

indeed, we ourselves drove the enemy, two days after they had entered it.

It was on the afternoon of the twenty-fifth that we halted in a very pretty bivouack, on the banks of the Caya: our camp lay in a beautiful valley surrounded by hills; on the sides of these the infantry took up their ground, while our cavalry occupied the verdant flat on the banks of the stream.

On the morning of the twenty-sixth we marched upon Campo Mayor: and, at the distance of about two miles from its walls, we halted to let the cavalry pass to the front. They were about 2000 in number; they moved past us in file at a brisk trot; their cattle were in beautiful condition, and occasionally broke into a proud prancing canter.

It is at such a moment, and in such a situation, that an infantry officer cannot altogether suppress a feeling of envy. It is true, that to his service belongs the tug of war, and that more men are killed in one hour by a hot fire of musketry, than in one day of galloping and sabring; for the in-

jury of a sabre-cut, as compared to a gunshot wound, is, in nine cases out of ten, trifling; still the heart will follow the trampling of a squadron of cavalry, the rattling of all their appointments, and the noble animating sound of their brazen trumpets. On this particular day I felt this very strongly: we knew that there was every probability of a handsome affair with the enemy, who would of course, evacuate the town, and retire upon Badajos; but the nature of the ground was so favourable for the operations of horse, that it was also very likely the engagement would be entirely confined to troops of that arm. Our suspicions were not ill-founded; the French were no sooner apprized of our advance, than they hastily formed behind the town. Four regiments of their cavalry presented a front to our people, while their infantry (a column of about 1200) commenced its retreat, carrying with it several pieces of artillery. A most brilliant charge was made upon the enemy's dragoons by our thirteenth light, supported by the Portuguese. Our people behaved with great intrepidity;

but the affair was altogether conducted, on our part, with such a total absence of skill, that the French secured the retreat of their infantry and guns, sustaining indeed a loss *, but a loss very little heavier than our own. Our fine brigade of heavy cavalry was never brought up to the enemy, and our columns of infantry followed slowly in the rear. At every half mile we met some mark of this ill-conducted contest, which was carried on to the very gates of Badajos ; near which, several of our men, who, consulting only their courage, had pursued without any order or regularity, and, indeed, with the main body of the French cavalry marching on in their rear, were captured. In spite of the interest excited on such a day, it is mortifying to a man of spirit, and painful to a man of feeling, to follow, in cold blood, and gaze upon the piteous spectacle of dead and dying, scattered in your path. I remember well, among the events of this day, having remarked one fine manly corpse

* About 300 killed, wounded, and taken.

very particularly ; it lay a few yards from the road-side, alone, naked, the face and breast downwards, and on the back of the head a deep and frightful cleft, inflicted by the sabre ; all round the spot where it lay the ground was deeply indented with the print of horses' feet, who appeared to have gone over it at a furious pace. The sky was cloudy, and the wind high ; the body was cold and pale, the fine formed limbs stiff and motionless ; the spirit, which had animated it, not an hour before, had indeed fled : yet I know not how it was, the very corpse made a forcible appeal to the feelings, and seemed to suffer, it looked so comfortless, so humbled, so deserted. An English dragoon, leading a wounded horse, and conducting two prisoners, one of whom had sabre-cuts on the cheek and shoulder, passed me while I was contemplating this scene. "Do you recollect," said I, "friend, what took place here?" "Yes, sir ; they shewed us a front here, and we charged and drove them ; but this man, who was an officer, tried to rally them, and was cut down by our adjutant, as I think." At

this moment, one of the French horsemen, leaning down, exclaimed, "C'est le colonel." "Comment diable," said the other. "C'est bien lui," said his comrade; "il est mort. Ah! qu'il étoit brave soldat, ce vilain champ de bataille n'est pas digne d'un tel victime." They passed on. What! this carcass, on which the flies were already settling, which lay, all spurned and blood-stained, on the rude and prickly heath, had been, but one short hour before, a man of rank, perhaps also of talent, fortune, courage, whose voice breathed command, whose eye glanced fire, whose arm shook defiance; — even so, such is war!

