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A

SUBALTERN IN AMERICA;

COMPRISING

HIS NARRATIVE OF THE CAMPAIGNS

OF THE

BRITISH ARMY,

AT BALTIMORE, WASHINGTON, &c. &c.

DURING

THE LATE WAR.

IN ONE VOLUME.

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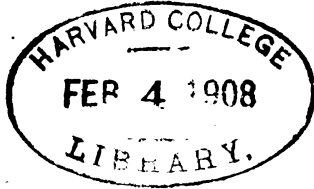
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A SUBALTERN IN AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

LANDING ON THE BANKS OF THE CHESAPEAKE.

It is not without considerable reluctance, my dear North, that I sit down to comply with your frequently repeated request. The details of the late war in the Southern States of North America have been so vividly and correctly given by your friend the Subaltern, that he who ventures to tread upon the same ground, must make up his mind to endure the reproach of rashness, if not of presumption. Nevertheless, as my journal professes not to enter in any degree into the plans of the different campaigns, farther than as these plans affected my own individual person; and as, in point of fact, I cannot pretend to give anything more than a relation of the accidents and occurrences which befell myself, from the commencement of our military operations in the Bay of Chesapeake, down to the period of their final close in the Dauphine Island; I am willing to be guided by your wishes; not in the spirit of a rival

or adversary towards my brother Subaltern, heaven knows, but as an humble imitator, whose lighter sketches and more private narration may, perhaps, give an additional interest to those grave and scientific details with which he has already favoured the public.

In the "Narrative of the Campaign of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans,"* you will find a sufficiently elaborate account of the embarkation of the troops in the Garonne, and the passage from thence to the mouth of the Patuxent. Of that account I shall say no more, than that to the minutest tittle, (as far at least as I am a judge) it is correctly given. All went on as the Subaltern has told us; St. Michael's and Bermuda were both visited, the Chesapeake was entered on the 15th of August, 1814, and on the 18th the fleet began to ascend the Patuxent. It was my fortune, during the progress of this voyage, to be embarked on board of a light, though very comfortable transport. The consequence was, that when the ships of war, and other heavy vessels took the ground, we continued to hold our course, till, having approached within eight miles of St. Benedicts, our master deemed it prudent to cast anchor. We had, however, got so far a-head of the rest, that but a very short space of time elapsed, ere boat after boat, loaded with troops, drew up alongside of us; and in a couple of hours our deck, cabin, and hold, were literally jammed with men and officers, making a sort of half-way house of number 375 between their own vessels and the shore.

* Murray, London, 1826.

Day had barely dawned on the nineteenth, when the report of a cannon from one of the frigates lower down, gave notice that all the boats should be hoisted out, and the troops conveyed to land. How it came about I know not, but in my eagerness to reach *terra firma*, I sprang, with five dozen men, and one brother officer, into a broad-bowed punt, which, being supplied with no more than a couple of oars, moved against the stream at the rate of half a-mile per hour. The point of rendezvous had, however, been named; it was St. Benedicts, a village distant, as I have already stated, eight long miles from our place of anchorage. We had, therefore, but a gloomy prospect before us.—that of a sixteen hours' voyage under a broiling sun; and the prospect, at one period, seemed not unlikely to be realized. Boat after boat, and barge after barge, passed us by, without bestowing upon us any other notice than a volley of jokes, or repeated peals of laughter; till at last a worthy midshipman took pity upon us, and threw us a line. Under his towage we made way at a tolerably rapid rate; and having quitted the ship at six o'clock, found ourselves snugly on shore, and in full march towards the bivouac, about half an hour before noon.

St. Benedicts, like most of the villages on the banks of the Chesapeake rivers, is a small straggling place; the houses of which stand far apart from each other, and are surrounded by neat gardens, and apparently productive orchards. When we landed it was totally deserted by its inhabitants. The furniture, however, had not been removed,—at least not wholly,—from any

of the houses, and not a few of the dairies were garnished with dishes of exquisite milk, and delicate new cheeses. I state this fact, because I perfectly recollect the degree of hesitation which was generally experienced, before any one would venture to partake of these luxuries. In order, I presume, to deter the men from plundering, and to keep them from being guilty of those acts of insubordination which the habit of plundering never fails to produce, a report had been industriously circulated through the fleet, that the Americans had poisoned both wines and provisions, which were purposely left in our way. Though I was never much disposed to place reliance in this report, it must be confessed, that the idea hindered, not only a few privates, who followed me into a dairy, but myself also, for several minutes, from applying our lips to a pig of delicious cream, which occupied one of the shelves. Inclination, however, at length prevailed over apprehension. I drank freely of the perilous liquor; my men followed my example; and none of us suffered the slightest inconvenience from this act of temerity of which we had been guilty.

I have said, that the little detachment of which I was in charge, made good its landing about an hour before noon. Nothing could exceed the degree of exhilaration which was exhibited by persons of all ranks on the present occasion. Of the privates, few had planted foot on firm ground for the space of three months, and of the officers there were several, the low state of whose finances had not permitted them to indulge very frequently in visits to the towns or ports at which we had

touched during our passage. To them the prospect of a few days' sojourn upon their own element, was in the highest degree animating and delightful. For my own part, I had omitted no opportunity of breathing the land breezes, or taking part in such amusements and recreations as our temporary sojourn at St. Michael's and Bermuda afforded; yet I firmly believe, that not an individual among them all enjoyed the change more heartily than myself. Once more I felt that the business of my profession was to be carried on. Widely different, indeed, was the style of conducting that business here from that which had attended our campaigning in the Peninsula. We had no tents now to pitch and to repose in; no bat-mule, loaded with portmanteaus and canteens, attended us; nor were our saddle-horses ready at a call. Each officer, on the contrary, like the soldiers, carried his baggage on his back, and all had the firmament of heaven to look to as their canopy. It may, perhaps, amuse some of your readers to be told in what plight we, on this occasion, took the field; and, as a fair specimen of the plight of officers in general, I will inform them how I myself was accoutred when I stepped for the first time upon the soil of America.

In the first place, then, I carried, as is usual on such occasions, a perfect equipment of military accoutrements; that is to say, sabre, sash, belt, pistols, and telescope. Strapped across my shoulders was a good cloak, which on many previous occasions had done the duty of a bed, and which I confidently anticipated would be called upon to discharge a similar duty in times that were yet before me. On my right flank, that is to say,

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slung over my left shoulder, lay a black leathern haversack, containing a spare shirt, a pair of stockings, dressing utensils, a foraging cap, three pounds of boiled pork, and two pounds and a half of sea-biscuit. On my left breast, again, rested a horn, filled with rum, such as pursers usually serve out, whilst a wooden keg, for the conveyance of water, hung over my neck, on the very middle of my back. All these things, the reader will be pleased to observe, were necessary; yet they by no means added to the agreeable nature of our feelings in the mean time; whilst they certainly took away very largely from the personal elegance of such as were laid under the necessity of carrying them. On the present occasion, however, no one regarded appearances. We looked only to such arrangements as might promise to add a little to our comforts; and as all were equally loaded, no man had an opportunity of quizzing or deriding his comrade.

