

**RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL
AND SPAIN DURING 1811 AND 1812**

by

Cornet Francis Hall, 14th Light Dragoons



**KEN TROTMAN
MILITARY MONOGRAPHS 10
2003**

Published in 2003 by Ken Trotman Ltd.
Booksellers & Publishers
Unit 11, 135 Ditton Walk, Cambridge CB5 8PY
Tel: 01223-211030
Fax: 01223-212317
www.Kentrotman.ltd.uk

This edition © Ken Trotman Ltd.,
All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted
in any form or by any means electrical,
mechanical or otherwise without first seeking the
written permission of the copyright owner and
of the publisher.

PENINSULAR RECOLLECTIONS, 1811-12.

A Note on Colonel Francis Hall, by E. G. H.

THE writer of these Peninsular Recollections, Francis Hall, shows in his miniature a fair, pleasant face, with a twinkle in the blue eyes. Winchester College educated him, and was a life-long inspiration. She gave him a prize each year from 1803 to 1807, with the Prince of Wales's gold medal for English Verse¹—also three or four loyal friends. He went to Trinity College, Cambridge, in October, 1807, and had not yet taken his degree when on June 15th, 1810, he was given a commission in the 14th Light Dragoons. He went out with a draft to join his regiment in February, 1811, and was just in time to take part in the pursuit of Masséna from Santarem to Sabugal, as his journal describes. His letters of this period show his keen sympathy with the Portuguese people, who were so sorely inconvenienced by the presence of their British protectors. Hall was ever a friend of liberty, and fought for the freedom of Portugal from Bonaparte, as he afterwards fought for the freedom of Colombia from the yoke of Spain. He saw much fighting between February, 1811, and September, 1812, the limits of his Peninsular service, but Fuentes de Oñoro was his only pitched battle. He came through it with no further harm than a musket ball in the shoulder of his charger Sancho, concerning whose convalescence there are several notes in his letters home. In the following autumn he was slightly wounded at the combat of Carpio (Sep. 25), but much resented the publication of the fact in the *Gazette*. "By a diabolical blunder" he writes "I am afraid you will have seen my name among the slightly wounded; it is true I got a scratch on the 25th, but it was so slight that the Adjutant promised me not to return me as wounded. He afterwards sent in my name without my knowledge."

Invalided to England in the winter of 1812, after a fruitless search for health at the baths of Caldas, Lieutenant Hall was at home for three years. In October, 1815, Major-General John Wilson, commanding the Eastern District, chose him as his military secretary. Next year Wilson was appointed Administrator in Chief and Commander of the Forces in Lower Canada, and took his secretary with him to his new post beyond the Atlantic. Their connection was terminated by the General's death in the following winter, and Lieutenant Hall returned to England in February, 1817. He published in 1818 a volume

¹ On the Fall of Babylon, as shown by the College records.

on his Canadian and American experiences, dedicated to three brother-Wykehamists—Wrightson, Empson, and Rolfe. Immediately after he was travelling in France, and published an account of his rambles therein, dedicated to his old head-master, Doctor Goddard. His quaint description of the Seine at Paris reads sadly in this year of floods.¹ "The bridges are handsome enough to leave no regret save that they have not a nobler current: but in summer the Seine is so diminutive that one fancies it would have been cheaper to have filled it up than bridged it over. At all times it looks like a very lucky ditch to be thus running under arches of the most graceful symmetry, betwixt palaces and gardens, the admiration of Europe."

In 1819 Hall sold his commission in the British Army, and joined the "Legion" raised by General Devereux to fight under Simon Bolivar, the "Libertador," for the freedom of Spanish South America. The Legion was chiefly composed of Irishmen; Jeremy Bentham was interested in it, and one of the recruits was a son of Daniel O'Connell. How far the Legion was a success seems doubtful; but unlike most of his comrades Hall did not perish early by Spanish bullets or swamp fever. He survived for fourteen years, and became a colonel in the service of Colombia, and hydrographer to the Government of that Republic—the constitution of which, together with the possibilities of the country for immigration, he described in a pamphlet dedicated to Bentham.

The hydrography seems to have been congenial work, and led Hall into much exploring, during which he visited, in the company of Boussingault, the volcanoes of Pichimichi and Cotopaxi; on the latter mountain he climbed 300 feet higher than the point reached by Humboldt. The MS. of his journals was sent "with many excellent plants" to Dr. J. W. Hooker, of Glasgow, who printed it in the Report of the British Association for the year 1835.

The experiences of an English officer under a South American Government were not always pleasant. Hall's sympathy with the oppressed remained genuine—on one occasion he experienced imprisonment for 24 hours for defending a blacksmith's implements, which had been "commandeered" without payment by some town authorities for their own use, and contrary to their own law.

His end was sudden and sad—he died the victim of a typical South American revolution. An insurrection broke out in Quito on October 19th, 1833, and Colonel Hall was shot dead while leading "centralist" troops to attack a barrack occupied by the "separatist" rebels, who were tearing Ecuador away from the Colombian Republic.

E.G.H.

¹ Written in 1910.

RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN
DURING 1811 and 1812.

By CORNET FRANCIS HALL, 14th Light Dragoons.

INTRODUCTION.

LIFE has been called a pilgrimage. It is one in many respects, and the simile is never more applicable than when we make, at certain intervals, a halt in the onward march of our ideas, to revert to the contemplation of times gone by, and endeavour again to bring out the lineaments of events and objects, which, like the rich and delicate carved work of some ancient cathedral, we perceive to be growing daily more indistinct, and in danger of being finally blended into "a mass of things but nothing certain."

While thus occupied we resemble the traveller, who towards the close of his day's journey, pauses on some commanding eminence, and tries to discover, in the blue confusion of distance, the several portions of the landscape, the particular forest, vale or hamlet, through which his road has lain in the course of his peregrination. He perceives that the lapse of a few hours has rendered the fixing their exact site a matter of some perplexity, but it is a perplexity which is not without its charm—it both excites and gratifies curiosity. There are besides few features in a prospect which do not gain by being thus viewed: bleak and barren intervals disappear; the stiff formality of cultivation is waved and broken: whatever seemed coarse or obtrusive when beheld closely is now softened, and the whole landscape is so mellowed by the colouring of the atmosphere that the enraptured gazer wonders he should have found any part of the way tedious, and blames himself for having insufficiently enjoyed beauties of which he is now first made sensible. Time not infrequently produces on our recollections effects resembling those of distance on natural scenery: much of what seemed harsh in the endurance is softened when beheld through the vista of years: we perceive gleams of sunshine irradiating specks and patches in the landscape of past events, which when present to our observation either excited little interest or altogether escaped our notice; nor can we otherwise account for the complacency, and even delight, with which they are now reviewed, than by their connection with past times and feelings, as if there were some charm, some "open sesame" in this simple circumstance, capable of finding an immediate passage to our hearts. Here, however, the parallel we have been drawing terminates. The traveller stops, looks back, and again continues his journey with increased delight and refreshed vigour; but it is not so in the pilgrimage of existence: we can make no mental retrospect without being sensible of some loss, and feeling many regrets.

We cannot have lived with impunity. The wear and tear of our moral being is alone a formidable set off against the casual benefits of fortune or acquirements of experience. We may, indeed, have encountered none of the more tremendous visitings of calamity; our ship may be still seaworthy; her timbers may be all sound and her masts standing; but the gay ensigns on which our young fancies had painted the insignia of hope and pleasure, have either been hauled down, or are flying half-mast high in token of distress. We still indeed drive on, but it is either like "the Flying Dutchman," without hope of a haven before we founder, or with the almost equal misery of finding we have mistaken the latitude and bearings of the port we sailed for, till we are obliged at length to give up our intended point of destination, and accept such anchorage and shelter as accident may afford us. To be subjected, however, merely to mistakes and disappointments is a destiny too favourable to belong to more than a minute portion of the human race; of the majority of men's lives there are few which would not afford materials for a tragedy, were the events of them reduced within the limits and compass of stage effect. Many would convert the theatre into a shambles and "drown the stage with tears." It is no wonder, therefore, that remembrances are guests in whose presence we feel ourselves constrained to a more than ordinary sobriety of deportment. Their very entrance strikes a chord of melancholy. They are dwellers among the tombs, and bear in their countenances the "pale cast of thought" suitable to those who, while yet in the flesh, hold converse with the departed.

* * * * *

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE AND ARRIVAL AT LISBON. [Jan.-Feb., 1811.]

I embarked at Plymouth towards the end of January, 1811, with a detachment of my regiment,¹ or a "remount," as it is aptly termed, destined for the Army of Portugal, which was then watching the movements of Masséna at Santarem. My feelings on this occasion were, I suppose, like those of most young officers under similar circumstances. They were full of hope and enterprise: courting difficulties and little apprehensive of danger. I believed that being very uncomfortable was one of the first steps towards being a good officer, and the transport *Elizabeth* afforded me every facility for reducing my new creed to practice. I was uncomfortable to perfection. I had no bed but the boards of my berth, nor bedding but two stinking ships' blankets, which it required *heroic* nerves to tolerate. I was excessively sick, and for the first week literally tasted nothing.

¹ 114th Light Dragoons.—E. G. II.

My servant, finding that eating made no part of my mode of living, began gradually to discontinue his visits to my cabin, until at last, after having been bolted down in the dark during a Bay of Biscay gale for 24 hours, I began to consider that starving was no military death. So crawling from my hole, like a famished rat, I made a vigorous attack upon the single surviving leg of mutton aboard, and thenceforth recovered, not *my* appetite, but that of three people.

I was the only officer in the ship, and the master made it a point of conscience to communicate to me every subject of alarm in which I could possibly do no good. He roused me one night to let me know the ship was half full of water, the horses half drowned, and the pumps missing: as if I could either have found the pumps, bailed the ship, or restored the horses. They were luckily able to do without me, and after a tempestuous passage of 23 days, the whole fleet, about 20 or 30 sail, floated within sight of the brown, rocky shores of Portugal; and on the morning of the 16th February, 1811, we hailed the Rock of Lisbon, as devoutly as Leander the Sestian Promontory. One must have known the confinement of a dungeon, or a sick chamber, to appreciate the full value of fresh air and sunshine; one must have been sea-sick in a transport to know what a thrilling sensation, what an intoxication of the senses, can be caused by terrestrial sights and sounds, when they succeed a tedious voyage. I had lain all night on deck to watch the first breaking of Portuguese scenery through the morning mists. The crowing of cocks, the glimmering of white churches and convents, the tinkling of *Matin* bells, were the first harbingers of day. A swarm of fishing boats began to dart down the river, many of their crews saluted our Portuguese sailors as they passed; and in their noisy animation and gestures, I fancied I perceived the lively genius of a southern climate.

A conspicuous object on our right, as we ascended the Tagus, was Fort Bugio, rising as it were out of the middle of the stream. It is the State Prison, and its dungeons are said to extend far beneath the waters. If their miserable inmates ever catch a sound of the tide booming heavily over their heads, they probably envy its finny inhabitants, and wish they had occupied a lower station in the scale of created beings—but this is an after-thought. I made no such moral reflection as I passed it, but continued gazing with increased rapture on chapels, palaces and castles, blended with gardens and orange groves in the neighbourhood of Belem, while beyond, the white terraces of Lisbon rose in amphitheatrical ranges above a forest of masts.

LANDING IN PORTUGAL.

At Belem, opposite to the great Convent of St. Jeronymo, I set foot on Lusian territory. Here I found myself on a broad

open space, or Praça, too irregular to be called a square, the principal ornament of which was the aforesaid convent, with its magnificent church, finished in the most florid style of Arabian¹ architecture. Many of the other buildings were mean, but with their broad verandas, latticed windows and orange trees, beheld, too, under a glowing sun, were all well enough calculated to please one so predisposed to become an admirer; but the living groups still more forcibly arrested my attention. Officers and soldiers, of many nations, in many uniforms; monks with broad hats in the habits of their various orders; a train of above a hundred mules, with their pack-saddles decorated with gaudy fringes, and shaking their bells in chorus with the shrill cries or shriller songs of their drivers; the comic appearance of the lower class of inhabitants, magnificently trailing their tattered capotes, and surmounting their tanned lanky features with the fragments of immense cocked hats. All these, together with the life and bustle which ran through all (with the exception, indeed, of the monks, who looked with plump serenity on such worldly turmoil), afforded me infinite amusement, as well from the novelty as the picturesque effect of the scene.

It was a striking contrast to this busy picture to enter the Church of St. Jeronimo. Its appearance was gloomily sublime. There was scarcely daylight enough admitted to dim the lamps and tapers which burned round the High Altar. The columns—covered to their summits with grotesque sculptures—which flanked the centre aisle, seemed to lose themselves in the obscurity of the vaulted roof; on either side were several shrines and chapels, superbly gilt and ornamented: one or two of them were concealed with heavy palls of purple drapery, and this concealment seemed to me to give them a more awful character of sublimity than they could have received from the most ostentatious display of their splendour. There was no service performing, but here and there a female, covered with a white veil, was kneeling on the pavement, seemingly absorbed in prayer. This solitary devotion has always been to me the most impressive part of the Romish worship. All forms and ceremonies are conventional, and are rather substitutes for, than representation of, internal piety: but when the suffering spirit draws near the Altar of its God, in solitude and silence, we perceive religion in its essence, and respect the feeling, whatever may be the faith of the worshipper.

The Refectory of the Convent is hung round with a series of portraits of the Kings of Portugal. I remember little of their execution, but it was impossible not to be struck with the regular (or *rectilinear*, to use a legitimate phrase) degeneracy exhibited in the persons and features of this royal race, from the

¹To be exact, in the florid "Manuelesque" style, a sort of local blend of "Flamboyant" Gothic, with Oriental detail, and a certain amount of Renaissance spirit.

haughty Emanuels and Alphonsos who frown in steel, to the puny abortions of these latter days

My first quarter was in an hotel which had been a nobleman's residence. The situation was beautiful, looking to the Tagus over a delightful garden full of flowers and orange trees. It was unlucky that, though a great admirer of flowers, I could not live by inhaling their fragrance, for the larder produced nothing but sour bread and salt butter. The secret was that our host was in prison for some peculation, so that the establishment was a little out at the elbows. I could not procure a bed, but was accommodated with a sofa, in a lower room looking to the garden. Bed or sofa were alike to me. I out-watched the stars and saluted the rising sun as much refreshed as if I had dreamed an hundred years in the court of the sleeping beauty. What wonder? I possessed a new existence. After crawling some time about the cold wet streets of Plymouth, I had passed into the chrysalis state on board the transport, and was now enjoying my butterfly resurrection among sweets and blossoms.

Daylight, however, dispersed a pretty little vision I had conjured during my moonlight vigils. I had imagined I saw the heads of two persons engaged in earnest conversation in the garden below my window, and could think of nothing less than some lady fair and Portuguese cavalier; when, as they, imprudently to my notion, suffered the dawn to break upon them, I beheld two innocent white lilies shaking their heads together in the morning air.