The same day a young French officer was taken by the falling of his horse; he was of the compagnie d'élite of the twenty-sixth dragoons; a handsome youth, with a fine fair complexion; a serjeant escorted him past our column, which was, at the time, halted. I shall never forget the mortified and mournful dejection of his countenance: he suffered the bridle of his horse to hang on its neck, and sat in the saddle, thoughtfully careless. As he passed us, some of our officers

moved their hats to him ; he returned their salute, taking off his large bearskin cap with much grace, but I could see that his eyes were filled with tears. A very few yards behind us, he had to pass a Portuguese column, whose officers crowded forward to look at him, with a sort of triumphant curiosity ; though his back was to me, I saw that this awakened all his pride and spirit, for he placed himself erect in his seat, spurred and reined up his horse, and rode slowly and haughtily by them. Two days after the affair, a flag of truce came to Elvas, to bring this young man some baggage and money. The French captain who came, remained with his young friend for half an hour, in the officers' guard room, at one of the barriers. The trumpeter, who accompanied the flag, was a vieux moustache, of about forty, with the chevrons of twenty years' service on his arm. This man, when the two friends came out, and the captain mounted, rode up to the young officer, and cordially grasping his hand, put into it a purse of money, and rode off. The purse, I found, had been made up among

the privates of the *compagnie d'élite*, who had charged the old trumpeter with its delivery. This was too strong a testimony, both of the amiability and gallantry of this youth, not to create a deep feeling of interest for him ; and it was sorrowful to think, that he might be doomed for years, perhaps, to pine away, in an obscure garret at some *dépôt* of prisoners in England ; his professional hopes and prospects blasted, and the brightest season of his life chilled by poverty, and consumed in inaction. But, to return. — After being in motion the whole day, alternately amused by the sight of prisoners and captured horses, and our own dragoons displaying the curious contents of the valises they had plundered, and, again, shocked by the sight of slain and wounded, we retraced our steps to Campo Mayor, and encamped close to its walls.

The next day we marched to Elvas, where we halted till the first of April, when we moved to Borba, a very pretty town, about six leagues from Elvas, and highly celebrated for its rich and excellent wine. While we were thus disposed of

in cantonments, our engineers were busily employed in throwing a bridge over the Guadiana at Jurumenha. This work proceeded but slowly, from the great want of materials, and was rendered extremely difficult, from the heavy and sudden rises of the river, caused by the melting of the snows. A flying bridge was, however, at length established, and our army was transported to the Spanish bank in safety, and without opposition, on the night of the fifth of April. On the sixth we moved about three miles, and took up our ground on a plain covered with gumcistus; a small village, lying a little to the rear of our right, was occupied by the head-quarters and staff. Here a most extraordinary accident occurred, for which it is difficult to account satisfactorily. A body of the enemy eluded the vigilance of some Portuguese outposts, and surprised a squadron of English dragoons, all of whom they captured. These dragoons had been, for twenty-four hours previous, on out-line piquet, and were desired to consider themselves released from duty, though they

were still kept close to the line of piquets ; an arrangement by which, combined with the utter want of caution in the outposts, they were taken. But this was not all : the enemy arrived at Marshal Beresford's quarter in the village, and the first alarm was given by the fire of a serjeant's guard, posted over the person of the marshal. They took several horses belonging to the staff from their stables ; and if they had not been unnecessarily alarmed, to find that they had penetrated so far, they might have carried off the whole of our head-quarter staff, for they returned themselves unmolested.

On the morning of the eighth we moved to invest Olivença, in which the enemy had shut up a small garrison. The occupation of this place was absolutely necessary to us as a depôt, or *place d'armes* ; for the French had a very strong garrison in Badajos, which might avail itself of our march to the front, to insult, or altogether interrupt, our communications ; and, for the same reason, we constructed a *tête du pont* at Jurumenha.

