by one of the gardeners, without even a cloak, and composed myself to sleep. Such is the climate of Spain.

We reached Torre Major, the village allotted to our brigade, in two days, passing through and bivouacking for the night near Talavera. Some regiments of the division Hill, to which our brigade was attached, lay at Montijo, a town in our route, about four miles from Torre Major; among others the twenty-ninth regiment. It was the first corps distinguished for its services, which I had ever seen under arms. Nothing could possibly be worse than their clothing; it had become necessary to patch it; and as red cloth could not be procured, grey, white, and even brown had been used: yet, under this striking disadvantage, they could not be viewed by a soldier without admiration. The perfect order and cleanliness of their arms and appointments, their steadiness on parade, their erect carriage, and their firm and free marching, exceeded any thing of the kind which I had ever seen. No corps of any army or nation, which I have since had an opportunity of seeing,

has come nearer to my idea of what a regiment of infantry should be, than the old twenty-ninth.

Our village was a collection of mud cottages, not a tree near it, and looked, as we approached, poor and mean: we were, however, very agreeably surprised on entering it. The dwelling of the Spanish peasant is very clean, and owing to the extreme thickness of the walls, and the smallness of the windows, delightfully cool. I got a comfortable little room, with a good bed, two or three of the little low chairs, and the small low table of the country. The poorer Spaniards sit very low, and their food is spread on a table still lower, a custom very ancient and very inconvenient. I however thought myself in high luck to be lord of this little sanctum, and generally retired to rest too much fatigued to find fault with my thick hard mattrass, and my coarse though white sheets.

The life of the Spanish villager is simple, and not without its pleasures. He rises early, and after mass goes forth to labour: a bit of dry bread and a few grapes, or a slice

of the water-melon, supply his breakfast: a plain dish of vegetables, generally a sort of bean, boiled with the smallest morsel of bacon to flavour it, forms the dinner; and their drink is water, or the weak common wine of the country. They invariably, whether in their houses or in the fields, take their siesta after dinner, and proceed again to labour in the cool of the evening. In the front of their cottages you may almost always see low benches of stone: on these, after supper, they seat themselves to smoke their segars; and here, surrounded by their families, they frequently remain till a late hour, enjoying the refreshing air of night, and all the luxury of that calm and lovely season, so grateful and reviving in their warm climate.

How often have I stood apart and gazed on these happy groups, how often have I listened to their pleasing ditties, the pauses and cadences of which they mark so feelingly, yet so simply, with the light guitar!

Oftentimes too, when the moon shines brightly, their youth will meet together, and by that soft light, dance to the cheerful

sound of the merry castanets, the rude but sprightly fandango, or the more graceful bolero of their country. What is there to despise or ridicule in a life like this? Yet I have often met among my countrymen, with those who would laugh with contempt at the innocent, and not irrational, amusements of this contented peasantry.

Some of their customs in husbandry are very ancient, among others, the treading out of their corn with cattle, instead of threshing it. This is all done in the open air, where the grain is afterwards spread to dry and harden; oxen or mares are used for this purpose, and you may see five or six at a time trotting round in a circle, upon the out-spread wheat in straw. This practice obtained in the very earliest ages of the world, and one cannot therefore look upon it, without awakening in the mind, by the natural laws of suggestion, a train of the most interesting recollections.

I made an excursion from our cantonment in this village to the town of Merida, a place of some note, situated on the Guadiana, about four leagues in front of us.

Myself, a friend, and an acquaintance from another corps, who has long since been numbered with the slain, set off at an early hour, and after a pleasant ride of two hours, reached Merida. We procured a billet for the day, as a place of retreat, and immediately after breakfast, though the mid-day heat was scorching and oppressive, walked forth to see those monuments of antiquity for which Merida is so deservedly celebrated among well-informed Spaniards, but of which I never even heard or read, till accidentally cantoned in Estremadura. This city was founded by Augustus, and the lands around it were granted by him to the veterans of some disbanded cohorts, who had long and faithfully served the empire.

On entering Merida, you pass the Guadiana by a handsome stone bridge * of Roman architecture, and in the highest state

* This bridge has sixty-four arches, and is one thousand yards in length; the antiquary will learn with sorrow, that two arches of this old bridge were, in the spring of 1812, blown up by the British, in the course of their military operations in the province of Estremadura.

of preservation; above it, on ground the most elevated in the city, stands a Roman castle*, the venerable walls of which, though rough and discoloured, or rather, coloured by the touch of time, appear secure and undecayed. These antiquities of themselves would have well rewarded our visit, for the design of them had probably been given by some celebrated Roman architect eighteen centuries before; and conquered Spaniards, from whose hands the shield and the sword so long, but so vainly, opposed to their invaders, had been reluctantly dropped, were employed, perhaps, in raising these monuments of the greatness, the power, and the genius of their victors. Such was the policy of the Romans: they always thus, by the erection of public works of magnificence and utility, while they recorded their own triumphs, gilt over the very chains they imposed, and made their provincial subjects feel proud even of dependency. Merida had its amphitheatre, its

* This castle was of great extent, the centre area being two hundred yards square.

naumachia, its baths, its triumphal arches, its temples and votive altars.