It was Sunday, and I attended Mass in the Prince's Chapel. Everything was striking, the whole choir wore scapularies of rich point lace over cassocks of purple silk. The music and singing were excellent, and when the "Holy of Holies" was suddenly revealed, and the "mitred Abbot" stretched out his hands, amid a cloud of incense, to bless the prostrate congregation, one could not but confess the imposing grandeur of the ceremony When the service was over, I amused myself with watching the ugly old women who glided in long files from the chapels They were interesting, for they were the ugliest beings I had ever seen, and whatever is perfect in its kind, be it best, wisest, fairest or ugliest, attracts and deserves notice. I next ran over the Prince's new Palace, half finished, but in a better architectural taste than is common in Portugal. The gardens are according to the most perfect models of the worst era of the horticultural art. Terraces built up above terraces, and connected by flights of stone steps. Gravel walks, arranged with parallelogrammatical exactness, to divide one box-edged square or triangle from another, its facsimile; trees trimmed and tortured as regularly as if they had grown in the Flying Island; the stony heads of Popes, Cardinals, and Demigods planted in steadfast rows along the

alleys and round the stately alcoves or stinking basins of green water, in the middle of which a petty pyramid of shell work is commonly crowned with a little squirting boy or sea monster—such are the features of the royal gardens of Belem, and of all other gardens in Portugal of any pretension, whether royal, noble, or episcopal. Here and there, however, a long, shaded walk, vine-clad trellises or a thicket of orange trees, make some amends, and render a stroll through them more than bearable.

Seeing sights is no bar against the inroads of hunger, and unfortunately hunger in Belem could not, at this period, furnish any direct clue towards procuring a dinner. There was nothing to be bought, and I was provoked to find myself next door to starvation in a town in which so many individuals evidently contrived to support themselves. It is true this is no great matter to a Portuguese. In every street are men sitting with small earthen stoves, on which they boil sardines, and thus furnish an inhabitant with a meal in a few minutes; a few oranges and vegetables make this meal a feast: but our English stomachs craved more substantial viands, and we were fain to appease them by having recourse to our quondam prison-house, the transport, where a round of beef and bottled porter made up all old grudges, and dismissed us full, and grateful, as men commonly are when full. This same evening our horses, who had now with little loss of health or flesh been six weeks on their legs in the ship's hold, were embarked on board some great *prames*,¹ to be conveyed to Lisbon, where they were landed, and I marched back with them to Belem, four miles on foot through a complete slough of all abominable filths, which, considering I might have ridden, I could not but esteem a very meritorious action, and accordingly I slept very soundly in the consciousness of having deserved well of my country . . . I saw Lisbon but twice by daylight during my first visit to its neighbourhood, and as often, perhaps, afterwards. On this first occasion I was too much in a hurry, and on the second, in too bad health, to be able to give a tolerable account of it, or, indeed, any account worth writing, but for the satisfaction of securing the little I have once known; could all such littles be recalled, we should be often surprised at the gross sum of knowledge they would constitute. Lisbon looks enchantingly from a boat on the Tagus. Being built up the side of a hill, street shows itself above street, church above church, all of stone as white as if just quarried, and relieved by clumps of trees rising from the gardens of the numerous convents; but to land and enter is like crossing the stream to dissolve an enchantment.² There are, indeed, some decent squares, the Praça

¹ The Prame or Praam is a sort of lighter of Dutch origin and type.

² An allusion to the old superstition that the power of a witch's spell did not work after running water had been once crossed by the person on whom the glamour had been cast.

de Commercio in particular, which is surrounded by a piazza of a more imposing aspect than that of Covent Garden : but the streets are for the most part built up precipices, miserably paved, without footways, and in rainy weather roll down, not a metaphorical but a literal torrent of filth and water. Many of the houses are, indeed, upon a princely scale, but their ground floors, which are appropriated to the stables and meaner domestic offices, are always wretchedly dirty, and with their windows closely grated with iron, make the principal streets look like rows of dungeons. The shops have an aspect equally gloomy : they have no shop windows, but are open in front in the manner of our petty green stalls and coal sheds, yet frequently so dark within that it requires a keen glance to discover the sallow vendor of cheese and candles sitting among his wares. While the French occupied the city they compelled the inhabitants to keep it clean, but our arrival restored the golden days of filth and freedom, and now, as in the days of old, each morning breeze is poisoned with legitimate stinks, descending by prescriptive and indefeasible right on the head of the unwary pedestrian, who, after suffering or escaping such peril, is consigned to the domiciliary visits of thousands of fleas and bugs, who incessantly excite his attention to the nightly chorus of famished curs, howling under his window.

The pleasantest part of Lisbon is a suburb extending towards Belem, emphatically denominated Buenos Ayres. The houses command fine views of the Tagus, and, externally at least, are clean and cheerful. I believe it is the part of the town chiefly occupied by the English and foreigners, whose health requires the softness of a Southern climate ; but assuredly their noses pay for it.

I visited the San Carlos theatre, which used to get up the finest Italian operas in Europe. The house is large, neither shabby nor splendid. It has two peculiarities which struck me. There is no gallery, and the royal box occupies nearly the whole front of the house. This is emblematical. The Court is everything, the people nothing. The present company was Portuguese ; some of the actors were not below mediocrity. The piece was a kind of sentimental comedy, probably translated from the German ; a statuary was one of the *dramatis personæ*, relative to whom it was observed in the course of the play, " that an artist who honoured his country by the productions of his genius might well rank with its first nobility," which heretical sentiment was followed by that wavering kind of applause which indicates a struggle betwixt prejudice and good sense on the part of the audience.¹ I can speak of Society

¹ On my second visit to Lisbon, I found a company of players from the West of England established in one of the minor theatres. Their principal claim, of course, was on the English ; but the Portuguese came too, and seemed as well amused as people can be with what they cannot fully understand.

in Lisbon only by report, which puts it on the easiest footing. After a bow of introduction, repeated at each visit, one may say and do nearly anything. My own experience of Portuguese manners lies chiefly among the lower orders, but from the little I have seen of the upper classes, I believe them to be generally courteous and lively, exhibiting not, indeed, the polished brilliancy of refined imaginations, but a facility of being amused, accompanied with a certain degree of indifference as to the mode. The great disparity of ranks probably aids this disposition. There can be no fear lest the "clown tread on the kibes of the courtier." The latter is a *Fidalgo*, and has, therefore, nothing to dread from the encroachments of plebeian equality. Jealousy dies with competition; vanity has no need to keep her bristles up, lest she should be degraded by too familiar intercourse, and the tone of communication betwixt the different ranks of Society is therefore kindly, even somewhat paternal. The Portuguese term for male and female domestics (*Criado, Criada*) answers rather to *Elève de la maison*, than to our "Servant." The females are often called "Daughter" by their mistresses. It is honourable to human nature when private feelings tend, as they probably do in Portugal, to mitigate the effects of a defective political system. Such systems are rarely the work of existing generations; they descend upon them with the yoke of necessity which admits of being lightened, not shaken off. I regard the ceremonious politeness of the lower classes of Portuguese towards one another as another effect to the same end. They seek, in the forms of mutual respect and ceremony, to recover a certain degree of self-consideration, in which to bury the sense of their political nothingness. It used to be the same in France. Such artificial forms are indeed a mask, of which freedom stands in no need, but when a mask veils deformity one would not have it withdrawn for the sake of what is beneath it.

CHAPTER II.

A MARCH.—MASSÉNA'S RETREAT.

[Feb. 20th—April 4th, 1811.]

Four days after our arrival, the detachment to which I belonged received orders to join the Army. Our road lay through Lisbon, on the right bank of the Tagus, to Sacavem. It is called a paved road; that is, a number of large stones are sprinkled in the mud, which was sometimes three feet deep. It was as hot as an English July, and I felt the full force of all these advantages from having, in pursuance of my system of discomfort, suspended a loaded haversack, with a soldier's canteen, over the usual allotment of military accoutrement. The distance, however, did not exceed eight or nine miles. Vineyards, divided by loose stone walls, were the principal feature

of the country, but at this season they resembled fields of dried cabbage stalks. We passed a monastery, about a league from Lisbon, the monks of which were sunning themselves in the courtyard. Sacavem is a mean little village built on an arm of the Tagus, over which there was a flying bridge of boats. We found an inn, which would have made a shabby pothouse in the most untravelled parts of England. The walls were bare; the windows unglazed. The furniture consisted of a rude bench or two and a rickety table, round which we minions of Bond Street, "all plumed like ostriches," were to dine. The fare, however, was far from despicable. Broiled Tagus salmon, roast pork, salad, dressed with oil not very rancid, wine, porter and oranges. Our next day's march (Feb. 21) lay along the shores of the Tagus, through a tract of country consisting chiefly of vineyards and olive groves, with occasional patches of pine wood, to Villa Franca, once a neat little town, and still affording a market of fruit, vegetables, salt fish, and small cheeses made of goats' milk, insipid enough. As there were no troops there but ourselves we were much at our ease with respect to quarters, that is, we had sufficient space of bare walls and flooring—a luxury of brief duration. Betwixt Villa Franca and Azambuja we passed the right of the lines intended to cover Lisbon. From the confluence of the Sizandro,¹ with the ocean on the left, a chain of redoubts commences, passing by way of the heights and ancient castle of Torres Vedras, across the Peninsula towards Alenquer, and thence by the stream of Villa Nova to the Tagus. Every commanding eminence in this interval was crested with batteries, so placed as to enfilade each gorge, or pass, by which an enemy might penetrate; so that Portugal might literally be said to have armed her mountains in her defence. There was something sublime in the contemplation of this natural barrier which, like a bulwark of oceans, fixed a limit to the tide of hostile devastation. I once heard a Portuguese woman call Lord Wellington "the angel of victory." It would cost a poet but little to image out such a personification of his eagle spirit sitting above these guarded heights, and turning back the march of the destroyer. The sublime in action is privileged, however, even beyond the minstrel's art. It needs but to be simply related to become poetry. We found Azambuja occupied by General Cole's Division (the 4th). When four or five thousand men with a proportionate number of horses occupy a small town, it may be imagined there is little superfluous space, either within doors or without. The whole was, in fact, a thick compost of military bustle. Baggage wagons and artillery parked in the square; bugles sounding the various calls; the dingy streets thronged with soldiers, some hastening to their respective parades, others lighting fires and cooking their meals in the open air; orderly

¹ Or Zizandre, below Torres Vedras, on the west end of the lines.

sergeants hastening to and fro with looks of steady importance; soldiers' wives in gay attire with looks of no steadiness at all; such was the scene without doors. The interior of the churches exhibited a curious spectacle: they were converted into barracks. The gilded shrines were torn down for firewood, and instead of myrrh and frankincense the High Altar smoked with the steam of ration beef. If churches were thus treated, private houses scarcely fared better. Twenty or thirty soldiers were crammed into each room, against the bare wall of which they made their fires, with the aid of whatever relics of furniture friends and foes had spared; in default of movables, which had in most cases altogether moved off, recourse was had to doors, window-frames and flooring, and where these too failed, rafters and roof-timbers were put in requisition, a process by which numbers of houses were daily converted into ruins. It may be supposed that in this state of concentration two or three officers arriving with a petty detachment of dragoons were not splendidly lodged. My lot was cast in a quarter of an apartment in which, to say nothing of the luxury of seat or table, there was neither door, window, fireplace nor light-hole. Squatting, however, on our packs and trunks, we contrived to dine tolerably on ham and potatoes. My companions slept in this same apartment; for my own part I discovered a loft above my horse's stable, occupied by a suttler, and all his cargo of porter and groceries, in a corner of which I made my bed, that is, spread my cloak, and reposed very hardly—or, as I represented it to myself, very like a hero.

The next day's march (Feb. 22) brought us to Cartaxo, the headquarters of the Army, a mile or two in front of which the 14th Light Dragoons occupied the village of Castel d'Ouro, and formed, with the Royals, the advance of the Army, having picquets on the Rio Mayor, in the direction of Valle and on the neighbouring flats. Valle is a petty hamlet, scattered on the sandy alluvium of the Rio Mayor, over which there is a small stone bridge crossed by the main road from Cartaxo to Santarem. This bridge formed the advanced post of the French Army, and as our vedettes were pushed up to the river's edge, the sentinels on either side were close together, and occasionally carried on a kind of friendly communication. Masséna's main body occupied the town of Santarem and heights in front of it, covered with *abattis* and batteries. On our side there was a small battery, on the heights which flanked and commanded the road to Valle, from which the enemy's advanced post might plainly be discerned. The village of Castel d'Ouro consisted of some dozens of cottages scattered round a green near the main road. My own quarter shall be described as an indifferent specimen of the general accommodation. I occupied a cottage consisting of two small rooms, the first of which was my stable, and was lighted by a broken door, whereas my apartment drew the blessing of daylight through the broken roof only. It is true

the rain entered by the same aperture, but then it was quickly soaked up by the mud flooring, while myriads of fleas perished in the deluge. For furniture, I converted part of the old door into a table, made seats of my canteen and pack-saddle, and a bed of my cloak and blanket spread over a few branches of pine, on which I should have rested well enough, but for the vermin above-named, between whom and me, neither length of time, nor habits of the most intimate association, could ever generate anything like sympathy or affection.

On the morning of the 5th March, clouds of smoke were observed above Santarem, and a report was presently abroad that some movement on the part of the enemy might be expected, preparatory to which they were burning, either their useless stores, or the town. This conjecture or information proved correct. Early the next morning our bugles sounded "to horse," and in less than an hour we were on the road to Valle. The morning was fine and the scene animating. We found the Guards halted in close column, on the road from Cartaxo, ready to advance with the main body of the Army. The Staff were busily in motion, and both officers and men seemed to rejoice, like unslipt greyhounds, in the prospect of pursuit. The baggage formed an amusing appendix to our line of march. Horses, mules, donkeys, servants, women, children, dogs, goats and poultry were mixed in a chaotic jumble. Here, a restive mule planted his forefeet and halted in obstinate defiance both of oaths and blows; there, another had contrived to shift his load from his back to his belly, while a third, with the most provoking philosophy, had chosen this moment of confusion quietly to repose himself where his presence was least desirable. In spite, however, of impediments, we moved briskly on. The narrow bridge of Valle, on which the French had placed a stuffed vedette, to deceive our advanced posts during the twilight, was quickly rendered passable, and we soon began to ascend the heights of Santarem, and entered the town, which had been Masséna's headquarters through the winter.