We reached our ground, as I have already informed you, about half an hour before noon; and seldom have I looked upon a more spirit-stirring spectacle than the position presented. Just under the ridge of a gentle eminence, extending, perhaps, about three or four hundred yards from one extremity to the other, were piled in order of open columns the arms of the different regiments, whilst the men to whom these arms belonged were scattered here and there in groups of twenty, thirty, and fifty, over the whole slope. Some were lying at full length upon the grass, basking in the beams of a sultry sun, and apparently made happy by the very feeling of the green sod under them. Others were

running and leaping about, giving exercise to the limbs which had so long been cramped and confined on board of ship. Whilst, in the immediate rear of the muskets, numerous fires were blazing, upon which camp kettles and other culinary utensils were placed, and beside which the cooks of the different companies were moving in all the dignity of office. A little apart from the men again, and surrounding each coterie its own small fire, sat many of the officers in parties of two, three, or four; whilst others were strolling about with the careless step and merry countenances of men, who looked forward to danger as a pastime, and confidently anticipated success. The very summit of the hill, again, was empty, except that three pieces of cannon crowned it, the muzzles of which were pointed towards the distant country; and a few sentries walked their solitary rounds beside them. Such was the general appearance of our bivouac, as it was first established on the banks of the Patuxent.

The Subaltern has informed you, that officers employed upon active service lay aside all idea of a general mess, and live together as the ties of friendship, or a sense of mutual convenience, may dictate. Like your correspondent, I too, had a friend, and one whom I sincerely valued. As he is still in the service, and has risen, as his merits deserved that he should rise, to an elevated rank, you will excuse me, if instead of giving you his real name, I call him, for distinction's sake, Charlton. He was, and is, as good a soldier as any in the army, and at the period to which I now allude, commanded the company to which I was attached as a lieu-

tenant. My first inquiry on reaching the corps was naturally for him, nor did it require a very minute search in order to discover him. I found him sitting under a tree, on a spot of ground considerably removed from all neighbours. A fire was burning hard by, beside which his servant and my Portuguese boy were resting—not idly, but in the act of watching a potful of greens and potatoes, which they had carried off from one of the gardens near. A couple of cheeses, with some pork and biscuit, were spread upon the grass; and a horn drinking-cup stood beside them. This was our dinner, which had been prepared for some time, and was kept waiting only for me. We had breakfasted at five in the morning, and were therefore quite ready for it, even thus early; and we addressed ourselves to it with the promptitude of men, whose appetites were neither sickly nor fastidious.

Having performed this most necessary of all duties, our next business was to take a survey, as far as it might be practicable and safe so to do, of the nature of the ground on which we were posted, and of the country beyond it. With this view we ascended to the top of the height. The view from that height was extensive; but it introduced to our notice little besides one immense, and apparently impervious forest. Immediately beneath us, indeed, that is, along the descent, and just where the descent ended, the fields had been cleared. One solitary cottage, too, was visible, about musket-shot from the base, which was surrounded, as almost all the houses in Virginia are surrounded, by an extensive orchard; but even it stood in a nook of the thicket, giant

trees in full foliage closing it in on every side. There were two roads discernible, one leading away from the right of the position, the other running close beside the left. The road on the right was narrow and broken; it presented the appearance of nothing more than a by-path to some hamlet or farm-house near; that on the left was of a tolerable width, and, though deep and sandy, exhibited symptoms of greater care and labour having been bestowed upon it. But of these, neither could be traced above a mile, because both were lost at that distance in the wood.

We descended the hill, with the intention of pursuing the track on the right, after we should have examined, as prudence required us to examine, the cottage and its out-buildings. It was occupied by a picquet of our own troops, and, as might be expected, was already in a state of dilapidation. Of a couple of pigs, which had occupied a sty on one side of the little domicile, nothing remained now except the hind legs of one, and the half of the other, the rest having been long ago divided among the messes of the corps which furnished the guard. The hen-roost, too, was plundered, at least a quantity of feathers scattered here and there gave proof that some of the fowl-kind had suffered a violent death not long ago. In other respects the cottage was circumstanced as most cottages are which have the bad fortune to fall in with the line of an invading army's out-posts,—that is to say, its shell stood uninjured, but its interior was in ruins.

Having satisfied our curiosity here, and ascertained the direction in which the advanced sentinels extended,

we were proposing to accomplish our original design, and to pursue the path on the right, when the arrival of a brother officer out of breath, and in great haste, deterred us. He had ventured along that road, and having penetrated about a couple of miles, arrived at a farm-house of some size. Taking it for granted that this, like the houses in St. Benedicts, must be deserted, he had rashly entered, and escaped being made prisoner by three or four stout Yankees, only through their apprehension that he was not alone. He *purchased* a fowl from these worthies, and, being permitted to retire, lost no time, as soon as the trees concealed him from observation, in hurrying to the camp. With the account which he gave of matters, we were, at least for the present, perfectly satisfied; so, returning to our place of abode under the tree, we passed the rest of the day in quiet.

As the evening closed in, all the arrangements, customary in bivouacs, were effected. The troops, assembling near their arms, trimmed and enlarged their fires, and sat down by companies and sections on the ground beside them. Their great-coats were all put on, and their accoutrements buckled over them. The knapsacks, likewise, packed and strapped up, were so arranged as that each might be slung across its owner's shoulders at a moment's warning; or, should no alarm occur, supply him with a comfortable pillow for the night. Arrangements not dissimilar were also gone into by the officers. Charlton and myself, for example, having suspended our sabres from a branch, laid our haversacks and pistols within reach, and, wrapping

our cloaks round us seated ourselves, with our feet towards the fire, and addressed ourselves, *con amore*, to the fragments which remained from our noon-day repast. We were neither of us much disposed to sleep; nor, indeed, had the case been otherwise, should we have found it an easy matter to drop at once into a state of forgetfulness. The sun had hardly set, when every leaf of our tree became alive with insects, which sent forth a ceaseless chattering, not perhaps loud enough to break the repose of a sound sleeper, but sufficiently audible to drive sleep from the eyes of persons totally unaccustomed to it, and neither infirm nor weary. It was, however, upon the whole, an extremely pleasant sound; and it was not the only sound which gave us pleasure. Stores continued to be carried from the ships to the shore long after nightfall, and the cry of the seamen on the decks, the splash of oars in the water, and the heavy noise of casks and carriages, as they were rolled into the bivouac, all had an effect in keeping alive the excitement, which men ever experience on first taking the field, after a long interval of quiet. Then there was the hum of conversation from the bivouac itself; a song, or part of a song, heard from time to time; and as these died away, the murmur of the river rolling its large and sluggish body of water towards the sea, and breaking as well upon its own banks as upon the bows of the ships, now at anchor in its tide. Each and all of these made a music to the ear, which the ear could not refuse to take in; whilst, for the sense of sight, the fire-flies furnished ample occupation, as in numerous clusters they pitched

upon the boughs overhead, and shed a soft light through the foliage, such as legends tell once illuminated the hall of Oberon, or Titania's bower. To be grave and serious, these sights and sounds, some of them perfectly novel, and all so different from those to which we had of late been accustomed, long hindered us from making so much as an effort to close our eyes. But the enthusiasm even of soldiers will not resist the encroachments of drowsiness for ever. The sounds of human labour and human voices gradually died away, —those produced by insects and the stream became confused and blended together,—the splendour of the fire-fly became more and more indistinct, and was at last seen no more. Above all, our grog was drunk out, and our cigars expended ; so, laying ourselves at length upon the grass, we were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER II.

ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

It was still dark, when the well-known bustle of troops standing to their arms, broke in upon our slumber. The fires, as a matter of course, had all burned low; ours, indeed, was totally extinguished; and though the extreme mildness of the climate hindered us from experiencing any inconvenience from cold, it cannot be said that we awoke in absolute comfort. A heavy dew had fallen during the night, which, if it hardly penetrated the thick folds of our cloaks and blankets, hung about our hair, neck, and faces, producing a sensation which I cannot easily describe, though I perfectly recollect that it was the reverse of agreeable. Nevertheless we rose in excellent spirits and high good humour, and took post beside our men, in confident expectation that an immediate advance would occur as soon as there should be light enough to direct our steps.

We had waited thus above half an hour, the soldiers standing with ordered arms in close columns of companies, and the officers lounging about near them, before the dawn began to exhibit itself in the eastern

horizon. A pale yellow light rushed up, as it were, into the sky, which increasing in brilliancy every moment, brought the objects around us gradually into notice. The houses in St. Benedict's rose first like rocks upon our view, then the vessels in the river were seen like trees and towers, as the feeble light fell upon them; whilst the forest beyond continued obscure and dark long after, till the sun's redder rays began to strike them. It was truly a magnificent spectacle, as the approach of daylight is, under all circumstances and in all situations. But the object which most strongly attracted our attention, was a dense—I had almost said an impenetrable fog, which was now seen to hang over the position of our bivouac. The reader has perhaps stood beside a salt-pan, whilst the process of evaporating the sea-water was carried on,—if so, he can form a pretty accurate notion of the kind of mist by which we were now surrounded, and which very satisfactorily accounted for those stiffened joints and aching bones which had affected most of us when we awaked. As the sun rose, however, the fog quickly cleared away; and when the order to dismiss and prepare our breakfasts was given, it had entirely disappeared.

Our morning meal being consumed, we began, not unnaturally, to indulge in surmises and speculations touching our future proceedings. Contrary to the expectations which had been formed, no hint was dropped about moving, and as we all knew General Ross sufficiently to be aware, that there could be no disinclination on his part to carry on the war with vigour, we looked now for some other cause of a delay, which, on every

account, we united in deploring. Long previous to the disembarkation,—as early, indeed, as the entrance of the fleet into the bay,—the several regiments had received instructions as to their order; and to each of the three brigades into which the army was divided, a commandant had been appointed. It could not, therefore, be for the purpose of organizing his troops that our leader abstained from advancing. But there were stores to be landed, a medical and commissariat department to be arranged, and dispositions to be made for a speedy and safe reshipment, in case of any reverse or check in our operations. Besides, it was not quite certain that the end of the debarkation had as yet been determined on. The most prevalent rumour, indeed, spoke of a flotilla of gun-boats on the river; and of the necessity of a co-operation between the fleet and the army, to secure its capture; but whether even now, the general or admiral were not calculating their means for the attainment of a higher object, is, to say the least of it, doubtful. Be this, however, as it may, one thing appeared very certain, namely, that there was but a slender chance of our effecting anything, or making any progress, during the day.

Having remained in the neighbourhood of the position till noon, I determined, in company with a friend, my brother subaltern, whose name was Williams, to proceed upon a foraging excursion up the country. With this view we took the right-hand road, of which I have already spoken, and arrived, after a walk of about a couple of miles, at a farm house. It was the same which another officer had visited during the pre-

vious day; and if, as I have no reason to doubt, he really found it uninjured,—marauders had been busy enough between the period of his ramble and ours. It was now thoroughly ransacked. Scarcely an article of furniture remained entire; and as to living creatures, there was not one to be seen in its vicinity. We left it behind, and went forward. A further walk, of perhaps half a mile, brought us to a poor cottage, situated about a stone's throw from the road, the general style and architecture of which bespoke it as being the residence of some new settler. Even it had not escaped the rapacity of stragglers. Its hogsty was torn down, its poultry-house broken open, and its little garden robbed of almost every cabbage and potatoe that grew in it. There was a wretched old woman here, who began to weep bitterly as soon as she beheld us. With some difficulty we managed to convince her that from us she had nothing to apprehend; and having informed her of what we were in quest, she produced, as she declared, her last fowl: for which she was astonished at being paid by a quarter-dollar piece. This act of barter on our parts restored her to herself, and we were not less gratified than surprised to learn, that she had suffered no injury from the British troops; but that her son, with whom she lived, had himself driven off the hogs, and let the poultry loose into the woods. We likewise learned that there were neither villages nor farm-houses within six miles of her cabin, a space of country which we did not deem it prudent to traverse. So wishing her good morning, we directed our steps backwards, and reached the bivouac unmolested.

On returning to our home under the tree, we found that Charlton and the servants had been far more actively, or rather successfully, employed than ourselves. A pig, a goose, and a barn-door fowl, bore testimony to the zeal and diligence with which they had conducted themselves; and these being all in an advanced state of preparation, we looked forward with satisfaction to the enjoyment of a substantial and delicate repast. But as the poet expresses himself—

“The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft awry;”

an aphorism for the truth of which we could this day painfully vouch. Our messes were just laid upon the grass, and we had taken our seats beside them, when the bugles suddenly sounded. Mortified, as it was but natural that we should be, at an occurrence so ill-timed, there remained for us only one course to pursue. We took each in his hand as much meat and bread as he believed that he should be able to consume whilst on the march, and the rest was unceremoniously bestowed in our own and our men's haversacks; we buckled on our accoutrements, and slung our baggage on our backs and hurried off to our stations.

A few minutes only elapsed, before the whole army, consisting of near four thousand men, and divided, as I have already stated, into three brigades, drew up in the order in which it was designed to move. It was my fortune to be attached to the light brigade; which, as forming the advance, took post at the head of the column. This force, which was composed of the 85th regiment, the light companies of the 4th, 21st, and 44th,

one company of marines, and a hundred armed negroes, might muster about twelve hundred bayonets, and was commanded by Colonel Thornton. The second brigade again, at the head of which was Colonel Brook, comprised the 4th and 44th regiments; whilst the third, led on by Colonel Paterson, was made up of the 21st regiment, and a battalion of marines. The park of artillery, again, amounted to no more than three pieces, one six, and two three-pounders; and it was rendered doubly inefficient from the total absence of horses. The guns, with their tumbrils and ammunition-waggons, were dragged by seamen; the gunners and drivers followed on foot, and the progress which they made was as tardy as the deep and sandy nature of the roads authorized us to expect.

The different corps had already taken their stations, and were in anxious expectation of the word to march, when, about four o'clock in the afternoon, General Ross, accompanied by his aides-de-camp and staff, rode up. No preconcerted plan had been arranged, nor had the slightest wish been expressed on the part of the officers; but his appearance amongst them was hailed by loud and reiterated shouts from the men. The thing was wholly involuntary, and it failed not to cause the gratification which it was calculated to produce. The General pulled off his hat, smiled and bowed to his soldiers; and then addressing himself to the officer in command, desired that he would lead on. Another hearty cheer followed the delivery of this order, and the march began.