In a plain near the city are very grand and striking remains of the amphitheatre.* Its form, except in height, is still preserved; the seats appear quite perfect; the vaulted dens where the beasts were confined, and which open on the arena, are uninjured, and their arched roofs are strong as ever; the whole building is of stone, and the Roman cement used in its construction, is as hard, and seems to have been as durable, as the stone itself. Not very distant, you distinctly trace the naumachia †; and the low stone channel or conductor, by which the hollow space or basin was filled with water, may still be seen. Crowded on the seats of this amphitheatre, or pressing round the sides

* This amphitheatre has two tiers of seats, seven rows in the lower, five in the upper. Its diameter is fifty paces, and it is capable of holding with ease more than two thousand spectators.

† The basin of this naumachia is one hundred paces by sixty, its form oval, its depth twenty feet in the centre, and the banks for the spectators rise about twenty feet above its sides.

of the naumachia, you may still fancy the haughty legionaries, and the wondering Spaniards, gazing on the magnificent exhibitions of those splendid ages.

As you pass from this scene towards the town, you are struck by the lofty and picturesque ruins of two aqueducts*, one erected by the Romans, the other built by the Moors. I defy any man, of common education and feeling, to look upon such memorials of other days, unmoved.

I wandered from my companions, and seating myself under the shade of the first, fell into a train of thought, at once solemn and delightful. Here, on this very spot, had the Roman eagle been displayed in the day of its pride and glory; here, Roman knights and soldiers, men born perhaps on the banks of the Tiber, and educated in imperial Rome, whose familiar language was that in which a Cicero wrote, and a Virgil sung, and who had served and fought

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* The Roman aqueduct has three tiers of arches, the Moorish only two.

in Greece and Asia, laid down their helm and cuirass, and claimed their hardly-earned reward.

Over the same plain had the rude and unlettered Goths moved as conquerors, till in turn the haughty and glittering crescent rose o'er their drooping banner, and countless Moors, known by their snowy turbans, and silken vests, borne on the fleet coursers of Africa, and brandishing their curved falchions in all the insolence of triumph, rode shouting to those walls which an Augustus had built, and over which a Trajan had once held sway.

There is something infinitely affecting in having such scenes forced upon our imaginations by the presence of monuments, which, though crumbling before the ceaseless and consuming power of time, have yet survived, for so many centuries, the perishable hands of the mortals who raised them. There is a pleasure too, though it is not perhaps a Christian one: we are gratified, when reflecting on the shortness, uncertainty, and obscurity of our own lives, to mark the silent triumph of time, alike

"o'er all that has been, o'er all that is;" for the very wrecks of antiquity, still scattered over the earth, serve but to proclaim, more sadly, the desolating and enduring tyranny of time. In one of the streets of Merida may be seen a large and lofty arch*, said to be a triumphal one, erected in honour of Trajan. It bears, however, no inscription, nor is it in any way adorned with sculpture or relief; it has, nevertheless, the true Roman character; it is handsome in its proportions, and solid in its construction: very large massive stones, arranged with the most just and admirable skill, and put together without cement, compose this still perfect work.

In another part of the city three votive altars have been raised one above the other, and form a sort of pillar, on the top of which, some good and devout fathers have very provokingly placed the clumsy image of a saint. Strange revolution! that altars sculptured and adorned by the hands of

* This arch is fifty feet in height, and the base and sides of it are exceedingly thick.

heathens and idolators, should now form a column to elevate a statue for Christian adoration.

Near this place two small chapels have been built out of the materials, and upon the sites, of Roman temples; one of these, now dedicated to the Virgin, has the following inscription in large Roman characters, immediately above the entrance: — "*Marti Sacrum.*"

The baths are surprisingly perfect, but not large, though they have evidently been very handsome. You descend to them by a long flight of stone steps; the subterraneous chambers are gloomy, and not spacious, but extremely cool; the basins still contain water, supplied by some spring, but they are foul from neglect and disuse. These bathing rooms are lighted from the top of the building, which just above the water is open; a cornice runs round these rooms, most curiously and delicately finished, and the vine leaves and bunches of grapes, thus represented, appear as perfect as if they had not been executed many years. There are, doubtless, more vesti-

ges of Roman sculpture and masonry scattered and lost in the materials with which several of the private houses in and about Merida have been erected; and the foundation of many an old building, and the bed of many a garden, would well reward the search and labour of an antiquary. The remains which I have noticed, are all that the eager traveller can now discover; they are, however, sufficient in number, and interesting enough in character, to throw a sacred and indescribable charm around this small but venerable city.