Our column halted for a few minutes in the great square. A large convent on one side of it attracted my attention, and I took an opportunity of running to get a sight of it. The church door stood open, and I was on the point of entering when I started back on perceiving 20 or 30 miserable objects, seemingly in the last stages of disease, lying in bed on each side of the aisle. The convent had been used as a hospital, and these were French soldiers who had been left here to die, either because they were deemed past recovery, or that Masséna's means of transport were inadequate to the conveyance of all his sick. Some of them lay seemingly insensible to their condition, and perhaps were already dead; others turned their ghastly faces towards the door as I entered. It was already crowded with Portuguese, whose squalid figures, and countenances wild, gaunt and famine-pinched, bespoke the agony and

irritation of recent suffering. "*Mata los, mata los*"—"murder them, murder them"—was their shrill sepulchral exclamation. Women and children joined in the cry, while revenge lent their dark, hollow eyes and livid features an expression of deadly satisfaction. I prevailed on them, however, to pause for a moment, and hastened to communicate the circumstance; a guard was, I believe, in consequence set over the convent. If so, the destiny of these forsaken wretches was an exception to the general lot. There were few cases in which our interposition could be sufficiently speedy to avert the "wild justice" of the inhabitants, eager to share with their oppressors the dregs of that bitter cup of which they had been compelled to drink so deeply. For these wretched tools, which ambition had thus broken and cast away, it is difficult to conceive in the whole circle of human suffering, a situation from which our nature shrinks more appalled. They had escaped death when death had been honour, and pain quenched in the hot tide of combat, to meet him as the avenging fiend of deeds which had blasted their names as soldiers, and corrupted their memory to all succeeding generations. The dying flame of life was to be extinguished amid tortures and execrations from which conscience could make no appeal; with what heart-sickness must they have beheld the removal of their comrades, and have listened to the succession of sounds which indicated their departure. The trumpet-notes. The hurried trampling of men and horses. The creaking of wheels which told the march of the baggage. The deadly stillness which came after—"prophetic of their end."

We moved from Santarem on the road to Thomar (March 6). Every step of our march now presented some image of cruelty, some stamp of devastation. Everywhere was a wilderness of death. Towns and villages stood in tenantless ruin. The doors were open, the furniture destroyed and scattered about in the wantonness of havoc. Of the few inhabitants who had ventured to "abide the coming" of the invader, or who had returned too early to their houses in the hope of saving some portion of their property, the greater part lay murdered in the streets, or within their dwellings. We sometimes found whole families bleeding together, the women's breasts were frequently cut off and their bodies otherwise mangled, with a demoniac ferocity which could have had neither motive nor temptation. Blood seemed to have been poured out like water, and the vessels of life broken as if they had been mere potsherds.

So intense was the desolation that the sight of a living inhabitant became something startling and unusual. One might have fancied the bells, which occasionally tinkled from some church steeple to welcome our arrival, were rung by disembodied spirits, so little were any ordinary sights and sounds in unison with everything about us. The few survivors who occasionally collected in groups in the village market-place, or before

their houses, as we passed, had faces so meagre and cadaverous that they looked as if they had already died of hunger, and were now tortured by some magician's act into a horrible semblance of life. I have never before, or since, seen such lines of wretchedness traced in the human countenance. In this state of things we quartered ourselves and horses wherever we could find room. Not unfrequently, before we could occupy an apartment, it was necessary to remove the corpse of its murdered owner. I remember lodging one night at a mill, in which we found the miller, lying with his limbs drawn up in the writhing attitude of a painful dissolution, and both his hands pressed to a wound in his left side, inflicted either by a sword or the bayonet. Nor were the peasantry and inhabitants slow in retaliating on the authors of their calamities, whenever an opportunity presented itself. Descending, as the French retired, from their mountain hiding-places, they hung upon their rear and massacred every straggler whom they could pick off with their fowling-pieces, or who chanced to drop behind from sickness or fatigue. We found their bleeding bodies at every step of our advance; life was in some cases scarcely extinct. They were stripped naked, and a few pine-branches were sometimes cast over them. We frequently noticed their faces turned towards the road their comrades had taken. It was, I think, towards the end of the second day's march (March 7), as we were moving from Thomar towards Ceros,¹ after winding up the toilsome ascent of one of the stony ramifications of the Sierra d'Estrella, in the midst of a hail storm, that we first came in sight of the enemy's columns, moving on the brow of the opposite mountain. We halted for a moment to close up our files, and commenced our descent towards an open heath in the valley, where their rear guard of cavalry was drawn up to receive us. We threw out our line of skirmishers as we moved forward, and the firing commenced. One of our squadrons charged, and cut down a few French dragoons, but the force opposed to us was too strong for us to make a serious impression. The enemy went off, leaving us a few prisoners and horses, and we took up our quarters for the night in a ruined village.

The French Army had retired from Santarem in three Divisions, by the roads of Pombal, Anciao and Espinhal. Our brigade had followed on the latter, but moved again to its left in consequence of Masséna having concentrated his force on the 9th inst., before Pombal. He had, however, no intention of giving battle, but after sustaining an attack of the light troops and some cavalry, under Major-General Pack, retired in the night, leaving Pombal in flames. On the 12th his rearguard was again seen occupying a strong position of heights betwixt Redinha and Pombal. Again we looked for battle. Our main body deployed on an open heath in two lines, covered by

¹ A small village on the Thomar-Espinhal road.

cavalry, and the whole were moving forward in support of the Light Division, which had commenced the attack, when the enemy again retired, and soon after heavy clouds of smoke bursting from the town of Redinha, informed us they had continued their retreat towards Condeixa. Everyone could now perceive the principle upon which their movements were regulated. With a strong rearguard of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, they took up positions too strong to be attacked in front without manifest disadvantage. It was, therefore, necessary to turn them by the circuitous march of columns towards their flanks and rear; an operation which necessarily took up time, and enabled them again to commence an unembarrassed retreat. The celerity, however, with which our movements were executed not infrequently deranged their calculations, as was the case at Condeixa, when their position was turned by Major-General Picton, and they were forced from the Coimbra Road towards Miranda de Corvo on the Eça river. We passed through Condeixa after the action. It had been one of the principal seats of nobility and fashion in Portugal, but its stately mansions now scarcely yielded shelter to the wearied soldiery, who carelessly threw their knapsacks on the marble pavements and lighted their fires against the painted walls of the saloons.

On the 14th and 15th March the enemy's positions at Casal Novo and Miranda de Corvo were successively turned and carried. Many were drowned in fording the Ceira. The Sierra de Moita, a branch of the Estrella ridge, on the right bank of the Alva, afforded them another vantage ground. The Alva, crossed by a narrow stone bridge, rushes rapidly betwixt the precipitous ridges of Moita and Murcella, the road over which from its rugged steepness and difficulty has acquired the name of the "Pass of Murcella." Here they once more put themselves in position, destroyed the bridge of Murcella in their front, and sent foraging parties to scour the adjacent country; but being turned by their left, they went off on the night of the 18th, and continued rapidly to retreat on Celorico. Our share of service during this advance was unimportant. The broken face of the country scarcely permitted the use of any other arm than light infantry. Our business was to plod on from daybreak to dark, and sometimes long after, in most unenviable perplexity. In the lower and more cultivated districts the roads were rendered deep and miry by the incessant passage of horses, artillery, bullock cars, and carriages of various descriptions, numbers of which were abandoned as the retreat grew more hurried, and choked up the way with their broken wheels and fragments; in addition to which, every slough and muddy ravine or ford was thickened with putrefying carcasses of horses, mules and asses, which had dropped or been slaughtered when unable to proceed. To escape these impediments we were perpetually obliged to break our line of march, by filing through the enclosures of loose stones, and so pick our way through

vineyards and cornfields, with very little either of speed or convenience. In this manner a few miles cost many hours, even when there was no enemy to impede us.

Among the hills betwixt the Ceira and the Alva, we had perpetually to mount and descend by roads which more resembled the channels of mountain torrents than roads designed by human ingenuity. Here the face of the country grew wild and bare in the extreme. In every direction it was traversed by the branching ridges of the Sierra, whose summits, covered with snow, gleamed, and were lost at intervals, amid a sea of heavy clouds. Here and there its bare rocky slopes were marked with long, dark belts of pine wood, but on the bleakest steeps even the pine refused to vegetate, and a light, but graceful fringe of the white-flowering broom alone waved over masses of grey rock, which frequently rose like the giant altar of a Druidical temple. The small green lizard was the only living thing which seemed domesticated in these solitudes, and was often seen basking in the sun or darting his bright eyes, as if with curiosity, on our line of march. The glens and valleys by which these ridges were divided were generally cultivated, looking, as we descended on them, like green streamlets serpentine round the mountain's base. Here we commonly found an *Aldea* or group of smoke-grimed hovels, in which men and horses crammed themselves for the night; but we rarely met with a hamlet so obscure, or even a solitary peasant's hut in the middle of its little melon-patch and cornfield, which had not been pillaged, and for the most part destroyed by the enemy. Sometimes a whole village had not a habitable dwelling left. The peasantry began, indeed, slowly to return to their homes, sometimes with a little flock of goats or sheep which they had secured in the mountains, and which were now converted into lawful booty by our soldiers. Military logic is in such cases extremely compendious. The soldier holds all animals that run away to be "*feræ naturæ*," and takes them by the right of occupancy. Those which do not run away he also takes, of course! When a village was not to be met with sufficient to shelter us, a pine wood answered the purpose. Our horses, accustomed to remain in one another's company, were easily kept together in troops near their riders, and stood saddled all night. After their nose bags were on, if we had been lucky enough to meet with a supply of Indian corn in the course of the day, the men began to look out for water and cut fuel, and in half an hour a hundred fires threw their ruddy light on "umber'd groups" busied either in cooking, repairing their arms, or jesting and squabbling over the events of the day. The most alarming inconvenience attending these bivouacs was the occasional failure of supplies, both public and private. Our provision baskets were exhausted by the constant drain upon them, and our slow speed, by frequently out-running that of the commissariat mules, reduced us sometimes to the uninteresting

alternative of mouldy biscuit or nothing. As often, however, as no such privations hung over us, and while our wine skins continued to keep their goodly plumpness, we lived merrily enough "under the greenwood tree." Our limbs required no couch more luxurious than dry heather, fortunate when our encampment afforded so much. The stars were always still bright when the bugle roused us. Each man folded his cloak, replaced his wet blanket beneath his saddle, and shaking the heavy dew-drops from the draggled bear skins of his helmet, he fell into his place, and again we commenced the toils of the day.

This early rising was not, however, without its reward. They who live in a level country have no conception amid what visions of beauty the sun rises over mountain scenery. The mists which at day dawn were seen ascending from the blue smoking streams, gradually rolled themselves into clouds, and as they reflected the rising sunbeams, enveloped the mountain tops with a gorgeous drapery. Frequently as our lengthened file wound up from the yet twilight valley, the foremost horsemen of the column were seen by those below moving like the shadows of giants through its gauzy wreaths. When we had at length scaled some beetling eminence, and the full splendour of day flooded the whole landscape, we looked down over forests, rivers and barren heaths, intersected by cultivated valleys, in which the white walls of some convent or *quinta* brightly contrasted themselves with sombre olive groves. We had been thus marching over moor and mountain for fourteen days, when we fell upon the main road betwixt Celorico and Coimbra. Here it was my fortune to be stationed several days with a small detachment, for the purpose of taking charge of prisoners. My quarters were a solitary *venta* or post house, more respectable of its kind than its name, "Venta de Porco," "Pig's Inn," seemed to denote it, for its walls and roof were entire, and no very considerable injury done to the flooring. There was even something resembling a table, and a broken bench or two. It stood on the edge of a pine wood, at the entrance of which lay the naked corpse of a French soldier, murdered by the peasantry. The day after my establishment here, when the enemy might be said to be completely off, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood began to return to their houses and produce their hidden treasures. Thus, a blacksmith came to my *venta* for his anvil and tools, which he drew from the roof; others brought out their crockery and linen. In consequence of the vigour with which our light troops had pushed on, the work of hostile devastation in this vicinity had been incomplete. The villages a little off the line of march had in many cases completely escaped. Our men frequently came up while the enemy were in the act of firing the quarters in which they had slept, and many were thus saved. The prospect of famine was, however, dreadful through the country.

Betwixt friends and foes scarcely a consumable article was left. I, indeed, purchased a few starved sheep at half a dollar a head, but they were not bigger than cats. "*Ah, Senhor, los Franceses todo rompieron, destruyeron todo,*" was everywhere the lamentable burthen of complaint. I must make a single exception, however, in the person of my host, who one day made me a visit with another Portuguese. He was a plump looking man, decently dressed, carried a fowling-piece in his hand, and seemed to think on the whole his house and himself had got well through the business. I offered him what refreshment I had, and some very bad wine; in return he produced a leathern bag from under his cloak, and offered me a draught of a very superior quality. It was evident he had not been comfortless on his journey.

My charge of prisoners was of a very trifling nature, half a dozen wretched objects were delivered over to me, who had neither strength nor inclination to escape; one of them died the next day. I had him buried: but the morning after, we found the body had been dug up by the peasantry, for the sake of the rags, swarming with vermin, with which it had been covered. I sent the other prisoners with a string of return mules to Coimbra, and my office was in danger of becoming a sinecure when I received orders to rejoin the regiment.

I proceeded by way of Celorico, three days' march to Guarda, the road, as usual, crowded with troops and choked with mire and dead cattle. Guarda is a fine specimen of a border city in feudal times, when strength and security were the first objects considered in choosing a spot to build on. The approach from the north is by a paved road, toilsomely winding up the side of the mountain, on the summit of which the massive walls and ruined towers look like the chroniclers of many an ancient emprise and deed of arms. One is surprised, after gaining the eminence, to find a considerable town, with a cathedral and several large churches, on a spot which seems fit only for eagles' nests. As may be supposed, it is dreadfully cold and tempestuous, the very buildings seem to have put on a moss-grown, gloomy aspect, in unison with their situation. The cathedral is a dark, Gothic pile, full of heavy carved work. It had been used as a stable by the French, and our troops were now cleaning it. The town was occupied by Major-General Picton's Division. I waited on him, as is usual, to enquire his orders; they were such as I was happy to execute, being to dine with him and take a bed in his quarters. They were the first dinner and bed I had met with during the advance, so I did my best both in eating and sleeping. The General's sociable good humour rendered his hospitality still more agreeable, and now that his talents have been proved, and his praise on earth consummated, I feel pleasure in recalling the simple energy of his manner, which bespoke the resolute soldier, capable of grappling with Fortune for the wreath of Victory.

The French Army had abandoned the position of Guarda, without firing a shot, and it was then Lord Wellington is said to have declared his full assurance of their intention to quit Portugal. They nevertheless made a final attempt to hold their ground in the position of Sabugal, behind the rocky stream of the Coa, but they were again turned and beaten back by the light division, with the loss of a howitzer, and on the 4th April they entered the Spanish frontier. The change which took place in the behaviour of the French soldiery, immediately on their entering Spain, removed every doubt as to whether their previous cruelties were to be considered as part of a concerted system of devastation, or as the licentious acts of a disorganized army no longer controllable by its officers. They now not only refrained from plunder, but paid liberally for whatever they required. This distinction cannot be accounted for on the ground of national animosity. They had been injured neither by Spaniards nor Portuguese. They had made war on both on the same provocation, that of resistance to the will of the Emperor. The national opposition had been greatest in Spain, yet the weight of revenge fell heaviest on Portugal. It is evident that policy, not sentiment, marked the difference in their treatment of the two nations.

(To be continued.)

RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN DURING 1811 AND 1812.

By CORNET FRANCIS HALL, 14th Light Dragoons.

(Continued from October JOURNAL, page 1391).

CHAPTER III.

THE SPANISH FRONTIER.

[April, 1811.]