The order of our march, on the morning of the eighth, was very beautiful. We moved in four parallel columns, at well regulated intervals. The two flank columns were of cavalry, who marched with advanced guards and flankers; the two central columns were divisions of infantry, with their guns. The skirmishers of the 13th dragoons moved on some eminences to the left of our line of march, and kept an eager look-out on the Badajos road; while the advanced guard of the heavy cavalry, on the right, pursued one of the roads which led directly on the town of Olivença, our near approach to which was announced by the sound of its cannon. From the nature of the country we passed over, all the columns had a fine distinct view of each other, and we all came in sight of the fortress nearly at the same moment; and halting on the heights which overlooked it, just out of gun-shot, had a full view of the place while the summons went in.

On a day like this, every one seems on the "*qui vive.*" All faces are cheerful, all

eyes strained ; spy-glasses are out ; and every one looks pleased who has been lucky enough to distinguish a brazen helmet, a broad-topped cap, or, in fact, any thing French. The governor rejecting the summons, General Cole was left with the fourth division to conduct the siege, and on the afternoon of the tenth the army advanced. I was on the rear guard ; and as the main body moved two hours before us, it was already dark when we reached the bivouack. There was a something so strikingly beautiful in the appearance of it, that I shall never forget the picture. The night was excessively dark, and, under such circumstances, the common camp fires would of themselves have produced a fine effect ; but, they had been for the most part made in hollow cork-trees, of which great numbers were scattered through the ground ; and to see the red fires in their fantastic cavities, and the bright and consuming flames issuing from their tops, illuminating the pale branches, causing a red atmosphere above, and showing to great advantage the troops, their arms and horses, was a scene

so picturesque, so magical, that no description could do it justice.

Olivença, which was only provided with a garrison of four hundred men, fell as soon as ever it was possible to bring guns to bear on it, and was occupied by the division which besieged it: the rest of us pushed many leagues southward. At Los Santos de Maimona, another affair took place between our cavalry and a small body of the enemy's horse. Our people killed and wounded several, and took about seventy prisoners; but were certainly not successful, to the extent we might have been, had they been more vigorously pushed. These prisoners were hussars, very handsomely clothed and appointed, particularly those of the tenth French. This corps wore a jacket and pelisse of light blue, or French grey, neatly ornamented with white lace and black fur: their caps, boots, and accoutrements, excellent: their hair clubbed in a manner not unbecoming; and their whole appearance soldier-like.

We lay for a few days at Zafra, a clean good city, on the route to Andalusia. We

looked forward with eager hope to the chance of a triumphant march over the Sierra Morena, that rude and majestic barrier of southern Spain. The towers of fair Seville already seemed to rise before us; and, in imagination, we were already wandering amid the romantic scenery on the banks of the far-famed Guadalquivir. Badajos, however, was first to be gained; a fortress, the possession of which was to us most important, whether we looked to offensive operations in Spain, or to the mere defence of Portugal.

We broke up from our cantonments on the third of May: the same evening our division arrived at Talavera-Real, a town on the high road to Badajos, and distant from it about ten miles. It was just at the dawn of day, on the fourth, that the heads of all the columns, destined to besiege Badajos, crowned every little eminence round the city, and formed the investment of the place. Our previous night-march had been well arranged as to time; and this operation, which is at all times interesting, was executed, on this occasion, with admirable

skill, and in the most beautiful order. The sky was cloudless and serene, the morning air mild and pleasant. The enemy's picquets skirmished prettily with our advance, and they threw both shot and shells from the town, but with little or no effect. They sent out the few dragoons they had, to assist in reconnoitering our force ; and these men performed their duty, with a degree of coolness and intrepidity, which could not have been surpassed. I saw individuals ride up within pistol-shot of our infantry skirmishers ; and one man galloped boldly as near to a column, not very distant from the height on which my regiment was formed. The scene was quite a review one : the walls of Badajos were crowded with spectators ; and from the top of the castle the tri-coloured standard, an ensign which has spread terror over half Europe, was calmly floating. Our regiment lay for four days in a small narrow dell, under cover of their fire, but within gun-shot of the city.