The order in which this inroad was effected has been

so accurately described elsewhere, that I deem it quite unnecessary to enter here at any length into the detail. The advanced guard, under the command of Major Brown of the 85th regiment, led the way. It consisted of three companies of light infantry; two of which moved in column along the road, whilst the third extended itself in files both in front and on the flanks. After this body, at a certain interval, came the light brigade, which also furnished a company or two, to scour the woods. Upon the heels of the light, followed the second brigade; next came the artillery; and last of all the third brigade, which furnished the rear-guard. Such were the arrangements made by our general, at once to hinder surprise, and guard against ambuscades, for a happy application of which the nature of the country afforded every facility. The reader must now bear in mind that we were now about to penetrate through immense forests, scantily chequered here and there with spots of cultivated ground. Though to us these forests seemed pathless, it was hardly to be expected, that there were not many lanes and roads cut here and there by the inhabitants, along which, if any enterprise or talent guided their counsels, bodies of regular troops might be moved; whilst the well-known confidence of the Americans in their rifles, and their overweening estimation of their own skill as marksmen, led to the supposition that we should not proceed far without falling in with one or more parties of volunteers, anxious to give us a sample of their mode of bush-fighting. To-day, however, nothing of the kind occurred. Neither the leading files nor the flank patrols

saw an enemy, and the column pressed forward, not only unmolested, but without having its spirits once elevated by the sound of firing.

And, in truth, it was well for us that we were not, on the present occasion, either brought into action, or or harassed by any needless formations. For never, perhaps, did an army exhibit such symptoms of deficiency, not in courage, but in bodily strength, as we all exhibited this day. Nor is that a circumstance hard to be accounted for. In the first place, the soldiers, unaccustomed during three months to the weight of their arms and baggage, found the burden, at present imposed upon them, too great for their enervated condition to endure. Even the oldest and best of our veterans complained; whilst the younger men, and those who had lately joined from England, soon sank under it. In the next place, we, unfortunately, began our journey at the very hour when, in a climate like that of Virginia, the ordinary traveller thinks of resting. The heat was more intolerable than I have any language to describe. There was not a breath of air in motion; the sun was bright, and the sky perfectly cloudless; whilst the deep fine sand, of which the road was composed, not only gave way beneath our tread, but rose in masses about us, filling our eyes, and even obstructing our respiration. It so happened that to-day I was not employed with either the advanced guard or the flankers. My station was with the column; and it was really painful to see those whom I knew to be among the bravest and best soldiers in the army, dropping, one after another, upon the banks by the way side. We

passed, in our march, more than one stream of water. As may be imagined, there was no keeping the men in their ranks on these occasions; and, indeed, to speak the truth, I became myself, at last, so completely overpowered, that I not only ceased to forbid their halting to drink, but joined in the act of insubordination, and drank also.

The sun had set, and, as is the case, in this quarter of the world, darkness was fast following his departure, when, to the inexpressible satisfaction of every officer and man in the army, the halt was sounded. We had reached a space of ground more open than usual, and just sufficiently elevated to give to us, in case of an attack, the advantage of a rising ground. On the slope of this, and among a few stubble-fields, the different corps drew up. The guns were then, as usual, dragged to the summit, the arms were piled, fires were lighted, and the ordinary preparations for a bivouac gone through; but in these, and in the rest which was to follow them, it fell not to the lot of my friend or myself to take part. As soon as the column halted, we were called upon to muster our company, and moved off towards the front, where the charge of one of the out-picquets was committed to us.

The post in question was distant about a quarter of a mile from the camp. It was a farm-house, situated near the high-road, surrounded by numerous barns and buildings, and which, strange to say, had not been deserted by its inmates. Of these, however,—at least of the females,—we saw nothing; the father, an old, weather-beaten, rough-spoken personage, alone making his

appearance. He was a keen democrat, a thorough Yankee, and abhorred the English with all his heart; a feeling which he took no care to conceal, and which we, of course, resented only by turning it into ridicule. He spoke much of the iniquity of our invasion; but comforted himself by anticipating the utter destruction of those engaged in it, who would, as he asserted, be opposed by the bravest men, and the most expert shots, which the whole world could produce. His two sons, he informed us, had gone off only this morning to join the army, and his principal source of regret appeared to be, that his own age and infirmities hindered him from joining in it also. The reader will easily believe, that we enjoyed the old man's conversation a great deal more, than if he had pretended to sentiments which he could hardly experience, or put on a manner which was not natural to him. Nor, to say the truth, was he more hostile in his language, than he proved himself friendly in his behaviour as a landlord. He produced his bread and cheese and peach-whisky, liberally and freely; and though he drank to our speedy defeat, we willingly joined him, if not in his sentiment, at all events in his potations.

The greater part of our time was, however, spent out of doors. Though there was no enemy in sight, nor, as far as we could learn, any force collected within a day's march of us, we were not on that account the less careful to see that the sentries occupied proper posts, and were attentive to their duty. On the contrary, the circumstance that we knew not where to look for danger, induced us the more cautiously to guard against it;

and as it might come upon us from either flank, or from the rear, just as readily as from the front, the whole encampment was girdled in by a circle of watchmen. These took their ground at the distance of perhaps half musket shot from the different picquets which furnished them. They stood not more than forty or fifty yards apart from one another, and except upon the great road, they stood singly. On the road, again, there were a couple planted together, in order that one might from time to time patrol onwards to ascertain whether all was safe, whilst the other remained stationary. It was our business to see that these respectively fulfilled the trusts reposed in them; and the business was one which could not be otherwise accomplished except by constantly traversing from one extremity of the chain to the other.

For several hours, no other inconvenience attended these perambulations, besides a feeling of considerable fatigue, for which the toilsome march of the day had amply prepared us; but towards midnight the case was different. A mass of black clouds suddenly collected together, and the stars, which but a moment ago shone out brightly in a clear blue sky, were completely obscured. A tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, and rain ensued. There was not a breath of wind, it is true, hardly so much as to move the leaves upon the trees, but the thunder was terrific, and the rain rushed down like a cataract in perpendicular streams. The effect of such a storm, echoed back as it was from the thick woods around, was awful in no ordinary degree; whilst every flash of lightning gave to the eye a momentary glimpse of scenery, such as no powers of lan-

guage are adequate to describe. The pathless forests, which on every side formed the back-ground, the few cultivated fields which intervened between them and the house, the very palings and hedges which intersected them, with the curved line of sentinels, standing motionless at their posts—all these, as well as the sweep of the road, were seen for an instant as distinctly as at noonday; and then a darkness, thicker and more impenetrable than before, enshrouded them. No doubt there was much to admire in all this, perhaps sufficient, or more than sufficient, to compensate for the inconvenience of a sound ducking, where a change of habiliments was to be procured; but, on the present occasion, it must be confessed, that we would have willingly dispensed with all that was sublime in the occurrence, in exchange for a little dry weather, no matter how tame or monotonous.