The French Army having retired across the Agueda, our troops entered Spain, and occupied the intermediate country betwixt that river and Portugal. The Agueda, rising in the Sierra de Gata, nearly on the boundary line of the two kingdoms, describes an irregular arc, of which St. Felices el Grande and El Bodon, distant from each other about 30 miles, may be considered as the northern and southern extremities, and Ciudad Rodrigo as the most easterly point in its circumference. The boundary line, which is partly formed by the little river Turon, nearly represents the chord. The intermediate space is a plain, or gently undulating tract of country, about 25 miles from north to south, and 12 from east to west, the greater part of which is longitudinally divided by the Azava and Duas Casas, two tributaries of the Agueda. The latter descends swiftly betwixt shores often precipitous, and is always a considerable stream, but the former, though like all mountain torrents, much swollen in the spring and winter, are nearly dry in summer, so that while during part of the year they opposed formidable obstacles to the movements of troops, during the remainder it was sometimes difficult to distinguish their course among the bushes. Their banks, as well as those of their parent stream, are covered with open woods, intersected with glades, reserved most probably for fuel and pasture. The remainder of the country is an open expanse of arable land, studded with above 20 large villages, of which one might see from a slight eminence six or seven at once, looking, when the corn was ripe, half buried in a golden deluge. There is nothing of all I have seen during the period of my campaigning, the recollection of which gives me more pleasure than this frontier. I believe it would have seemed pleasing under any circumstances, but much of its charm is doubtless to be ascribed to contrast. We had been traversing a country of which it might be well said :

—"Crudelis ubique

Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago."

Here all was peaceful and smiling. It was Palm Sunday, when, with a detachment of the regiment, I first entered Fuente

Guinaldo. The service of the day had been celebrated by a procession of the inhabitants, singing, bearing boughs in their hands, to the church. As soon as Mass was over, the congregation burst out, eager to commence the amusements of the day. The young began to play at ball against the end of the church, while the old looked on, or gathered in knots for the sake of gossip. Their appearance was that of petty farmers and easy peasants: their dress strictly national, broad flapped hats, close jackets with slashed sleeves, and generally a cloak tucked under their chins. The women had an antique appearance, with their stiff stays, contracted waists, and a large bundle of short woollen petticoats, red or yellow, or both, with blue stockings. Their hair was combed close round their faces, and descended down their backs in long plaits fastened with bunches of ribbon. Their eyes and features—but who need tell of “Spain’s dark-glancing daughters?” Imagination was prepared for even more than the reality presented, but the noble mien and athletic make of the men struck me from its singular contrast to the dwindled growth and abject deportment of their Portuguese neighbours. Lord Byron elegantly describes both the moral and physical peculiarities of this border territory.¹

If the inhabitants pleased, their houses were not less refreshing to the senses, after the filth and mire we had gone through. They might all be called farm houses, though ranged in streets. There were few above one storey high. In most of the villages the *Padré’s* was the single exception. Those of the first-class had an enclosed yard in front for the accommodation of cattle, and generally a porch with stone seats at the entrance. The first apartment usually exhibited a range of shelves glittering with crockery, being used as a kitchen: the fireplace was a stone hearth, either on one side or in the middle of the apartment, without a chimney. Clean wooden benches, with a few sheep skins on them, were placed round it. These, with a large chest or two, a few three-legged stools, and an iron lamp to hang against the wall, made up the stock of furniture. The inner rooms contained recesses, in which straw mattresses were placed on tressels, with two or three rugs for cover-lids, and very clean sheets, the edges of which were frequently worked and ornamented. The windows were small holes, secured by iron bars, and seemingly intended rather to exclude heat or rain than let in light. The floors were of clay and uneven enough. There is no luxury in this description, and yet there was luxury in the enjoyment. It was in the universal neatness which set off all this. The walls were cleanly whitewashed, and the wooden benches and tables scoured almost as white. There was an air, too, of quietness and simplicity, yet with nothing of mean submission, in the manners of the inhabitants, which disposed us to regard them with complacency.

¹ *Childe Harold*, Stanzas xxxii. and xxxiii., Canto I.

Provisions were comparatively plentiful; excellent bread, milk, eggs, oranges and renowned sausages, salt fish and pork were to be had for money. I dined the first day of my arrival on leverets, two of which I bought of a peasant for a dollar, and the good woman at whose house I was quartered cooked them deliciously. An alarm was given after dinner of a strange-looking body of cavalry; on reconnoitring them, however, from the church tower, they proved to be the detachment under Don Julian Sanchez, an adventurer, who from a shepherd had become a corporal in the Spanish Army, and since the war, a Captain of an independent corps, who lived by plundering friends and foes, seldom fighting unless when ten to one, but often doing good service both to themselves and country, by cutting off straggling detachments and convoys of provisions. They came into Fuente Guinaldo looking as wild and whiskered as freebooters need to be. They were armed with lances, miserably mounted, and dressed more like hussars, than any other description of troops, but more like vagabonds than hussars. Fuente Guinaldo became Lord Wellington's headquarters a few days after we had entered it. We went to Alameda, and in the course of the spring and summer occupied in succession almost every village in the neighbourhood, so that there were few of the inhabitants with whom we did not become personally acquainted. Their occupations and way of life were purely pastoral and agricultural. The very names of their villages tell their story: Stag's Town, Mare's Town, Pig's Town, the Fountain of Guinaldo, the Fountain of Honorius, the Poplar-grove, the Cottages of Flowers—(Villa de Ciervo, de Yegua, de Porco, Fuente Guinaldo, Fuentes d'Onorio, Alameda, Casilla de Flores). They have no notion of wealth unconnected with the soil; I remember being questioned by them on the expenses of my profession, upon hearing which they observed: "Ah, your friends must have a great number of sheep and oxen." Nor could they at all comprehend how a man could be rich who did not possess a single goat. It was a pleasing feature in the evening landscape to see their many flocks returning from the woods to their respective homes; the sheep in a steady crowd, but the goats and kids bounding over or running along the loose stone enclosures, to crop the young shoots of the vine whenever they could steal an opportunity. After they had been housed and milked, the smoke which curled up above every village regularly at the same hour, announced the preparation of the family supper, which was usually a mess of pottage seasoned with garlic and a little bacon. On Sundays the young of both sexes dressed their dark hair with flowers, and met on the green before the church, to "twirl the castanet" and dance boleros to the simple music of the guitar, played and accompanied with some old ballad sung by the village pastor. Of the behaviour of the inhabitants towards myself I must speak with that feeling of gratitude disinterested kindness never fails to inspire.

I call it *disinterested* because the particular instances that I bear in mind, were certainly not the result of *fear*, nor at this period of the war did they augur sufficiently well of the event to be very strongly affected by *hope*; as a proof of which I recollect being asked by a woman, at whose house I stopped while on a reconnaissance betwixt Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca, before the latter was taken, "when the English were coming," and on my replying "soon," she laughed and said, "Aye, like the doctor who arrives when the patient is dead." Although the natives of this part of Leon probably shared with their countrymen in a general dislike to foreign dominion, yet, inhabiting an open and defenceless country, their feelings had been less roused by action, and were frequently in great measure swayed by the conduct of the armies which marched through their country. Nor did we profit so much by a comparison in this particular as might have been wished or expected. The French exacted some contributions, but they paid liberally for many things we could hardly afford to pay for quite so well: but neither were our robberies quite so extensive. "The French take all our great pigs, and the English all our little ones," was the remark of a Spanish good wife, and it well illustrates the point in question. The behaviour, too, of individuals, even of such as should by their rank have been raised far above such degrading meanness, was frequently reprehensible. I remember at Villa de Ciervo some of our officers were refused admittance into his house by the priest, on the ground that the General who had lodged there the night before had stolen his sheets! Then the soldiers would sometimes kiss the daughters of their hosts, which occasioned some indignation, less on the part of the kissees, than of the old people. On the whole, however, our intercourse was friendly enough. They grew very fond of our country dances, and equally so of the substantial suppers with which they were generally concluded. The priests almost always stood our friends, being well aware that a French *régime* boded them no good. They had probably heard, too, that in Portugal, when Masséna's soldiers were disposed to be jocular in their cruelty, they hanged a priest, a lawyer and an apothecary on the same tree: we therefore had not only their good word, but I believe their good wishes. They were commonly frank, jovial fellows. Their faith, indeed, was catholic enough; the politest among them could not in conscience give us any hopes of salvation, but they damned us in the civillest terms possible. There were good reasons, too, why our theological disputes were neither very long nor bitter. We were but indifferent Spanish scholars, worse logicians, and in divinity mere dunces, while they, whatever might be our fate in the next world, had no objection to our services and protection in this. Perhaps, as a soldier, I have said more in praise of the Leonese than their unwarlike disposition seems to merit.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE OF FUENTES D'OÑOR.¹

[May 3rd-5th, 1811.]

The French Army, by retiring across the Agueda, had necessarily left Almeida in a state of blockade, to raise which, or at least to withdraw the garrison, Masséna determined on offering battle, an invitation which Lord Wellington, that he might not be frustrated of a prize within his grasp, resolved to accept. We were naturally on the alert for several days previous to the attack; an hour before daybreak the regiment was assembled at the alarm post, and remained in readiness as long as there was any chance of attack, in an open field. At length, on the 2nd May, Masséna crossed the Agueda, with three Corps d'Armée and a considerable body of cavalry and artillery. On the same evening they passed the Azava, and on the morning of May 3rd, moved in three columns towards the Duas Casas, on the right bank of which our force was concentrated. The Light Division had fallen back from Gallegos to Fuentes d'Oñor, a village on the stream of the Duas Casas, in front of our centre. Our main body occupied in two lines the declivities on the left bank of this rivulet, having its right on an open plain towards Nava d'Aver, and its left in the direction of Almeida. Behind us were meadows and enclosures on the Turon, and in front the open woods, which shade the valley of the Duas Casas.

On the evening of the 3rd May, Fuentes d'Oñor was vigorously attacked, and a part of it for a moment gained by the enemy, but they were quickly dislodged by the bayonets of the 71st, and our troops re-established themselves for the night. The cavalry had retired with the Light Division, and on the afternoon of the 4th May, we were in the woods of Duas Casas, our horses just turned to graze, and ourselves looking out for the thickest trees under which to pass the night, when the troop to which I belonged received orders to march in support of Don Julian Sanchez, whom Lord Wellington had, to use his own expression, "*prevailed on* to occupy Nava d'Aver"—on the extremity of our right. We again saddled and set out as it was growing dark. We reached Nava d'Aver before midnight, but as it was needful our horses should eat, we had to move down to the low grounds of the Turon to find pasture for them. About three hours were spent in this way, and we returned to Nava d'Aver at daybreak. [May 5th.] Considering the uncertainty of our next meal, we now endeavoured to procure breakfast. We had a little chocolate and biscuit with us, and burnt some broken doors to boil it with, but the old proverb was fearfully verified. It bubbled in the tin boiler, when the

¹ I believe this name is properly spelt "Fuente d'Onorio," but this *properly* destroys its happy application to the events of the day.—F.H.

[Fuentes de Oñoro is the correct form.—E. G. H.]

assembly sounded. The word was given, "Mount your horses." I mounted mine, holding the tempting fluid in my hand. A large column of French cavalry appeared from the opposite wood, and Don Julian's people began to move off in commotion. I moved it to my lips—in vain—the heated metal defied my endeavours, and unwillingly I relinquished my hold. We moved over an open plain towards the right of our position, hurrying out skirmishers to our rear; the enemy followed us, doing the same to his front, and a brisk though undestructive firing began on both sides, we trying to get off, and they to intercept us. By the time we got to the edge of the woods of the Duas Casas, we began to be pressed by a squadron of chasseurs, when a picket of the 85th Regiment, which lay among the trees, poured a volley into its centre, several men and horses dropped, and it was some moments before the gap closed. They immediately went about, and a few of the 2nd Portuguese Caçadores now crept behind some rocks, and began to fire on them; and nearly at the same instant part of their column was charged by a squadron of the 16th Light Dragoons, and Captain Belli, who had arrived from England but the evening before, was made prisoner. We were near enough to hear the clink and clash of their swords, but were prevented by a small marsh from seconding their attack.

Being joined by a troop of the Royal Dragoons, we again advanced a little, but the enemy's infantry already occupied the road, and in their turn fired a volley upon our detachment, which induced us to retire upon the main body of the army. The action was now commencing. The pickets were driven in in front of our right, which Masséna evidently designed to turn by means of his great superiority in cavalry, which was now advancing under General Montbrun in heavy columns over the plains. Our scanty line formed to receive their advanced squadrons. I had been carrying a message when the first charge took place, and returned in the midst of the mêlée. It was literally "*auferte, trucidare, rapere.*" Horses whose riders had been killed or overthrown ran wildly across the field, or lay panting in their blood. The general rencontre was subdivided into partial combats. Two heavy Dragoons were in the act of felling a Chasseur with their broad swords; his chaco resisted several blows, but he at length dropped. Another was hanging in the stirrup, while his horse was hurried off by a German Hussar, eager to plunder his valise. Some were driving two or three slashed prisoners to the rear: one wretch was dragged on foot between two Dragoons, but as he was unable to keep pace with their horses, and the enemy were now forming for a second charge, he was cut down.

On perceiving the threatening aspect of our adversaries, whose main body was now come up, we again formed in line, and a second charge was led on by Captain Brotherton, of the 14th Light Dragoons, who had commanded the party in support of Don Julian. He rode at the French officer, who was in

front of his men, but the latter made a few steps on one side and politely let him pass. We were soon completely inter-mixed. Our men had *evidently* the advantage as individuals. Their broad sword, ably wielded, flashed over the Frenchmen's heads, and obliged them to cower to their saddle bows. The alarm was, indeed, greater than the hurt, for their cloaks were so well rolled across their left shoulders, that it was no easy matter to give a mortal stroke with the broad edge of a sabre, whereas their swords, which were straight and pointed, though their effect on the eyes was less formidable, were capable of inflicting a much severer wound. Many, however, turned their horses, and our men shouted in the pursuit; but it was quite clear that, go which way they might, we were but scattered drops amid their host, and could not possibly arrest their progress. We again, therefore, went about, and retired towards the Guards, who were formed in squares on the right of our line of infantry.

My military glories had here nearly been extinguished. I was galloping with the rest, when Captain Brotherton called to me to look behind, and on turning my head, I perceived a French dragoon, of no very friendly aspect, with his sword raised, close to my horse's crupper. I was lucky enough to parry his blow, which certainly, but for this friendly caution, had made "worm's meat" of me.