In our billet, whither we returned to dinner, we found our patrona not a little fidgety and anxious at the idea of our having passed the hottest hours of the day exposed to the burning rays of the sun; the Spaniards themselves are very cautious in this particular, and usually shut up their windows, and confine themselves to their houses, if not to their beds, during the oppressive heat of noon. This good lady was civil and full of conversation: she had two daughters, one of whom, the youngest, a girl of about seventeen, was without any

exception, the most lovely, the most beautiful woman I saw while in Spain. To a very perfect form, she added a most faultless and most expressive countenance: never shall I forget her graceful, elegant movements, and the natural, yet chastened animation with which she spoke. I have never seen her since the moment that we mounted our horses to return; she leaned gracefully over the balcony, and kissed her hand to us as we rode off, wishing us success and honour in war, with all that noble enthusiasm which stamps the Spanish heroine. In the course of our conversation, she had expressed herself warmly about the profession of arms, saying repeatedly, that she would accept the hand of no man who had not fought for his country, and who was not a true Spaniard. Was Spain a country to be subdued, when such was the spirit of her daughters?

As we passed out of the town, we saw several officers, men, and horses of the heavy brigade of British cavalry, stationed there. The cattle were in wretched con-

dition, and the men looked sickly. Both officers and privates were very ill dressed, and their brown and shapeless hats had a most unmilitary appearance. Whoever had seen these regiments in England; in pale, sallow-looking men, and skeleton horses, would hardly have recognized the third Dragoon Guards and fourth Dragoons, two corps enjoying, and deservedly, a well-earned name. Thus, oftentimes, on actual service, vanishes all that brilliancy which has won the heart and fixed the choice of so many a youth, and which appeared so gay and attractive on crowded esplanades at home.

We pursued our way, for a few miles, slowly and silently, for we had too much food for reflection to feel even the wish to talk. Our day had been one of too delightful a character to often recur, and bright enough to counterbalance weeks of fatigue and inconvenience. As the shades of night closed in upon us, we, by accident, left our track, and, at length, wholly lost our way. After wandering for some time, we descried a fire on the plain, at a con-

siderable distance, and made towards it. Three shepherds were standing near it, and restraining, with difficulty, two enormous wolf-dogs, whom our approach had alarmed and irritated. The appearance of this group was singularly picturesque, and would have made a fine subject for a painting. The shepherds of these immense plains wear an upper dress of sheepskin, with the woolly side outwards, which covers the breast and back, and protects the thighs. These are made of white or black skin, as it may be; two of the present party had white, the other black; two of them were armed with long Spanish guns, for the protection of their flocks, and the other had the ancient crook. Their dogs were of a dun or mouse-colour, smooth-haired, partaking, in the form of their heads, both of the bull and mastiff, and both taller, and every way larger than any I ever saw in England. We had disturbed the whole party, and their looks of surprise and inquiry, together with the fierce and eager attitude of their dogs, not a little increased the effect. One of them, good-naturedly,

came a few hundred yards with us, to set us in the right road; and, finding it late, we spurred quickly home, well pleased with all our adventures, not excepting that, which had arisen from our losing our way, and delayed our return.

The autumnal season, in Estremadura, is proverbially unhealthy, and numbers of the inhabitants die annually of the alarming fever which prevails in the dreaded month of September. The unwholesome vapours, which arise from the beds of the many stagnant pools scattered over the surface of these plains, and always dried up by the summer heats, are said to produce this evil. Be this as it may, towards the end of September, this insidious and resistless enemy found his way into our tranquil quarters, crowded our hospitals with sick, and filled the chapel vaults with victims, over whom we gloomily and sullenly mourned. We would have resigned them in the field of battle, perhaps, with a sigh, yet not without some proud feeling of consolation; but here, to see the cheek blanched, and the arm unnerved by disease, was a constant

source of affliction and despondency. There is nothing about which Englishmen are so generally incredulous, or to which they appear so indifferent, as any report touching the danger of a season or a climate, and the approach of sickness and mortality; for this very reason, when once an alarming disease appears among them, they are overcome with surprise, they lose all elasticity of spirit, hope forsakes them, and they sink unresistingly to the grave. This does not proceed altogether from weakness of character; on the bed of sickness, the English soldier thinks more seriously of death, and his accountability hereafter, than perhaps any other, if we except the Protestant soldiers of the north of Germany. The inhabitants of the south of Europe, and the men who compose the mass of the continental armies, are, for the most part, members of the Roman or Greek church; and, certain it is, that on the bed of death all of these religious persuasions do appear to entertain a confidence of salvation, which, to the sober-minded and humble Protestant, however, innocent and

happy a feeling, seems mistaken, if not presumptuous. Strong in youth and health, and of a sanguine disposition, I took my daily exercise, under a burning sun, with very little apprehension. Sometimes, indeed, the passing corpse, and the painful sight of its destruction in the vault, would give a momentary chill to my blood. A very few hours after death, the Spaniards, in that province, are carried to the chapel, cast into the vault, their bodies immediately broken with staves, quick lime thrown upon them, and they are soon utterly consumed. This is well — as it should be, I believe; and, in a hot climate, a most necessary precaution against the danger of infection; but to us, accustomed as we were to a decent interment, and a closed coffin, the practice was, at first, revolting. On the fourth of October, our division, commanded by General Hill, was reviewed on the plain near Montigo, by Lord Wellington. We had a league to march to the ground, and were kept under arms a considerable time before his Lordship arrived. I was in the highest possible spirits, eager to behold the