It was not, however, for us to choose. The storm took its course, and having continued with unabated violence during two hours, gradually died away. The rain ceased to fall, the clouds dispersed themselves, and the little stars shone forth again, like the eyes of a beauty whose tears have ceased to flow; and the rest of the night, accordingly, was spent in as much of quiet and comfort as it usually falls to the lot of soldiers upon an outpost duty to enjoy.

CHAPTER III.

SKIRMISH WITH THE ENEMY.

In obedience to the customs of war in like cases, our picquet got under arms, and was drawn up in front of the house, two hours before sunrise. No enemy, however, made his appearance, nor did any rumour of an enemy come in to put us more than previously on the alert; but we continued to preserve our ranks as if an army were in our front, till directions reached us from rear how we were to act. The column, it appeared, was in readiness, and would set out on the first blink of dawn; and as our company already occupied the road by which it was to move, we were ordered to perform the duty of the leading division of the advanced guard.

It was yet but the grey of the morning, when Major Brown made his appearance, and we began our march. The road, like that of yesterday, was deep and sandy; but our men appeared refreshed to a degree which could have hardly been expected, and kept up, as they had been accustomed to keep up, when marches were to them events of every day's occurrence. All, too, both officers and privates, seemed to catch additional energy

from the recollection that there was nothing friendly in front of them. It was truly a journey of adventure and discovery; but as the reader may not be aware of the kind of order which the advanced companies of an army preserve, and the species of feeling which animates the individuals who compose these companies may be strange to him, I shall not, perhaps, run any hazard of wearying his patience, if I endeavour to make him acquainted here with both the one and the other.

Charlton's company, that to which I was attached, consisted of a captain, two subalterns, three sergeants, and fifty rank and file. It was thus distributed:—Along the high road moved first of all two files of men and a sergeant, one file about twenty paces ahead of the other. Parallel with the most forward file, twenty men spread themselves, by pairs, or files, each pair or file keeping about ten paces apart from the others, on each side of the way; by which means the woods or fields were swept on both flanks to the extent of two hundred paces. In rear of the last of the two files, but full twenty paces behind, moved the remainder of the company. About twenty paces, again, behind that small section, the two remaining companies advanced, coming on in compact array, unless, indeed, some alarm chanced to be given, when they, too, instantly extended through the fields. Thus our movement resembled rather that of sportsmen, when, in large bodies, they surround a wood or draw a preserve, than that of soldiers, at least soldiers upon a parade; and perhaps, if the truth be spoken, our feelings were as much akin to those of the first named class of persons as to those of the last. For

myself, I freely confess, that I brushed through the underwood, and traversed the enclosures, more in the spirit of one beating for game than looking out for opponents; and if any judgment may be formed from the merry chat and rude repartees of those about, a similar spirit animated the men.

But though our occupation was productive of much merriment and very considerable excitement, it must be confessed, that the fatigue which accompanied it began, before many hours had expired, to counterbalance in no slight degree both the one and the other of these advantages. The woods, be it remembered, were thick and tangled, and the grass that grew under the taller trees seldom reached lower than our hips, and often passed our middles. Besides, no enemy appeared to interrupt our progress; and there was a sameness in searching continually to no purpose, and in expecting for ever, without having the expectation gratified. Under these circumstances, we were by no means displeased, when, towards noon, our bugles sounded the halt. At this particular moment, I and my section were extended on the right of the road, and occupied part of a wood, which presented every appearance of having continued unmolested since the days of Noah. But as the blast did not call us in, we were at no loss to discover that the halt was merely temporary, and that the ground of encampment for the night could not yet be in view. We lay down, however, where we were, well pleased that an opportunity of resting our weary limbs was afforded, and, unbuckling our haversacks, addressed our-

selves with extreme good will to the remnants of such provisions as could still be found there.

It chanced, that in scouring these forests, we had put up, among other animals, a leveret, which a poodle dog, the property of my friend Charlton, chased and caught. The reader will easily believe that poor puss was not a little baffled and confused by the shouts and cries with which our men animated the pursuer, and that nothing like fair play was granted to her in her efforts to escape. Taking advantage of this pause, a few of the soldiers set to work, skinned and cut up the hare, lighted a fire, and were preparing to dress it, when a circumstance occurred, which in an instant called off our attention to other and more important matters. "What is that?" said a corporal, who stood beside me, whilst I was watching the progress of dissecting the leveret. "Do you not see something, sir, moving through those bushes to the right?" I looked instantly in the direction towards which the soldier pointed, and beheld plainly enough a flash, like that which the sudden falling of a sun-beam on bright arms produces. There was no room to doubt from what source that flash proceeded. My bugle sounded the alarm, the men stood to their arms, and we dashed forward to the copse. It was as I anticipated. A body of the enemy, perhaps an hundred and fifty in number, were there. Perceiving by our movement that they were discovered, they instantly opened their fire, and a very pretty and interesting skirmish began. It was not, however, of long continuance. We rushed on, the men firing as an opportunity offered,

and covering themselves all the while, as they easily might, by the trees; whilst the Americans, not waiting for our approach, retreated with all haste through a country manifestly well known to them, and were beyond our reach in ten minutes. In this trifling affair not a single British soldier was scratched, whilst of the enemy, but one solitary dead body was discovered.

Trifling as the skirmish was, it served, as the sound of the bugles in all directions told us, to put the whole army on the alert. Advance was again the order of the day, and advance we did, in higher spirits and better humour than had distinguished us from the beginning. The enemy, we trusted, would sooner or later hazard a battle; and as he had begun the system of disputing his territories with us, we doubted not that he would henceforth act up to it. But the prospect of being every moment hurried into action, even though it be accompanied in the bravest heart with sensations—not perhaps of alarm, but of something remotely akin to it,—is, upon the whole, to a soldier in full march, and surrounded by gallant comrades, one of the most animating and exquisite sensations of which human nature is susceptible. It is not then with him, as it is in the stillness of his tent or bivouac, when he knows that to-morrow's sun must light him to a field of carnage and death. Then, indeed, there is time to think; and no man can think of an impending dissolution, without at least a degree of seriousness which no other thought is capable of producing. But when he is scouring the woods, or advancing through fields and inclosures,—his men all about him, and eager and animated, like

huntsmen about a fox-cover,—the officer must be phlegmatic indeed, whose energies are not wrought up to a degree of enthusiasm which causes all apprehension of personal risk to be forgotten, and directs his whole thoughts into one channel—namely, how he is most successfully to discharge his duty when the moment of trial shall arrive. I am not one of those who, writing in my own study, pretend to say, that I should prefer a bloody battle to a snug dinner with my friends, and a social glass of wine after it; but I confess, that during the remainder of our progress, one wish, and one only, rose into my mind; and that was, that the Americans would afford me an opportunity, with the twenty brave men whom I commanded, to make what impression I could upon any of their ambuscades, however numerous, or however judiciously disposed.