As soon as we came on the infantry they opened a fire, which effectually checked the enemy's advance: a few individuals, indeed, rode scatteringly into our lines, where they were killed or made prisoners. Colonel La Motte, of the 13th Chasseurs, was among the latter. They presently after charged and surrounded two of our 9-pounders, but Lieutenant Ramsay and his Artillerymen drew their swords and gallantly repulsed them. After this unsuccessful effort, Masséna withdrew his cavalry and contented himself with cannonading us from the plain of Nava d'Aver and the woods of the Duas Casas. Lord Wellington having resolved to concentrate his forces by throwing back his right across the Turon, the cavalry covered the movement in line. During this operation we were briskly pelted with round shot, which killed a few horses. The fate of one officer's charger was remarkable: he had a volume of "Tristram Shandy" in his sabre-tasch, which was carried by a cannon ball into his horse's body, and probably by its resistance saved his opposite leg, which received a slight contusion through the animal's ribs.¹

¹The story is told a little differently by Brotherton, whose narrative is quoted in Colonel Hamilton's "History of the 14th Light Dragoons," page 85. "Colonel Hervey escaped losing his right leg by having put a thick book ('Queredo's Works') into his sabretache. An 8-pound shot entering the sabretache went right through the horse, and just appeared on his other side, without coming through the skin. Hervey, poor fellow, had already lost his right arm (at the battle of Oporto), and his leg from

No attempt was made against our new position; the brunt of the day's fight fell on Fuentes d'Oñor, where Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, at the head of the 24th, 71st and 79th Regiments, maintained the glory of the Highland name against the repeated efforts of the 6th Corps.² Sometimes the enemy obtained a partial lodgment, and combat thickened from house to house and wall to wall. The church in particular, which was a kind of key to the possession of the village, was repeatedly stormed. The walls and doors were riddled with loop holes, through which each party fired muzzle to muzzle. As soon, however, as any column endeavoured to penetrate in support of its light troops, the "hurrah" burst from the smoke, and it was driven back with the bayonet: in this manner Fuentes d'Oñor was held through the day.

During the afternoon the enemy's cavalry made a dart at the pickets of the First Division, with the expectation of sweeping off the line before our cavalry could support them. They succeeded in part by coming up unexpectedly, but when they were perceived, the men, by collecting themselves into a knot, or *hiving*, as it is called, repulsed them with the bayonet. A troop of the 14th (Dragoons), under Captain Knipe, with a party of the Royals, were then ordered to skirmish, and suffered some loss in endeavouring to get possession of two field pieces. A man was brought from the rencontre, supported on horseback betwixt two of his comrades. He was mortally wounded, and being placed on the ground near to where I was sitting, his grave was dug while he lay gasping beside it. Captain Knipe was hurriedly after conveyed from the ground in a litter, having received a grape-shot through his lungs; he was conveyed to the rear, and died two days after. There is an inscription to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

The business of the day concluded, about an hour after sunset, with a general discharge of fire arms, shells and cannon, which rolled and blazed round the field of battle with great picturesque effect and little mischief. We bivouacked, as we had the night before, among the enclosures in the rear, which afforded pasture for our horses, whose weariness and exhausted condition may be estimated by a trifling incident. My own charger, Sancho, having been slightly wounded in the leg, I had changed him for a troop horse, and was lying down in the afternoon with the animal's bridle in my hand, when he stretched himself by my side, and after nodding and starting two or three times as if trying to overcome his drowsy propensities, laid his head on the ground and went fast asleep. The infantry passed the night on the ground they had occupied in the day, shelter-

the blow swelled to an immense size. But he would not leave the field, and had himself placed under a tree, where he remained during the rest of the battle."

² More properly, Ferey's Division of the 6th, and Couroux's and Claparédes of the 9th Corps.

ing themselves as they could, or not at all : the poor Portuguese, having no great coats, huddled together, and looked miserable enough in the morning. The Guards built themselves neat huts of boughs and earth. The weather was luckily dry, and so warm that, as a French officer observed, there was no need of a battle to make it hotter.

On the morning of the 6th May we were on our former ground : some field works had been thrown up on our right to diminish the effect of the enemy's superiority in cavalry. Masséna kept his position, making an ostentatious display of his force, but showed no disposition to renew the attack, and on the 9th and 10th May he withdrew over the Agueda.

Thus far Lord Wellington's arrangements had been covered with success. He had repulsed a superior force, and maintained himself on ground from which a retreat across the Coa would probably have been attended with the most fatal consequences. An unexpected event deprived him, however, of the fruits of his victory. On the night of the 11th May, the garrison of Almeida blew up the bastions of the place, and moved off in column with silence and celerity towards the pass of Barba del Puerco. Their march was so well directed, that after driving back our pickets, they passed unobserved between the troops intended to support them and began to descend the pass, nearly at the same instant that the 4th Regiment, which had been delayed by accident, the 36th, and the light battalion of the 5th Division under Major-General Campbell arrived to stop them. The 2nd Corps was drawn out from St. Felices and formed on the right bank of the Agueda to support their passage. The road winds down rocks, so precipitous, that even in broad day caution is necessary to observe where it turns the angles of the projecting cliffs, lest by deviating a yard or two either way the track should be lost, and a false step precipitate the passenger fathoms deep into the abyss. It may be supposed, therefore, that when a body of troops was hurrying down in the dark, galled by a fire of musketry, and pressed upon by an enemy, many must have been separated from their comrades, and been dashed to pieces or lost among the curvatures of the rocks. The wonder is that under such circumstances the majority should have escaped. We rode over the field of battle of Fuentes after the enemy had retired, and counted the skeletons of 500 horses, looking as bare and black as if the flesh had been burnt from the bones, though but two days had elapsed since the battle. This phenomenon was solved by the appearance of a flock of vultures, so gorged with food that they could scarcely rise on the wing as we came near them. There were some blue putrefying human bodies lying about, not one of which they had deigned to taste, though the peasantry had stripped them as if for their benefit. These birds never made their appearance except after a battle : they seemed to have a singular sagacity in scenting a field of carnage, and probably regarded us as appointed to be their purveyors.

CHAPTER V.
A MOVE TO THE ALEMTEJO.

[June-August, 1811.]

While Lord Wellington, after the battle of Albuera, was forming the siege of Badajoz, we passed an easy life in Gallegos and the neighbouring villages; a little puzzled, indeed, as officers commonly are, to get quit of the arch enemy, Time, but endeavouring to supply by ingenuity the lack of occupation and amusement. The Light Division acted plays, the cavalry took to giving dances, and we had been loyally celebrating His Majesty's birthday by a festival of this kind with the Spanish villagers, when Marshal Marmont determined on treating us with a ballet in a different figure. He had succeeded to the command of the Army of Portugal after Masséna's recall, and on June 3rd came from the Tormes towards Ciudad Rodrigo, which he entered on the 5th June, and on the morning of the 6th June pushed a column of cavalry upon our advanced post before Gallegos. This movement, if it did not surprise Sir Brent Spencer, who commanded us in Lord Wellington's absence, surprised my batman, and obliged him to abandon several articles of my baggage in the village. The Royal Dragoons and a troop of the 14th were formed to cover the retreat, but though I belonged to this troop, I can report little of what befell it, and the rearguard generally, under Major-General Slade; though it may (be) conjectured that as nobody was killed, the action was not a severe one. My own individual services were required to warn General Pack's Portuguese Brigade at Almeida of the enemy's advance—a duty I performed with some loss of wind to my horse, as the distance was not less than twelve miles, and my orders were to make haste. Having secured this part of the army, my thoughts were next turned towards securing myself, about which I had no orders to take but from my own discretion. To return by the way I came had been little wise, seeing it was in all probability occupied by the enemy. But then I knew no other way, and everybody was in too much bustle to direct me. Luckily I perceived by my map (and this, by the way, shows how much better a bad map is than no map at all) that there was a certain Castel Bom on the Coa, which seemed to lie in a convenient offing from Marshal Marmont's advance, and was still in my road towards our probable line of retreat. My conjectures proved not altogether wide of the mark; a few hours' riding brought me to the rocks on which stood the town and ancient towers of Castel Bom, or "Good Castle," a frontier fortress of olden time, but now occupied by Colonel Hill and his regiment of Portuguese infantry. I reported myself to Colonel Hill, ostensibly to receive his instructions where to join my regiment, but, in fact, in the hope of getting a dinner, of which I stood in great need; fortunately Colonel Hill was not a man to need

prompting in such a case. After dinner I attended him on a reconnaissance towards Nava d'Aver, and as no enemy appeared, I continued my ride in that direction by myself. I met with nothing on the road but a few Portuguese stragglers, draining the lees of some broken wine casks, till towards night-fall, when I approached the road to Nava d'Aver; I heard the sound of horses' feet as if moving from the village. This proved to be a party of the Royal Dragoons, who had been patrolling towards the village, which was occupied by the French; as I was now luckily informed, but there was this oddity in the rencontre. The officer commanding the patrol was an old school fellow, with whom I had not met since we parted boys at Winchester. I gladly recognized him, and we rode on till about midnight, when we arrived at a picket of the 14th (Dragoons), in a little chapel before Aldea Ponte, among whom I gladly stretched myself on a stone bench till the morning. Marshal Marmont, having by this advance covered his convoy into Ciudad Rodrigo, retired from the northern frontier and moved his army to the south by the Roman bridge of Almaraz.¹ [June, 1811.] On our part, a corresponding movement was made by the flying bridge of Villa Velha into the Alemtejo. The Alemtejo, or "Province beyond the Tagus," though occasionally traversed by Sierras, is, on the whole, flat and fertile, especially towards the south. Its northern extremity is much like its neighbour, Beira, barren and mountainous.

Portalegre is a large town, built on a steep hill, and surrounded with ancient walls. It is rich and thriving, or at least seemed so to eyes long accustomed to nothing but ruins and petty villages. We heard some delightful singing at a convent, and found all the saints and churches as fine as gold and frippery could make them. The houses and beds, though neat to the eye, were pestered with bugs and fleas, which I found a woeful set-off to the luxury of shrines and churches, knowing that a single flea does me more harm than all the saints in the Calendar, aye, and the patriarchs to boot, can do me good. However, bad may be worse, as the sequel showed. We proceeded to Arronches and were encamped in a forest of live oak on the left bank of the Caya, a small river which rises in the mountains of Portalegre, and flowing under the works of Arronches, finally unites with the Guardian betwixt Elvas and Badajoz. Here we made ourselves huts of boughs, but though these green retreats look very fresh in description, they did not form comfortable dwellings. The ground on which we were encamped was speedily pulverized by the joint action of a burning sun and the trampling of men and cattle. We were infested by myriads of ants, to such an excess that our soup was never served up without a due proportion of their bodies

¹ A confusion between the Roman Bridge of Alcantara and the French boat-bridge of Almaraz.

floating on its surface. Then the Caya began to run dry, so that our water was both hot and muddy. The wine we were able to procure was not drinkable without the water, nor the water with the wine; all ill savours multiplied around us. If we rode into Arronches we found a more "pestilent congregation" of loathsome sights and smells than we had left in our camp. If we rode round the country, we found a sterile flat intersected with pine woods and covered with gum cistus, whose white blossoms and resinous fragrance would have been agreeable enough had they not ever been connected with the idea and feeling of extreme heat. I chanced during one of these excursions to pass through a burning forest, the aspect of which might have reminded one of a tale of enchantment. The ground was burnt black and smoking under my horse's feet. The pine trees, of which the wood consisted, had generally escaped, but their trunks were so scathed that they resembled arcades of ebony pillars, supporting the dark vaulting of their foliage. Here and there one of them had fallen across and was still blazing, as were portions of the underwood at a distance from my path; so that with the heat and blue columns of smoke and vapour the whole scene presented no bad picture of an infernal palace. These conflagrations arise usually from the fires lighted by shepherds, while "watching their flocks by night." There were sometimes three or four of these fires to be seen at once during the darkness, illuminating the horizon like distant volcanoes.

We joyfully broke up from the banks of the Caya about the middle of July, and moved south, towards Villa Vicosã. Our first day's march was to Barbaçena, a large village, the houses of which were cleanly whitewashed, and ornamented in front with canopies of grape-vine, whose large clusters of fruit hung deliciously over the doors. The next day brought us to Villa Viçosa,¹ the hereditary abode of the Braganza family, and the fairest city in Portugal. It has the advantage of being built on level ground. The streets are wide and lively, and many of the private houses, though now shorn of their lustre, are built in a style which denotes the connection of their inhabitants with a Court. The Palace has little external beauty, but the halls and State rooms are spacious. Some old portraits of the Royal line were still suspended against the walls, and two or three antique lustres, covered with dust, were hanging from the painted ceilings, looking amid other remnants of state furniture, like mementos of departed grandeur. The largest saloon was used as a hospital for French prisoners, some of whom were feebly fanning themselves with boughs as they lay on their mattresses.

(To be continued.)

¹The Palace from which the Portuguese Royal Family were returning when the late King was murdered.—E.G.H. 1910.

RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN DURING 1811 AND 1812.

By CORNET FRANCIS HALL, 14th Light Dragoons.

(Continued from November JOURNAL, page 1535).

CHAPTER VI.

A SKIRMISH.

[Carpio, Sept. 25th, 1811.]

[A gap in the Reminiscences between August and December, 1811, can be partly filled up by a letter, herewith given.]

In September, 1811, the main stress of the Peninsular War was transferred from the Caya and the neighbourhood of Badajoz back to the frontiers of Leon, whither Marmont had betaken himself, in order to deliver Ciudad Rodrigo from blockade by Wellington, who had once more moved up to the northern theatre of operations. Having strengthened himself with the greater part of Dorsenne's Army of the North, he not only threw a convoy of provisions into Rodrigo, but marched out from it and drove Wellington back three or four days' march into Portugal. In the commencement of this short campaign the 14th was engaged. On September 25th fourteen squadrons of the Imperial Guard Cavalry advanced to the Azava, driving back the British cavalry screen, and the Lancers of Berg crossed the river in pursuit. They were immediately charged and driven back by a squadron of the 14th and two of the 16th Light Dragoons. Hall writes :

Povoa d'El Rey, Oct. 20, 1811.

“ By a diabolical blunder I am afraid you will have seen my name in the *Gazette* as slightly wounded. It is true, I got a scratch on the 25th, but it was so slight that the Adjutant promised not to return me as wounded, and he afterwards sent in my name without my knowledge, that our regiment might make some show in the business. A bit of plaster healed up my whole grievance in a day or two. The way I got the hurt was in a charge of Lancers. An ill-looking Frenchman hit me with his spear—however, they got paid back with a few broken heads.¹ This disturbance has shifted us out of our Spanish quarters into the dog-holes of Portugal. This place (Povoa) is the very dwelling of filth and misery Quarters in a

¹The official returns give—Carpio, Sept. 25th, 14th Light Dragoons, Lieutenant Hall, 2 men, and 2 horses wounded.

Portuguese village are beyond comparison more dull and lifeless than the 'country quarters' in England. I don't think the poor people have even time for scandal: their hours are sufficiently occupied in gaining a miserable subsistence. The only variety in their lives is caused by their inmates, our soldiers, who sometimes burn a house for firewood, and sometimes steal what few things the French have left them. When our armies first came the inhabitants of every village offered us their choicest, and thought themselves honoured by our acceptance of it. Wherever an officer was quartered, the people of the house were affronted if he did not live with them. They have since grown poorer—and wiser!"

CHAPTER VII.

CELORICO (A HOSPITAL STATION).

[December, 1811.]

