fair lady was, by the absence of her carriage on this coarse, but useful service, altogether destroyed. While we remained in this cantonment, a Portuguese officer died in the town; I attended the funeral, and was very much impressed with the ceremony. The custom of exposing the body, dressed as in life and health, on an open bier, may, by its frequency, produce little effect on the natives of Portugal; but to the eye of an Englishman it carries with it an air of solemnity, painful yet salutary; and I defy him to look upon the pale features of a clay-cold corpse with the same light-hearted indifference, that he too often regards the passing hearse in England.

I have more than once distinctly stated, that it is not my intention to offer a professional view of the progress and conduct of the war, or to enter at all upon a regular detail of movements and positions. My

humble wish is to draw a picture of *campaigning*: and if I succeed in recalling one scene of interest to the mind of any veteran who served in the Peninsula, or if I kindle one spark of enthusiasm in the bosom of a youthful soldier, however feebly I may have written, I feel that I shall not have written in vain. I have deemed it necessary to repeat this, that it may not be supposed that a man, with any knowledge of, or attachment to his profession, could be inattentive to the relative situations of the opposing armies, so extraordinary at the period of which I write, and on which it might be expected I should comment and enlarge. No; such a task would far exceed the limits of a light trifling work like this, and would, moreover, be presumptuous in an officer of my age and rank. I consider the Peninsula war to have been a most instructive course of military study; and I have, in common with other officers, treasured up the lessons it afforded with care, and the hope of future advantage.

On the night of the 14th of November, the enemy retired from the position they