All my eager aspirations after renown were, however, doomed to suffer disappointment. The Americans would not make a stand. We saw them, indeed, again, just as we reached the skirt of the forest, and, falling in once more with the river, wheeled up towards the open country around Nottingham; but it was in full flight, and already at the farther extremity of the town. We saw, likewise, that a few of our mounted officers, Colonel Thornton, Major Brown, and, if I mistake not, the General himself, attempted, in the most dashing and gallant style, to charge their rear, and cut off their stragglers; but the charge of three or four horsemen was easily repulsed, and the stragglers, striking off towards the plantations on either flank, were soon safe from farther molestation. Somewhat vexed that they

should have thus escaped us, we were accordingly obliged to halt, where we had been ordered to halt, in the village; and here the rest of the army joining us, dispositions were made to pass the night. The picquets were planted without delay; the different brigades took up their respective grounds; and Charlton, Williams, and I, not a little weary with our excursion, ensconced ourselves under the shade of a large barn, plentifully stored with tobacco.

The reader must be already well aware, that if the purport of the present debarkation really was to seize Commodore Barney's flotilla of gun-boats, it completely failed of success. The boats were all gone. They set sail, as one of the few remaining inhabitants informed us, at an early hour this morning, and were now many miles nearer to the source of the Patuxent than we. But this circumstance, whatever effect it might have upon the minds of those at the head of affairs, was the cause of no annoyance whatever to us. We were, on the whole, very well pleased with all which had yet befallen us. We were particularly satisfied in finding ourselves so snugly housed for the night; and it added not a little to our gratification, when we discovered that our Portuguese servants had not been remiss in providing the requisites for a sumptuous evening repast. Turkeys and geese had by some chance or another flown into their hands as they proceeded; and these they now made ready, for their own, and their masters' suppers. And then, with respect to tobacco, that principal delicacy of soldiers upon active service, there was no reasonable cause either for scarcity or

complaint. The house which sheltered us was full of it; and though the broad arrow had been impressed upon the doors, we scrupled not to appropriate to our own use, not only as much as we required at the moment, but a stock sufficient, as we guessed, to supply our wants for several days to come. To sum up all, the quarter-master arriving soon after the halt, with stores of bread and rum, an additional allowance of both was served out, as well to the men as to the officers. On the whole, therefore, a thousand situations may be conceived many degrees less enviable than ours; when, with a fire blazing before us, and the remains of our supper taken away, we reclined, pipe in hand, and drinking cup hard by, within the porch of the hospitable barn, chatting over the occurrences of the morning, and calculating what might be the issue of to-morrow's operations.

Of the disposition of the army in general, it falls not in with the plan of my present story to say much. Let it suffice to observe, that Nottingham, a small town, or rather an overgrown village upon the Patuxent, was occupied by the light and second brigades; the third brigade taking post among the out-buildings of a few farm-houses on the left of the road. The picquets, again, extended across the whole front, round the left flank, and so back to the rear; whilst on the right the river, already covered with launches and boats from the fleet, was considered protection enough. Thus were we amply secured against all attempts at surprisal, had it accorded with the military policy of the United States to make them; and as no man thought of undressing,

or even laying aside his accoutrements, we needed only to be warned of the approach of an enemy, in order to be in readiness to meet and repel him.

In the short course of this narrative, I have more than once had occasion to mention the name of my brother Subaltern, Williams. There are circumstances connected with his destiny which induce me here to let my reader a little more into the history of his military life than I might perhaps have been otherwise disposed to do. Williams was the son of an officer; of a veteran officer, who, by dint of long and arduous service, rose to the rank of a major. He was not, I believe, his father's only son; but if it were fair to draw an inference from the boy's conversation, he was at all events the favourite. Williams was gazetted into the — regiment of foot, when he had barely completed his sixteenth year; and he joined us in the south of France, too late to take part in the war, before he had attained to his seventeenth. He was a fine, spirited, generous-hearted youth, ignorant, of course, of what a soldier's duty in the field really is, but anxious, if ever young man was anxious, to become practically acquainted with his profession. Being appointed to our company, he chose to attach himself very warmly to me; and seeing a great deal in the lad worthy of any man's affections, I readily and willingly met his advances. We were together during the morning, and his gallant and cool bearing throughout the trifling affair in which we had been engaged, certainly tended to strengthen the tie of personal regard by which I already felt myself bound to him. To-night he appeared to be in peculiarly high

spirits; indeed I have never seen a lad exhibit more striking symptoms of happiness than when I mentioned his conduct in the terms which I felt it to merit, to our common friend Charlton. So gratified was the youth by my praises, that he actually shed tears, though, as he himself assured us, they were the sweetest tears that ever wet his cheeks. "Oh, my poor father!" said he to me, as we were arranging our cloaks, and preparing to lie down, "how delighted would he be to have heard you say what you said to-night!" I could not answer the boy; his little speech affected me so deeply; but I loved him from my heart for his fine feelings, and I determined to be his friend during the remainder of his military life.

The night could not be farther advanced than eight or nine o'clock, when a consciousness of bodily languor overcoming every other sensation, we made ready to resign ourselves to sleep. As the smell of the tobacco was not offensive, and the plant itself was made up into large sheaves, we unrolled a few of these, and scattered them upon the floor of the barn for our bed. Upon the mattress thus formed, we spread one of our cloaks, and reserving the other two to supply the place of blankets, we lay down, all three together. A little more of the tobacco, raised into a heap, served us for a pillow. Our sabres were within reach, our haversacks and pistols at our heads; the only articles of dress which we laid aside were our boots, and our sashes we untied. Then directing the servants to heap up the fire, so as that it should continue to blaze till the morning, we bade each other good night, and slept, as men generally sleep,

whose minds and bodies have been in full exercise for four-and-twenty hours on a stretch.

CHAPTER IV.

THE reader may be informed here, once for all, that General Ross's army, like all other armies in the immediate presence of an enemy, drew up in close columns of battalions, every morning an hour before dawn. In this position we remained, on the morning of the 22d, till daylight had fully broken, when, instead of filing off towards the road, and prosecuting our journey, we were permitted to quit our ranks and return to our lairs. Ignorant of any reasonable cause for this measure, and anxious, as British troops ever are, to press on, we betook ourselves to our respective resting-places a little out of humour; but we soon acquired philosophy enough to believe that all must be for the best, and comforted ourselves with the expectation that the much-desired advance, though delayed for some purpose or another, could not but take place before long. Nor were we disappointed.

We had just time enough allowed to ascertain that Nottingham consisted of four streets, running at right angles through one another, and that it presented every appearance of having been abandoned by its inhabitants only a few moments previous to the arrival of our army, when the well-known bugle-call summoned us to

our ranks, and in five minutes after we were in marching order. The same dispositions which had covered our advance on the previous day, were again made. The flankers swept the woods and fields, whilst the leading files marched cautiously along the high-road; but it fell not to our lot to occupy one or other of these important posts. We formed part to-day of the columns, and like our comrades moved on; ready, indeed, to act, should an opportunity be afforded, but less sanguine than we should have been, had the office of protecting the movement been intrusted to us.

The country through which we travelled presented fewer traces of cultivation than any which we had hitherto traversed. The road, indeed, diverging from the river, struck inwards, so as to cut off an angle formed by its course; and, as every body knows, it is entirely upon the banks of its navigable streams that America can, even now, be said to be inhabited. A few fields there doubtless were, with a house or two here and there, throughout the whole line of march; but after leaving Nottingham decidedly behind, they were rare indeed. One mighty forest was before us and around us, which, if it served no other purpose, at all events screened us from the rays of a sultry sun, which would have otherwise proved in the highest degree inconvenient.