I passed a considerable portion of the winter season of 1811-12 on duty at Celorico, one of the principal hospital stations for the army. The town is as miserable as a Portuguese town, and a hospital station to boot, need be—but its site is grand in the extreme. It stands on a tongue of land, towering boldly from the Mondego, which flows round its base at the distance of about a mile through a fertile valley, towards the south and east, when it turns short to the west, and seems to bury its broken stream in deep chestnut woods. The town is divided into two parts by a precipitous rock, crowned with the ruins of a large castle, at the foot of which the road runs along a superb natural terrace, commanding a fine view of the southern valley of the Mondego, with the Estrella mountains on the horizon, and immediately beneath, rich groves of olive trees, from which the voices of the girls and women, singing in chorus as they gathered the fruit, were distinctly, and thus mellowed by distance, harmoniously, audible. Nature, however, is little indebted to art; there are, indeed, some large houses, convents, and churches, to be found among the narrow dirty streets, but they were all now converted into barracks and hospitals, so had lost the little of good looks they could once boast. On my first arrival I was crammed into the miserable dwelling of a muleteer, whose daughter lay dangerously ill of a fever. He and his wife, however, accommodated me as well as they could, and even shared their dinner with me, when they found from the delay of my servant and baggage, I could procure none for myself. I was afterwards better lodged in the house of a gentleman of Trancoso, who dined with me when he came to visit his property in Celorico, and sat, either with real or pretended satisfaction, beside a fireplace I had made by blocking up one of his windows. It is at an hospital station and not on a field of battle that the calamities of war are best estimated.

When the reader of the *Gazette Extraordinary* has sighed over the returns of killed and wounded, and exclaimed, "Ah! poor fellows, war is certainly a shocking thing," he believes he has paid his full tribute of sympathy to its calamities and lamented everything that is lamentable about it. He is ignorant that for one man who meets an easy and comparatively enviable death in the field, at least 20 descend to an obscure grave at the hospital station. During the autumn of 1811, at Celorico only, from 50 to 100 men were buried daily (it was observed that the men who had been at Walcheren were the first to be attacked by fever in the Peninsula, and were seldom known to recover), and even after I arrived in the winter, from ten to twenty corpses were carried daily through the streets with scarcely the fragment of a tattered cloak, or a few boughs, to shroud their ghastly remains, and in this state were flung into a hole, which constituted a common receptacle without the town. Death was too common a guest to be treated ceremoniously. During the sultriest part of the season the crowded state of the hospitals (an evil irremediable, perhaps, considering the means of accommodation) tended greatly to increase the virulence of contagion. Two patients occupied each bed, and when one died another was brought in to fill his place, and share in mind as well as body, the infection of his disease. Another evil, even more fatal, arose from the want, or worse than the want—the ignorance of the medical staff. There were doubtless at the head of the department men both skilful and conscientious, but amid such a pressure of duty, they could do little more than give a very general inspection to the several hospitals, while the detail of management fell upon hospital mates, many of whom were grossly inattentive and ignorant of the first rudiments of their profession. Nor is this extraordinary. The demand in this branch of the service was very great, the pay very small, the prospect unattractive. Few young men, therefore, of education and promise would give up the chance of establishing themselves at home, and hazard their lives upon so barren a speculation: the void was consequently filled up without much scrutiny into the qualifications of the candidates. If, therefore, a few young men of talents and information were still to be found among the ignobler band of hospital mates (and my own experience justifies me in affirming there were a few such), it must be ascribed rather to extraordinary good luck, than to any merit in the system according to which they were selected.

Another evil in the medical department was the fraudulent application by the hospital mates of the comforts¹ intended for the sick to their own use. Nor do I mention this as ground of severe reproach to them. I doubt if in their situation I

¹ Such as poultry, wine, spirits, tea, sugar, lemons, etc., which were delivered from the Commissariat store, upon a receipt signed by the medical officers of the several hospitals.

should not have acted in the same manner. They were frequently several months without pay; they were not allowed the indulgence of a soldier as their servant. Their duty required an incessant attendance of the most painful nature, and I am convinced that for young men accustomed at least to the ordinary comforts of life, there were few whose constitutions could have supported, especially if they were conscientious in the discharge of their duty, the fatigue they must have undergone, both in mind and body, on the ration allowance of a pound of lean, tough beef, as much bread or biscuit, often mouldy, and a pint of sour wine, fit to be used as vinegar. Besides, however, the probable detriment of the sick, whose comforts were thus diverted into another channel, and the degradation of the *medicos* themselves, who were thus subjected to the familiarity and contempt of the sergeants and orderly men attached to the hospital, the loss thus occasioned to Government was, as I had once the curiosity to calculate, more than equivalent to such an addition to their pay as would have placed them above the necessity and temptation of having recourse to means, from which, as gentlemen, they must have revolted with disgust and shame. If the situation of the sick soldiers was far from what humanity would have wished it, that of the officer under similar circumstances was still more deplorable. No provision was made for his accommodation in the hospital, and if he was below the rank of a field officer, he could look for little comfort in a quarter. To prevent exactions on the inhabitants, an order has been issued limiting the claim of quarters to the bare rooms the individual was, according to his rank, entitled to. In such towns as Coimbra, Abrantes and Celorico, where the depôts of sick had been long established, and the inhabitants had from habit grown callous to their wants and sufferings, this order was literally acted upon, and the officer who arrived from the army exhausted with pain and disease, found nothing but the floor on which to lie.

In such a condition, too frequently without the means of procuring the most trifling of those comforts which nature craves in sickness, without nurse, friend, or attendance beyond what his servant could give him, how many a gallant officer has breathed his last, and been consigned to earth as leaves drop unnoticed into the brook and are swept from human observation. Why, it may be said, recall the remembrance of these things, which were but links in the chain of inevitable calamities war drags with it? Because the calamities of war have been too commonly veiled with the robe of triumph; because the destruction of mankind has been too long considered as a kind of "*grande chasse*" in which the rulers of the earth may legitimately indulge, upon the slightest pretexts of provocation; because too many of their subjects have flattered this propensity, by exaggerating the value of conquest and diminishing its concomitant evils. Could kings and their

ministers, with all those who talk loudly of the glories of the great Frederick and all such great dealers in butchery, be induced to make a visit during a campaign, not to the headquarters of the Army, where all is gallantry, animation and abundance, nor even to the field of battle, where reflection may be well drowned in the pealing shouts or deafened amid the clash and thunders of the contest, but to the rear of the scene of action, amid the villages which have been demolished and plundered, the families who are dying of disease and hunger, the sick who are tossing in the loathsome wards of a hospital! These are sights which might perhaps teach them that it is not a light cause can justify the infliction of so much misery. That the facility with which the passions or prejudices of the multitude may be inflamed into a temporary approbation of a war, is no criterion by which to judge of its practice: a less fallible one is to be found in its moral consequences. If a nation comes out wiser and happier from the contest, it is a strong presumption she has not unadvisedly engaged in it—but how seldom have Governments this strong presumption in their favour!

I grew weary enough of Celorico, where I almost found the contagion of disease had "made men mad." I was met one day on my return from my rambles by my Portuguese boy, who with a face of horror conducted me to the stables, where I found my servant, a dragoon, had cut his throat and lay dead on the straw. He had just recovered from a fever, and this act might be the result of a consequent debility of intellect. "I could better have spared a better man," for he was an excellent campaigner, though of lax moral habits. Soon after this event I lost my medical companions, who quitted Celorico. My quarter was next turned into an hospital, and I shifted into a room over a wine shop kept by a pretty Portuguese landlady, so it may be supposed there was little peace in it day or night. At length, after a two months' Babylonish captivity, I gladly set off to join the regiment.

RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN DURING 1811 AND 1812.

By CORNET FRANCIS HALL, 14th Light Dragoons.

(Continued from JOURNAL for December, 1912, page 1735).

CHAPTER VIII.

ESTREMADURA ONCE MORE. THE FALL OF BADAJOZ.

THE masterly capture of Ciudad Rodrigo having secured our front from insult, the cavalry were withdrawn from the Coa and distributed, for the convenience of forage, along the valley of the Mondego, where I joined my regiment at the village of Torraes¹ early in February. Here we were magnificently lodged in the mansion of a Fidalgo, sufficiently large to hold a brigade, and looking still larger from the contrast of the miserable dwellings about it. (Strange how wealth dilates our corpuscula! I doubt if the giants of old were anything more than broad-acred men, who could not breathe but in halls of extraordinary dimensions, or dine except on oxen roasted whole.) We found these spacious apartments, with their long, open windows, not so well suited to the season as a snug housekeeper's room with glazed windows, in which we established ourselves during our stay; we were even sometimes fain to solace ourselves over the blazing logs on the kitchen hearth, notwithstanding the housekeeper's grave remark, "That when the Señor came there, with all the ladies of the family, they had brazieros² in their apartments, and never came into the kitchen." We did, indeed, as usual, build up a chimney in one of the state apartments, but the smoke could never be persuaded to go up it. The spring, however, was beginning to look abroad amid violets and orange flowers, and by the middle of February we were again on our way to the South, where we had nothing to fear from cold weather. The meaning of this movement was that Lord Wellington, having now the entire disposal of his offensive means, resolved to besiege

¹ Torraes, in the Mondego Valley.

² Large portable pans of red-hot charcoal.

Badajoz, and thus remove the remaining fetter by which our operations had been hitherto limited. Our route to the scene of action lay over the ground we had traversed during Masséna's retreat, until we arrived at Thomar, eight days' march from Torres.

Thomar is a large and lively town, with good shops, handsome streets, a cathedral, and a catholic proportion of churches. It was anciently a Roman station, as is testified by some remains of baths in the neighbourhood. It was subsequently a Commandery of the Knights Templars, as testified by the ruins of their castle, which still cover a hill above the town, and contain within their circumference a stately convent of monks, who have, owl-like, built their nests in the ruined watch tower. The church is circular, as were all those of the Templars, in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre; the altar occupies the centre, surrounded by columns, and superbly decorated; round the aisles are several oratories or chapels, containing some tolerable paintings. I entered them in company with the Superior, who conducted me through the building, but there was one, I believe, from which heretical feet should have been excluded, for I heard him sharply rate an attendant friar for leaving the door open. I passed through as many as five or six spacious courts, some of which, from their pointed arches, and their clustered columns, seemed to have been coeval with the castle, when war and devotion went hand in hand. At the end of the town a handsome stone bridge crosses the silver Nabão, which is broken just below it by a fall of five or six feet, the dashing of which sufficed agreeably to break the evening stillness. On the left bank, a long grove of orange trees, all glowing with fruit, descended to the water's edge, beyond which the stream seemed lost among woods and olive groves. This was a picture we could afford to gaze on with the more satisfaction, because it either followed or preceded good dinners, grand with delicious Tagus salmon, and digested with good wine. From Thomar, we marched, by way of Abrantes (of which I shall have to speak hereafter), into the Alemtejo, where we halted some days at the elegant little town of Vimiero, not far from Estremoz. While I was at Vimiero (whose white walls and clean houses I gratefully remember), I paid a visit to Evoramonte, an old walled town and castle, on the summit of a steep hill, which would be worth notice were there not so many in the country like it.

We marched from Vimiero to Estremoz, a town I frequently passed through, and never without a feeling of pleasure, which was partly to be ascribed to the hospitable reception I met with on my first visit. I was billeted on a respectable family, who lodged me in an apartment hung round with tapestry, representing the Trojan war, and ornamented with a dusty chandelier of antique cut-glass; but I looked on all this splendour somewhat ruefully, for I was a stranger, with neither money nor provisions, and as I surveyed the grim champions of old times,

I could not but remember how differently they fared in the intervals of battle.

“ They spread the tables, the repast prepare,
Each takes his seat, and each receives his share;
The King himself (an honorary sign),
Before great Ajax placed the mighty chine.”¹

These gloomy reflections were, however, agreeably dissipated by the entrance of dinner, which my host had provided for me: a kind of hospitality which had grown extremely rare on high roads and in towns frequented by the army. Other meals followed in due succession, and what seemed odder than all, I received the thanks of my entertainers—literally for having done nothing. It seems they had been troubled by inmates who had made themselves too much at home, to the great annoyance of the family, and as “contrast is everything,” I was lucky in coming after them. The great square of Estremoz has a very picturesque appearance. On one side of it are large tanks, edged and lined with stone, and shaded with the drooping foliage of large willows, round which the girls assembled with their pitchers, or linen to wash, and the monks and townspeople to gossip or lounge away the evening on benches placed round the water. On the opposite side is a large convent, in the church of which I observed a curious monument. A recumbent figure lay on a tomb, and from his body sprang a genealogical tree, nearly as high as the roof; all its branches were spreading and fruitful; but one, towards the centre, was especially distinguishable by a small glass case, containing a saint or saintling in wax, who was justly considered as the fairest apple on the tree. From Estremoz we marched to Villa Viçosa, through Borba, famous for its good wine, and for being the residence of many of the nobility while the Court was held at Villa Viçosa. Here I saw a regiment of Spanish cavalry, who might have passed for the household troops of the Mayor of Garratt.² Their faces were covered with all lengths and colours of beard and moustache. Some wore cocked hats, some helmets, some caps; some had straight swords, and some crooked, others antique toledos, which seemed to have rusted since the days of the Cid. Two regiments of infantry, which marched through the same day, had a much more soldierly appearance, but the cavalry looked like bandits and ragamuffins. The fault, however, was not in the men, but in a defective system of organization: a lack of staff, lack of commissariat, lack of officers, lack of pay, lack of all the stuff of which a good army is compounded, excepting heart; even this exception may seem dubious to many who have considered the progress of the Peninsular

¹ Pope's Iliad, book VII., line 386.

² A popular farce by Foote, in which (among other things) cowardly and undisciplined Militiamen were satirized. Four of them are robbed by one highwayman.

war, and may, in consequence, be disposed to regard Spanish courage as somewhat equivocal, but the apparent contradictions of their character in this respect admit of a solution by no means impossible. M. de Rocca, a judicious and impartial observer of the events which passed before his own eyes during the early period of the war, relates an anecdote illustrating this view.¹

The heroic zeal with which Zaragossa, Gerona and other fortresses were defended, was worthy of Spain in her most chivalrous days. There are many of our officers who can testify to the courage with which small detachments of the Spanish armies occasionally fought beside British troops, yet in all their great battles we find their armies broken and scattered before the French columns, with scarcely a shadow of resistance. May not this seeming inconsistency be thus reconciled? The peasant who acted singly, or with a few companions, was aware of the exact bearings of his situation; his acts were his own, and he felt responsible to himself for the consistency of his conduct; his situation was nearly similar when fighting behind a wall, or in a small detachment. Here, too, he felt his ground, and was sensible of the exertions and sacrifices his situation required; but when he found himself one of a number drawn out in battle array, and placed amid movements and operations of which he understood neither the detail nor purpose, and, what was still more fatal, which he believed his General understood as little as himself, all self-confidence and consequent resolution were gone; he no longer viewed the event as within the power of his efforts to control, but considered, perhaps, that in flying from a post in which he was unconscious of his ability to do good, he was not only excusable, but even acting a patriotic part by reserving himself for some fairer occasion of serving his country.