On the night of the eighth, our brigade broke ground ; at so considerable a distance, however, that we sustained no loss, but

opened the first parallel, and covered ourselves before break of day. I regard the operations of a siege as highly interesting; the daily progress of the labours; the trenches filled with men, who lie secure within range of the garrison; the fire of the batteries; the beautiful appearance of the shells and fire-balls by night; the challenges of the enemy's sentries; the sound of their drums and trumpets; all give a continued charm and animation to this service. But the duties of a besieging force are both harassing and severe; and, I know not how it is, death in the trenches never carries with it that stamp of glory, which seals the memory of those, who perish in a well-fought field. The daily exploits of the northern army under Lord Wellington, and Graham's victory at Barossa, made us restless and mortified at our comparative ill fortune; for as yet we had struggled only with privation, hardship, and disease. On the 13th, in the afternoon, while lounging in our camp of ease, about four miles from the trenches, we were surprised by an order, to hold ourselves in readiness to

march, at the shortest notice. Reports soon began to circulate, that Soult was moving rapidly, at the head of a considerable force, to succour Badajos; that a corps of Spaniards, under the orders of Blake, was marching from Ayamonte, to co-operate with us; that the siege was to be immediately raised; and that a battle might be shortly expected. On the 14th we broke up, and marched upon Valverde; halted for the night, and moved forwards at mid-day, on the 15th, to Albuera, which place we reached about five in the evening. Our cavalry had already retired upon this post; the enemy's horse, who were vastly superior in number, having pushed them from Santa Martha in the morning. Albuera, the scene of a most murderous and sanguinary conflict, it may not be amiss to describe. It is a small inconsiderable village, uninhabited, and in ruins: it is situated on a stream from which it takes its name, and over which there are two bridges; one about two hundred yards to the right of the village, large, handsome, and built of hewn stone; the other, close to the left of it, small, nar-

row, and incommodious. This brook is not above knee-deep : its banks, to the left of the small bridge, are abrupt and uneven ; and, on that side, both artillery and cavalry would find it difficult to pass, if not impossible ; but to the right of the main bridge, it is accessible to any description of force. The enemy occupied a very large extensive wood, about three quarters of a mile distant, on the other side of the stream, and posted their picquets close to us. The space between the wood and the brook was a level plain ; but on our side the ground rose considerably, though there was nothing which could be called a height, as from Albuera to Valverde * every inch of ground is favourable to the operations of cavalry — not a tree, not a ravine, to interrupt their movements.

I shall here interrupt my private Recollections, to give a rapid and general sketch

* I consider the wood, near Valverde, as too distant from the scene of action at Albuera to be considered, in any way, when speaking generally of the face of the country.

of the battle, which took place on the morrow. On the morning of the 16th our people were disposed as follows: The Spanish army*, under the orders of General Blake, was on the right, in two lines, its left rested on the Valverde road on which, just at the ridge of an ascent, rising from the main bridge, the right of our division (the second) was posted, the left of it extending to the Badajos road, on ground elevated above the village, which was occupied by two battalions of German riflemen; General Hamilton's Portuguese division being on the left of the whole. General Cole, with two brigades of the fourth division (the fusileer brigade and one of Portuguese), arrived a very short time before the action, and formed, with them, our second line. These dispositions the enemy soon compelled us to alter. At eight o'clock he began to move; and menacing, with two columns, the village and bridges, under cover of his cavalry, he filed the main body of his infantry over the rivulet,

* It joined us on the night of the 15th.