We quitted our ground at seven o'clock, and went on for about a couple of hours, without any circumstance occurring calculated to attract attention, or deserving of notice. A few pigs and turkeys, indeed, which happened to be at large near a farm-house by the way-side,

suffered, it is true, the fate incident to mortality; and much laughter was heard from front to rear of the column, as dogs and men either failed or succeeded in the chase. But of the enemy no traces were discovered, though our guide assured us that several numerous bodies had passed the night in this neighbourhood. About noon, however, we were put a little upon our mettle, and an adventure took place which I record, chiefly for the purpose of showing the temper and disposition of the men with whom we were now embroiled.

The advanced parties having arrived at the more open country which surrounds Marlborough, found themselves suddenly in the presence of two squadrons of well-mounted, and handsomely-appointed cavalry. They were composed, as we afterwards learned, of gentlemen volunteers in the service of their country. To do them justice, the troopers no sooner saw our men, than they made a spirited effort to cut down one or two files, which appeared to be separated from their companions, and at a distance from the wood. But a single discharge from another party which they had not observed, instantly checked them; and they galloped off.

Almost at the same moment when this little affair was going on, some eight or ten riflemen being discovered in the wood on the right of the road, were pursued by Colonel Thornton, and one of them overtaken. When I say that the fellow was overtaken, I mean that he halted of his own accord, and made signs that he gave himself up. The Colonel, satisfied with this, was directing a file of his men to go forward and secure the prisoner, when the American, with the utmost delibera-

tion, levelled his piece and fired. Happily he missed his mark; but that circumstance would have availed him little had he fallen into the hands of our people. Fleet of foot, however, and well acquainted with the country, he soon managed to baffle his pursuers, who, after having wasted a few rounds at him, were compelled to abandon the chase and return to their ranks.

It has been already stated, that our corps experienced very great inconvenience, and was sorely crippled in one of its most important arms, through the want of horses. We had no artillery; three of the smallest pieces ever used, hardly deserve to be termed such; we were without cavalry, and even our staff was miserably provided. The General felt this, and he did his best to remedy the evil, by causing every horse which was found in the fields or stables near, to be seized and brought in. By this means we were enabled to muster, at the close of the third day, a troop of about forty horsemen; but such horsemen! The men, indeed, were like other British soldiers; they were artillery drivers, and they were commanded by an officer of artillery; but the horses were, for the most part indifferent enough, whilst the appointments of the troopers proved, in many instances, a source of merriment, not only to us but to themselves. It was not always that saddles could be found for the horses; and when such were totally wanting, recourse was had to blankets, doubled repeatedly, and strapped on the animals' backs. On other occasions, the absence of a bridle was compensated by a halter; very many of the men made stirrups for themselves out of pieces of rope, and a few

rode bare-backed. Nor were their weapons more uniform or more graceful than their horse equipage. A few only carried their own sabres; the rest were supplied with the cutlasses which belonged to the seamen who dragged the guns. Yet this irregular and wretchedly-equipped cavalry proved repeatedly of the most essential service to the expedition.

It was one o'clock, when the neat houses, and pretty gardens of Marlborough, presented themselves to our view. I know not whether the scene would strike me now, as it struck me then, were I again to visit it; but at that moment I imagined that I had never looked upon a landscape more pleasing, or more beautiful. The gentle green hills which on either hand inclosed the village, tufted here and there with magnificent trees,—the village itself, straggling and wide, each cottage being far apart from its neighbours, and each ornamented with flower-beds, and shrubberies; these, with a lovely stream that wound through the valley, formed, as far as my memory may be trusted, one of the most exquisite panoramas, on which it has ever been my good fortune to gaze. Though no lover of the American character and nation then, (whatever may be the case now,) I could not behold this peaceful scene without experiencing sincere regret that it should suffer profanation from the presence of a hostile force; and I determined that no exertion on my own part should be wanting to hinder the orders already issued against plunder and rapine, from being neglected. To say the truth, however, it was an easy matter to keep our men within the bounds of tolerable subordination and discipline. The attacks

which they from time to time made upon farm-yards and pig-sties, were, to a certain degree at least, allowable enough. It would have been unreasonable to expect, that hungry soldiers, in an enemy's country, would sit down to digest their hunger, whilst flocks of poultry and herds of swine were within their reach. But not a single act of wanton mischief was perpetrated; and when we marched out on the following day, we left Marlborough, not perhaps so rich in live stock, but quite as picturesque and rural, as when we entered it.

In this place we learned, that Commodore Barny, aware of our design, and unable any longer to elude it, had blown up the gun-boats of which we were in pursuit. This piece of intelligence sufficiently accounted for the many explosions which we had heard whilst on the march; but though it might have caused some disappointment to the heads of departments, by us it was treated as a very dull and uninteresting piece of news.

The first matter about which soldiers interest themselves on arriving at the ground where they are to halt for the night, is to secure as comfortable a sleeping-place as circumstances will allow; and then to provide materials for their supper. Leaving Charlton to select a dormitory, Williams and I, as soon as we had seen to the comforts of our men, sallied forth upon the old quest, in search of provisions. We entered several houses, but found them all unoccupied; and what was far less satisfactory, very many of them already lightened of their viands. By the help of my Portuguese boy, however, (one of the ablest foragers, by the way, that ever followed a camp,) we succeeded at last in mak-

ing ourselves masters of five fowls ; with which, and a loaf of bread, a sack of flour, and a bottle of peach-whisky, we prepared to rejoin our friend. We found him very snugly settled ; not in the house, for the position of the corps was in advance of the village, but under a clump of leafy trees, which furnished a tolerable shelter against the sun, and promised to be equally serviceable against the dews. There our dinner was dressed and eaten ; and here, upon a few trusses of hay, brought from a neighbouring barn-yard for the purpose, we slept soundly and contentedly.

Fresh, and in excellent spirits, we rose next morning ; and having stood the usual time with our men, began to consider how we should most profitably and agreeably spend the day. Of farther movements, nothing was said ; the troops, indeed, had been dismissed as soon as dawn appeared,—we were therefore prepared to treat this as a day of leisure and repose. Nevertheless, as we were quite ignorant of the situation of the enemy, we deemed it by no means prudent to venture far from the camp ; but contented ourselves with strolling back into the village, and instituting a renewed and more accurate search after people, and other living creatures.

The only inhabitants whom we found abiding in his house was a Doctor Bean, a medical practitioner, and the proprietor of a valuable farm in the neighbourhood. The Doctor was, in point of fact, a Scotchman ; that is to say, he had migrated about twenty years ago from some district of North Britain, and still retained his native dialect in all its doric richness. He professed, moreover, to retain the feelings as well as the language

of his boyish days. He was a Federalist—in other words, he was hostile to the war with England, which he still persisted in regarding as his mother country. Such, at least, were the statements with which he favoured us, and we believed him the more readily, that he seemed really disposed to treat us as friends. There was nothing about his house or farm to which he made us not heartily welcome; and the wily emigrant was no loser by his civility. We took, indeed, whatever we stood in need of, provisions, forage, and even horses; but our commissary paid this man of professions the full value of his commodities. From Doctor Bean, I however scrupled not to accept a present. He offered me all that his house contained; I took only a little tea, some sugar, and a bottle of milk; and did not insult him by alluding to a remuneration.