From Villa Viçosa we marched to Elvas, where we remained while the siege of Badajoz was formed. Elvas, with its adjacent forts, is reckoned to be one of the strongest places in Europe; so, of course, it has a fitting number of bastions, ravelins, ditches, covert-ways, and all the paraphernalia of fortification, but I have forgotten, if ever I knew, what is this fitting number. I was more "impressed" by the Faith than by the *works* of the town. On the evening before Good Friday, I visited all the churches with a young Portuguese doctor, who acted as my cicerone. The altars were brilliantly illuminated and ornamented to represent a tomb, or bier, with an image of Christ lying in state. I heard a solemn service, at the conclusion of

¹ M. de Rocca (afterwards the second husband of Mdme. de Stael) wrote one of the first journals of adventure which appeared from the French side during the Peninsular War. He was a hussar officer in the Army of Andalusia. The reflections concerning the contrast between the individual courage of Spaniards and their misbehaviour as armies are in Rocca's Chapter IV.

which, to my great surprise, all the congregation began to jump on the flooring (which is commonly laid in the middle of every church for the accommodation of the ladies, there being no pews), and commenced a noisy movement with their feet, not a little resembling the O.P. dance;¹ *cui bono* I could not understand, but it seemed an uncouth winding up of the ceremony.²

* * * * *

The rainy season set in while we were at Elvas; town and country were deluged. The troops before Badajoz worked up to their knees in water, without the protection of a roof or dry covering at the end of the day's toil. We were comparatively in clover. Elvas had a tolerable market, but we were obliged to forage the neighbourhood for mutton. Leaving Elvas, we forded the Guadiana and marched to Olivença, a frontier town of Estremadura; it is badly fortified in the modern manner, and had been taken by the French during the war, but afterwards abandoned.³ It formerly belonged to Portugal, but was ceded to Spain at the termination of the last *fantastica guerra*, as a priest called it, between the two nations. It is a pleasant, clean-looking town, with nothing remarkable about it but a tall, square castle built by King Denys, and still used as a prison and barrack. I lodged with a *padré*, who not only procured me good wine, but conversed with liberality and good sense on most general topics. I asked his opinion of the respective merits of the two governments under which he had lived; he replied by successively marking off the length of a palm and cubit on his right arm. "The oppressions of the Portuguese Government," said he, "are so much, the Spanish are so much." He was a Portuguese; a Spaniard would probably have applied his mensuration contrariwise. . . . While we were at Olivença, and the siege was going briskly on, Marshal Soult broke up from before Cadiz and advanced to Llerena, on the Estremaduran frontier, where he arrived on April 4th, for the purpose of disquieting Lord Wellington's operations.

This movement produced a corresponding one on our part. The cavalry marched to occupy the intermediate country betwixt Llerena and Badajoz. We quitted Olivença, and leaving Albuera on our left, came to Nogales, a village on a hill with

¹ A reference to the systematic disturbances made by the audience at Covent Garden during the "O.P. ('Old Prices') Riots," when Kemble raised the admission scale in 1809.

² This stamping at the end of the long Good Friday service, was supposed to symbolize the convulsions of Nature at the death of our Lord, the earthquake, etc.

³ Captured by Soult January, 1811, recaptured by Beresford April, 1811, dismantled and evacuated in June of the same year, and never again occupied.

a small castle, whose vaulted galleries served part of the regiment for stabling. The next day we marched to Villalba, which we occupied together with Villa Franca and the neighbouring villages, having our advanced posts in the direction of Llerena. Villalba was but a village, yet it had an air of elegance which few towns in Portugal could aspire to. The square, in which stood the church, was surrounded by houses of a stately appearance. The inhabitants were collected in it to witness our arrival. The balconies were filled with ladies—not females by courtesy so denominated—but graceful forms round which (their) dark veils floated, with an air of dignity, or were occasionally thrown back revealing the glances of their darker eyes. One might understand, on seeing them, the passionate enthusiasm with which Spanish ladies have inspired both ancient knights and modern minstrels. They have the mien and step of queens, but of queens who rule with a sceptre of flowers.

Badajoz having been stormed by our army on April 7th, Marshal Soult, after a trifling affair of cavalry, in which he lost some horses and prisoners, retired to Seville, while we pursued our way back to Olivença, whence we marched to Elvas, through Badajoz. Badajoz was naturally an object of interest, and we took the opportunity of half an hour's halt, to walk through it. We entered by the bastion of St. Vincente, close to the Guadiana, which had been escaladed on the night of the assault by Major-General Walker. The bodies of two or three French soldiers were still lying in the ditch. Thence we crossed the town to visit the breaches in the bastions of La Trinidad and Santa Maria, where the assault was made. Their appearance readily explained why the gallant 4th and Light Divisions were repulsed in their attempt to mount them. After crossing the inundation of the Rivillas, and entering the ditch, they had to clamber up an almost perpendicular ascent formed of rubbish, in the face of a concentrated fire of grape, musketry, shells, grenades, and every species of destructive missile rained down upon them like burning hail, and had then to pass the breach defended by a Chevaux de Frise of sword blades, set round with bags of gunpowder, and undermined. Here they were to maintain themselves until they could receive support sufficient to resist the efforts of the whole garrison. In spite of these obstacles, a few brave men pushed on till they reached the summit, where their dead bodies bore noble witness to their courage. It may be imagined this spot presented a scene of considerable confusion: dismounted cannon, broken carriages, fragments of palisades, the sword-blades which had formed the Chevaux de Frise were scattered round the breaches, mixed with soldiers' caps, cartouche boxes and other fragments of their dress and arms. The rugs which the French sentries had put up to shelter themselves from our shot were still standing. Behind the breaches were the ruins of the church of the

Santissima Trinidad; part of the vaulted roof alone was distinguishable. There was no part of the devastation the Spanish ladies, whom I saw at Olivença, deplored so feelingly as that of this church "It was so holy a church," they said; but besieging armies have disregarded things far holier—witness the Acropolis and Tomb of Hadrian. From the breach we walked on towards the castle, which had been escaladed by Lieut.-General Picton, whose success was the decisive event of the attack. General Phillipon had apparently intended defending this post, after the breaches had been carried, since there was a battery of heavy cannon across the street leading to it. It is a very ancient building, commanding the whole town and works from its lofty square towers, which now looked black and desolate enough. The town was not greatly injured. The streets seemed clean. There were not many houses destroyed except in the immediate neighbourhood of the breaches, but they were all so bare, both of furniture and inhabitants, that the whole town reminded one of a carcass from which the entrails had been cleanly extracted. We crossed the Guadiana by a magnificent bridge within the works, attributed to the Romans, and taking the road to Elvas, forded the Caya, during which operation our doctor's mule fell, and all his cataplasms and pill boxes were scattered on the stream, while his servant stood up to his chin in water, vainly endeavouring to stay the havoc. From Elvas we once more traversed the Alemtejo, and crossing the Tagus at Villa Velha, bivouacked by the roadside in an olive grove alive with fleas. The next day we moved on towards Castello Branco.

While the siege of Badajoz was going on, Marmont, with a design to create a diversion, had advanced from Salamanca, blockaded Ciudad Rodrigo, and after vainly threatening Almeida, had entered the frontier of Beira, to the great alarm of all the doctors and commissaries, as far as Coimbra. Some of his cavalry pushed on towards Guarda and dispersed some Portuguese Militia, with little bloodshed, after which they approached Castello Branco, compelling the good bishop to a forced march over the mountains in a carriage drawn by two oxen, and obliging the commissariat to stave their wine casks and burn their stores; and this was the sum total of (the) diversion.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATHS OF CALDAS.

At the village of Sarnadas, betwixt Castello Branco and Villa Velha, I quitted the regiment, for the purpose of trying the effect of the warm baths of Caldas, on a complaint in my thigh bone, upon which the whole *ars medica*, both of our regimental surgeon, and of the medical staff of Almeida, had been vainly exhausted. Turning from the main road with my equipage,

which consisted of three horses, a mule, a pony, a dragoon, and a Portuguese boy, I journeyed over a dreary tract of mountain country to the wretched hamlet of Perdigão, where, I had been told, there was an inn—and so there was, as a bough over the door of a dismal-looking hovel informed me. The principal apartment, lighted by the entrance, was the travellers' room, through which the cattle passed to a stable adjoining it. It contained a bench and table, and there was a fire on the clay floor, but of eatables I could hear nothing in the house, nothing in the village. This was indeed a desperate case, but the inhabitants lived, why then should I starve upon the same ground? With this reflection I walked through the village, till I came to a group of women squatted on the ground with their distaffs and knitting needles. To them I made my appeal, for pity dwells in female bosoms, and by working much on their compassion, but more on their interest through the intercession of a *crusado-novo*,¹ I procured the slaughter of an old hen, with a salad to boot, on which I contrived to sup without much repining, and as beds were unknown in this primitive hotel, I stretched my blankets on a kind of elevation, built up in one corner of the apartment, probably for the preservation of the family in the rainy season, when the dirt-floor would be deluged. I set out the next morning in company with a muleteer—whose mules I had engaged to lighten the load of my own animals over the stony mountains, and a Portuguese, who entertained me with the reception I should meet with at Macao, and the luxuries I should find at Abrantes, descanting "*con amore*" on the "*Ruma bom*" and "*Vinho engarrafado*" (good rum and bottled wine), to be purchased in the latter. We crossed a pleasant valley, watered by the Laca, over which we were ferried, a man and a beast at a time, in a crazy boat. All the rest of the journey lay through heath and gum cistus, pine woods and sand. Macao had, indeed, a pleasing appearance at a distance, as most Portuguese towns have from their whiteness, but I found nothing to admire on a nearer survey. As for quarters, I was first crammed into a little smoky parlour behind a doctor's shop, but upon my remonstrating against this indignity, as I represented it, I procured a billet on the Capitão Mor, or Commandant of the Militia of the district. This gentleman was from home when I came to his house, but arrived by the time I had established myself. He was a stout, vulgar-looking man, with a beard of a week's growth, and a large cocked hat stuck fiercely on his head. His very cloak was folded with an air of defiance, as he strutted angrily into the room, where he paced up and down, talked bigly to himself, and actually slavered at the mouth with indignation at being thus incommoded; but, perceiving that I kept my ground, seemingly very little affected by the howling

¹ A Portuguese silver coin worth about half a dollar.

of the tempest, he cooled down into tolerable civility, and we parted in the morning good friends enough.

Next day I reached Abrantes: this was a military position of considerable importance, while operations were carried on within the Lines, since it was both the key which locked up the Alemtejo from the French armies, and also held them in check on the Zezere, in consequence of which they were so straitened for provisions, as to be forced into a disastrous retreat. It was afterwards made into a principal depôt for sick, and in this occupation I found it. It stands on a very steep eminence above the Tagus, and is defended by ancient walls, which have been repaired and strengthened by barricades, and a variety of new works. In other respects it was filthy, crowded, and gloomy. I was, however, obliged to wait here until the Medical Board should hold a sitting, before whom I was to appear, very much "*in forma pauperis*," to procure my certificate, and leave to visit Caldas. The first quarter assigned to me was well suited to an invalid, that is, to make one; it being half of a close dirty apartment, with a man dying of a fever in the adjoining room. I had taken possession but a few minutes, when I found myself swarming with vermin. This was beyond my philosophy, my baggage was yet on my mule's back, so I again descended the hill, resolving rather to trust to accident for shelter than be thus delivered over to dirt and disease. About a mile from the town I found a quinta, or country house, standing in a kind of farm-yard, with a garden behind it. It looked, to be sure, in a dilapidated condition, but the air was fresh round it, and here I quartered myself in a decent room, containing a stool, a table, and a large chest, which served me for a bed. Here I passed nearly a fortnight in the very fulness of solitude, and so worn down with pain and opium, that it was not easy to determine whether mind or body were the more hobbling and debilitated. What an awakening from a dream of glory!

"O, Octavian, where are now the joys
Thy lusty youth had promised?"

In truth I was not in a much fairer way to become a hero than was Cardenio, *alias* Octavian himself, when he took to skipping among the mountains in ragged crimson velvet.¹ We are cruelly the sport of fortune, when a trifling disarrangement of the fine membrane which covers one of our bones,² shall blast a whole harvest of bright anticipations, and turn us down like disgraced schoolboys, from the lofty grades of military

¹ Cardenio is a lunatic lover in *Don Quixote*. Octavian is the hero of a play of the same name by Geo. Colman the younger, founded on Cervante's tale of Cardenio.

² (For this was my complaint—an enlargement of the periosteum, doctors call it).

"At length the Doctors sat in deep Divan."

enterprise, to plod over again the dull lesson of an obscure existence. The only incident which occurred in this tedious interval was a visit from my quondam host, the Capitão Mor of Macao. His oxen had been embargoed, and having come to Abrantes to procure their release, he nosed me out, and concluding I might have interest enough to assist him, came bowing to the ground with hat in hand, and imploring my lordship's intercession. With the best wishes I could have done nothing in his behalf, but I gratified my revenge by merely inciting his supplications without letting him know the extent of my inability.

I appeared before them with my testimonials of the various remedies by which I had not been cured, so they had no objection that hot bathing should be added to the number. It was a pity that in all the medical surveys I underwent, nobody should have thought of ascertaining my complaint, which being a pain in a limb, was very gratuitously put down to be a rheumatism, whereas, if the real nature of it had been guessed at, it would have been clear that par-boiling for half a century would have gone no way towards curing it. I gladly quitted Abrantes, though, at nightfall, and, having crossed the bridge of boats over the Zezere at Punhete, arrived before midnight at Tancos, where my servants were already established in a decent quarter. Tancos consists of little more than a row of white houses on the edge of the Tagus, but there is a cheerfulness about the place, which an open site, and the vicinity of a fine view, always conveys in bright weather. The Tagus scenery, too, as well as its salmon, is always fine. A little above the village, in the middle of the river, are the ruins of a castle on a rock. I had once the curiosity to row to it with some brother officers; we found the rock covered with the prickly pear, and a long Latin inscription over the gateway: I forget its purport, but there was nothing interesting in it, nor is the edifice of great antiquity.

From Tancos I proceeded to Torres Novas (New Towers), where I was handsomely lodged, but scantily fed, though it is a decent town. The castle is used as a prison, and the walls are still in tolerable repair. This part of Portugal seems, indeed, bristling with feudal fortresses. There is even one at the little village of Alcanhede, my next day's stage, the old tower of which was a convenient landmark for me to steer by through the pine woods through which I had missed my road. When I entered the village, which exhibited evident traces of hostile devastation, I proceeded to the house of the Padre, which seemed to have been repaired, as the windows were freshly glazed, and the whole exterior looked clean and comfortable. I found the priest a good-humoured old man; he received me very civilly, but gave me a lamentable account of the present resources of the place, in which, he said, there was neither

cow, sheep, goat, pig or poultry left, so that nothing was to be purchased except bread made of milho or Indian corn, and wretched wine. I was sitting quietly down under these circumstances to what provisions I had brought with me, when a rabbit, very nicely stewed with rice, made its appearance. I was the more sensible to this attention because I had given no hint of my necessities, and the means, out of which the offering was made, were evidently small. After dinner, the old man recounted his losses to me, which he reckoned at £1,500, and as if it were not enough to have been robbed by the French, he complained he had been since cheated by our commissariat of 114 dollars, the price of two oxen, which a regiment of cavalry had taken and given him a receipt for, but after making repeated journeys to headquarters for payment, and being constantly sent from place to place on one pretext or another, he had made up his mind that it was cheapest to abide by the first loss. So he offered me his receipt for a trifle if I had been disposed to speculate on it. I had a few glasses of tolerable wine with me, over which, towards evening, he became so elevated and friendly that he actually proposed accompanying me on my journey to Caldas for the sake of companionship. He related with much glee a stratagem by which he had once kept the French out of the village, by parading a number of old cocked hats on poles along the battlements of the castle, and beating a march with a drum. The next morning I repaid his hospitality by a present of a little tea and mustard, the latter of which particularly pleased him, since, he observed, it would make a man eat whether he had an appetite or no, and he never dined at the eating houses of Lisbon without calling for it. In Alcanhede I observed the only palm tree I saw in Portugal. The French, who strangely mix taste and sensibility with their cruelties, were particularly careful it should receive no injury.

The next day brought me to Caldas, the Bath of Portugal, My reception, however, was not quite in the Bath fashion. I found the Juis de Fora resided at Obidos, but I was directed to his deputy, and after thumping some time at the door, his wife opened the lattice of an upper window with a shrill "*Quesci Ohi?*" (who's there), and on my telling her my business, she quietly answered her husband was from home, but if I would wait in the street half an hour he would return. Now, considering it rained hard, and I was already wet through, the demand was a modest one. I, however, took shelter in a shop, and when the magistrate's deputy at length returned, he quartered me in one of the lodging-houses in the square. These lodging-houses consist of a suite of little chambers or closets, plainly whitewashed, and furnished with a bed placed on wooden tressels, a chair and a table. There is, besides, a sala or sitting-room in front of the house, of an appearance nearly as simple as the chambers, and a small kitchen with a

stove for burning charcoal. The Portuguese care very little for the comforts of a house. Their fine climate permits them to pass much of their time in the open air, lounging in the Praça, or about a coffee-house, with a cigar in their mouths. Within doors they have little to do but to sleep and eat, the latter of which operations is a matter of very little research or refinement, and, consequently needs but little domestic apparatus. The hospital and mineral baths of Caldas were founded and erected by Leonora, Queen of João II., in 1488. The building consists of a neat entrance hall, in the middle of which there is a spring, where an attendant waits with drinking glasses, to present you with a dose, strongly resembling, both in smell and taste, a concoction of rotten eggs. In the evening this hall becomes the general promenade, in which the company assemble as they meet in the pump room of Bath, to lounge, gossip, and kill time. The wards of the hospital branch off from this central apartment. The establishment is open gratis to the poor, whose complaints require the aid of the waters. It contains a pharmacopœia, and seems kept in the neatest order.

A passage from the hall leads to the baths, or rather, bath, for there is but one, about 30 feet long, and half as wide, from a corner of which the spring bubbles up through fine sand. It is strongly impregnated with sulphur, so that metal becomes black when exposed to its vapour, but I should not suppose the temperature exceeds 75° . After passing out of the building, it turns a mill and forms a bath for cattle. A natural consequence of there being but one bath is, that thirty or forty diseased carcasses are stewed at the same time; a process not pleasing to the imagination. The poor bathe during the night; it is then open to the public. I avoided this by going at an early hour. There is a small dressing room adjoining, where I found a respectable man in attendance with clean towels, etc., whose business it is to rub you down on coming out. Adjoining the hospital are public walks and gardens, which, if not very tastefully disposed, afford at least pleasing shade and verdure. The neighbourhood of Caldas is flat and sandy, but the fences look all bristling with aloes, many of them in flower. I am surprised no speculating botanist ever thought of importing them in this state. They would easily outlive a fortnight's voyage, and Englishmen would thus be enabled more frequently to enjoy this centennial luxury. I had occasion, soon after my arrival at Caldas, to visit the Juis de Fora, who, as I have observed, lived at Obidos, whither I went in search of him. He was from home, but I found his deputy, who proved an excellent specimen of the weakest part of the Portuguese character; he overwhelmed me with expressions of regard and respect; showered on me titles of nobility, and ended by protesting his inability to be of any use to me. His principal, with whom I afterwards became acquainted, was a very different being. He was a man of gentlemanly manners and appearance, spoke French, and was a disciple of Voltaire.

In peaceable times the resort of company to Caldas was considerable. The Court was not infrequently held there, and there used to be an Italian Opera, but now the visitors were chiefly the old and infirm, who came simply for the benefit of the waters. There was, indeed, one lady of quality, who seemed to have come for amusement, and who frequently amused me by the *cortège* with which she took the field for her evening's ride. There were not less than a dozen horses, mules, and donkeys saddled for the occasion. All her waiting-maids were in requisition, besides her males, attending at the head of whom was a lounging major-domo, or species of esquire, with a tremendous cocked hat. I observed one day to my barber, that I thought such lumber were best with the army. "Ah sir," said he, "but they leave such as these, and take the man who makes bread."

Obidos is an old Moorish stronghold built on the steep banks of the Arnoya. The streets looked desolate, several of them being overgrown with grass, while the inhabitants, to judge from the stillness which I always found prevailing, were becoming homogeneous with the old battlements by which they were shut in, as it were, from the living world. The Lagoa di Obidos, an inlet of the sea, about six miles from Caldas, was one of my few excursions. It is a pleasing scene. The lofty cliff is broken through by a passage, seemingly not more than 30 feet wide, which opens into a lake or basin, forming a harbour for fishing-boats and small craft. The Berlings¹ are seen in perspective through the aperture. The little village of Conega lies near it, and a boat-builder's, close to the water's edge, enlivened the picture. I believe there are few other spots in the vicinity of Caldas worth visiting, except, indeed, a convent of Franciscans, in whose garden there are some fine plane-trees. One of the order came in with his fowling-piece, while I was there, and I fancied was not quite pleased to be thus caught "en deshabelle" by a heretic. "You shoot then, father?" said I. "We must do something," was his natural reply. Alcobaca² is within a ride of Caldas, but the spirit of enterprise was fast boiling out of me, before my furlough expired, and I found myself daily growing earthward.

CHAPTER X.

MAFRA AND CINTRA.

Having quitted Caldas, I rode through Obidos towards Torres Vedras, in the company of a young Portuguese commissary. When we had got about half-way, we overtook an old

¹ Las Berlengas are rocky isles, with a lighthouse, five miles out at sea.

² One of the two great abbeys containing tombs of the earlier Portuguese kings; very picturesque, but not so much so as its rival the abbey of Batalha.

gentleman, mounted on a mule, who seemed to be just setting out on a journey, for he took off his hat before we came up, and began a long prayer to St. Antonio, as he said was always his custom when travelling.

The approach to Torres Vedras is picturesque in the extreme. A paved road, formerly planted with trees, passes between two towering eminences, each of which is crowned by a strong redoubt, commanding the pass; it then crosses the Sizandro by a long stone bridge, beyond which, as it were at the bottom of the scene, a lofty hill rises in the shape of a sugar-loaf, crowned with the ruined walls and towers of the ancient castle, from which the town is named, Torres Vedras—old towers. These battlements, after having mouldered for ages, were now again mounted with artillery, which completely commanded the road. The town, which seems clustering round the bottom of the hill, is dirty and uninteresting enough, but I met with a hospitable reception from an officer of our Commissariat, who rode with me the next day to Mafra.

Mafra is the Escorial of Portugal, a convent and a palace united. The village is mean and insignificant. The surrounding country austere and wild in feature, so that the edifice rises up with single majesty as the sun in a hazy atmosphere. Its extent may be judged of by considering that besides the royal apartments, it accommodated 300 monks, and now 5,000 Portuguese soldiers, still leaving room for many of its original inhabitants. The front is approached by gradual flights of stone steps, which one might mount on horseback, to a broad terrace, forming, as it were, the basement story of the edifice. The wings terminate in square, and somewhat heavy, towers; but the centre, in which is the church, is surmounted by a graceful dome. The entrance is by a corridor adorned with colossal statues of saints and martyrs in white marble—executed in Italy. St. Sebastian, pierced with arrows, is among them. The church may justly be styled superb. The walls are completely encrusted with marbles of various colours. The altarpieces are of alabaster, without any mixture of the frippery usually seen in Portuguese churches, and there are eight large organs. I did not hear them, but the voice of a single officiating priest rolled like thunder round the vaulted roofs. Mafra was the family residence of the Prince Regent, who spent his days in processions and psalm-singing, and his nights in debaucheries too odious to be named. The expenses of his table, for he was a great glutton, were reckoned at £300,000 per annum. He was not delicate in his feeding, but usually gnawed off the breasts of half-a-dozen fowls, and flung their remains on the table. It may be conjectured he was withal extremely pious, for he had an army of 80,000 monks to 10,000 soldiers. His reign was the Friars' Millennium.

I one day met a Franciscan with his panniers and donkey, who begged of me; I gave him a trifle for an excuse to talk

with him. "Yours is a good trade, Father," said I before we parted. "Ah, it was once!" he rejoined, with a sigh, "but yours has spoiled it." It mends again now, I suppose.

By the time I had arrived in Cintra, and was satisfactorily established in Mrs. Davy's hotel, on the ascent of a hill, which looked like an entrance into Paradise, I discovered I had lost my portefeuille and writing-case, containing my notes, journal, money, and, in some sense of the word, everything I had most valuable in the world. There was nothing to do but to go back and seek it, which I did the next morning, proclaiming throughout Mafra, not only an adequate reward, but silence, secrecy, and impunities and immunities of every description, in vain. Alas! the place contained too many priests and soldiers to produce so much as a conscientious thief; so, slowly and sullenly, I turned my horse's head back to Cintra.

The town of Cintra contains a palace, built in the very worst taste. The ceiling of one of the apartments is covered with figures of magpies. In one of the courts there is a kind of grotto of Dutch tiles and pebbles, from the walls of which, on a signal being given, water unexpectedly spouts out, to the imminent danger of the unwary, who may be incautiously standing within its reach. It was, I was told, a favourite joke of the Prince Regent, to decoy Embassadors, or other strangers of distinction, within the sphere of its action. Cintra itself stands at the base of a sierra or mountain ridge, which sweeps in a bold line of rocky pinnacles towards the ocean. It is built of white stone, and has a clean, cheerful appearance. The slope of the ridge is one verdant, waving bower of fragrance and blossoms, embosoming a romantic succession of seats and palaces, nearly as far as Collares. The most conspicuous among them is that of the Marquis of Manalao. It consists of two wings in the Italian style, intended to be connected by a triumphal arch. The interior is fitted up on a style of superb elegance, even the door and window-frames having been brought from England. The lawn before the house, is surrounded by a luxuriant hedge of geraniums, glowing with the brightest hues. I know of nothing more apt to strike a stranger's eyes than this profusion of—to us—tender exotics springing in wild abundance. Nature seems to grow richer as she approaches the south, and to throw from her lap, with a gracious prodigality, those blooming treasures we denizens of the north may be said rather to admire than to enjoy. After drinking the pure perfumed air of the valley, and listening to the silver springs and streams which came hissing or dashing down its side from the crevices of the rocks above, I prepared to ascend the ridge, and visit the house of "Our Lady of the Rock." Jackasses are always in readiness for this purpose, and practised as they are, they seem to strive with difficulty up the narrow rocky path leading to the mountain pinnacle on which the convent stands. All here was bleak barrenness, strikingly contrasting with the soft verdure of the

valley. Even the climate was changed. The wind whistled chillily round the decayed porch of the building, whose dark walls, and mossy towers, seem coeval with the rocks that supported them. The tempests of three hundred years had impressed on them a character of antiquity suitable to their wild, melancholy situation. I looked towards the sea. Its roaring was distinctly audible, and I could observe the broad Tagus pouring into its bosom, but its surface was shrouded in heavy clouds, the white foam of the breakers was alone visible, glimmering like the partial lights which streak the expanse of futurity.

The chapel was small and simple. The altar was decorated with sculptures in alabaster, which an old monk, the single tenant of the pile lighted up with a candle to show them to their best advantage. I had observed he had substituted the pale flowers of the mountain for the roses and carnations with which the Roman Catholic churches are usually decorated. They seemed the offerings of age and sorrow. Having surveyed the chapel, he tottered before me through the sacristy, into the narrow Gothic cloister, to point out whatever he deemed worth seeing in the building. He paused by the way to tell me his own history. He was 70 years of age, and had been 50 years in the convent, having fled from the world at the period of the great earthquake of Lisbon.

I shall not easily forget him as he stood before me in the white habit of his order (St. Jeronymo), bending feebly on his staff, and placidly narrating the recent misfortunes by which his brethren had been dispersed, his convent plundered, and himself reduced to beggary; yet he uttered no reproach, and expressed no discontent. Why, indeed, should he? Betwixt him and the dead beneath his feet the interval was so brief, the transition so insensible, that how the one should be spent or the other accelerated, must have been a matter of little interest. It was for his auditor, who was yet to sweat many lustres, perchance, beneath the weary load of existence, to be disquieted at its burdens, and sicken at its crosses. On our return through the chapel he pointed out a picture he had dedicated to his patron Saint, for having once, when a shutter of one of the windows fell, suffered him to escape with a severe broken head. To have escaped altogether would certainly have been a greater favour, and yet, perhaps, have excited less gratitude. I regretted I was too poor to make him a trifling recompense for his attentions, but I must do him the justice to say he had not the air of expecting one. We parted, and I descended the mountain, but like certain pilgrims, who, when they have once looked upon the tomb of Mahomet, close their eyes, and esteem nothing else on earth worth beholding; so can I remember nothing worthy of being recalled after Cintra.

THE END.

KEN TROTMAN MILITARY MONOGRAPHS:

- MM1:** OPERATIONS OF THE FIFTH OR PICTON'S DIVISION IN THE CAMPAIGN OF WATERLOO
- MM2:** MAJOR MILLER THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1859.
- MM3:** CAMPAIGNING IN AFGHANISTAN: JOURNAL OF THE LAST THREE MONTHS' OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN [1843] together with EXTRACT FROM A JOURNAL OF AN OFFICER OF HER MAJESTY'S 13TH LIGHT INFANTRY IN INDIA [1843].
- MM4:** THOMAS TAYLOR LETTERS OF CAPTAIN THOMAS WILLIAM TAYLOR OF THE 10TH HUSSARS DURING THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN.
- MM5:** G.C.WOOLLEY THE MALAY KĒRIS: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.
- MM6:** INFANTRY SWORD EXERCISE 1845.
- MM7:** "C.B.H." BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE LATE LT.-COL.SIR THOMAS NOEL HARRIS, K.H.
- MM8:** T.A.OPPÉ BASING HOUSE IN THE CIVIL WARS.
- MM9:** R.ROBINSON THE SIEGES OF BRISTOL DURING THE CIVIL WAR.
- MM10:** Cornet Francis Hall RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN DURING 1811 AND 1812.