We were thus situated, when towards noon the General suddenly appeared in the bivouac, and the troops were ordered to fall in. The scruples which had, for a time, affected him, were now overcome, and a push, it was understood, was about to be made against the city of Washington. From various quarters we had learned of the excesses committed by the American army upon the frontier towns of Canada, and the General and Admiral determined, by insulting the capital itself, to convince the Government of the United States that such proceedings were not more barbarous than impolitic. This, at least, was the rumour of the moment; but concerning the causes of their movements, the inferior officers and soldiers of an army seldom trouble themselves by inquiring. It was sufficient for

us to know that an enterprise was before us, worthy of our leaders and our own reputation ; we cared not from what motive it sprung,—our only thought was to effect it.

In less than a quarter of an hour from the first alarm, the column was in motion. Charlton's company had again the good fortune to form the advance ; and it was not long before my young friend Williams was again enabled to exhibit his coolness and courage under fire. We had proceeded about four miles, sweeping and scouring the country as before, when, on arriving at the base of a low green hill, we were saluted by a volley of musketry, from a body of troops which filled a wood upon its summit. It happened that the General was at this moment among us. He had seen the rising ground from a distance, and, anxious to take a survey of the surrounding country, had ridden forward, with the intention of ascending it. It will be easily imagined, that the presence of our leader acted as no clog upon our courage or resolution. We rushed up the height at double-quick time, and, receiving one other volley just as we gained the ridge, dashed into the thicket. Three of our men were wounded, and as yet we saw not the hands which struck the blow ; but now they were visible enough. It was the rear-guard of a corps of observation which had bivouacked last night within gunshot of our picquets, and which, finding that we were in full march towards them, were retreating. We drove their skirmishers through the wood in gallant style, scarcely allowing them time to load as they retreated ; till at last they fairly took to their heels and escaped.

In the meanwhile the rest of the advanced guard pushing steadily along the road, caused the section which was meant to support the skirmishers with whom we were engaged, to disperse and fly in all directions. To the fugitives, it is true, the country was familiar; they therefore easily escaped; but by their flight they enabled us to obtain a view of the column, which it was their business to have masked, and we were consequently made aware that about twelve or fifteen hundred infantry, with several pieces of cannon, were in full retreat before us. The enemy observed us, probably at the same moment that we beheld them, for on our approach they halted, and drew up upon some heights about a mile distant. Of this matter the General was soon informed, and one hundred and fifty additional men arriving to our assistance, we made ready, about two hundred in all, to dislodge them.

With this design one company extended itself in skirmishing array, whilst the rest advanced in column; but Jonathan was too timorous, or too wary, to abide this shock. Their artillery, indeed, opened as soon as we arrived within point-blank range; and to say the truth, the shots were well directed; but we were yet a great way off from the bottom of the rising ground which they occupied, when the infantry broke once more into marching order, and retired. Notwithstanding this, we continued to press on, till we had crowned the heights, when Major Brown, who directed the movement, informed us, that it was not intended that we should advance any farther in this direction.

A halt being accordingly commanded, we lay down

upon the grass, and looked about, for the purpose of ascertaining how far we had outstripped the column, and in what manner the column was occupied. Our surprise may be guessed at, when not a soldier appeared in view. A cloud of dust rising at the back of a copse, which ran parallel with the heights above, served to point out the direction which the army had taken; and even that was so wavering and uncertain in its aspect, as to create some doubts in our minds, whether a retreat were not begun. A short time, however, sufficed to set our minds at rest on this important subject. We had kept our ground perhaps something less than an hour, when *Lieutenant Evans*, Assistant Quarter-master General, arrived with an order, that we should abandon the post, and keeping so far under the ridge as to screen the movement, defile to our right. The army, it seemed, had taken the road to Alexandria; we were to follow it; and if we did not overtake it before, we should certainly find it bivouacked at a place called Wood-yard, about four miles distant. Such were the directions given to us, and these we prepared to follow.

The evening was closing in when we began to descend the hill, and it was something more than dusk ere we regained the road; but even then, our only guide was the track of those who had preceded us; for Mr. Evans could not, and did not wait to conduct us. Nevertheless, we were not afraid to trust to it, and it did not deceive us. Darkness came on, indeed, whilst we were yet far from the camp, and we could not but feel that had the enemy been as enterprising and active as he ought to have been, perhaps we might not have

reached it at all. But we did reach it in safety ; though, as far as Charlton and myself were concerned, it was only to be employed upon a duty as harassing and disagreeable for the time, as any I recollect ever to have performed.

About a mile, or a mile and a half from the situation of the camp, and considerably out of the line even of the picquets, stood a large house, built after the fashion of a chateau. It was the residence of a gentleman of extensive fortune, who, probably not anticipating that he ran any risk of a visit from the invaders, had not removed either his family or effects from his house ; and now entreated that General Ross would station an officer's guard there, for the purpose of protecting him and them from violence. The General readily acceded to his wishes ; and it fell to the lot of my friend and myself to be appointed to this service. As the events arising out of our leader's generosity were to us, at least at the moment, replete with interest, it may be well, instead of entering upon them imperfectly here, to reserve my relation of them for a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER V.

I HAVE said that the chateau (for the protection of which my friend and myself were made answerable) was distant a full mile and a half from the ground of the encampment, and separated by rather more than half that space from the most advanced of the outposts. The orders which we received, were, to keep up a communication by patrols and sentinels with the nearest picquet—not to permit any violence to be done to the house or furniture—to guard ourselves against surprisal from the enemy—and to join the main body as soon as daylight should appear. To say the truth, we were far from being delighted with the honour conferred upon us; for we could not but regard ourselves as exposed to a most unnecessary degree of peril, for the attainment of an object hardly worth the risk which was run in seeking to attain it.

The first and greatest lesson which a soldier is required to learn, is obedience. Whatever may be the extent of personal hazard or personal inconvenience to which it promises to subject him, an order once received must be carried into execution; and both Charlton and I were too well acquainted with the customs of the service to hesitate, on the present occasion, as to our course

of proceeding. Taking with us the allotted guard,—thirty men,—we set out without a moment's delay, and reached our station just as a great clock in the hall was striking the hour of nine.

The mansion, built after the French fashion, was fronted by an extensive court, fenced in on all sides by a brick wall of some ten or twelve feet in height. Having traversed this, we arrived at the main entrance, where we were received, with every demonstration of politeness and hospitality, by the owner; a very gentlemanly, well-dressed person, apparently about forty years of age. He overwhelmed us with apologies for the inconvenience which he doubted not that he had occasioned; and assured us, in the same breath, that no efforts would be wanting on his part to render our sojourn with him as little irksome as possible. It struck me, at the moment, that there was rather too much of civility in this, considering the relation in which we really stood towards each other; and I confess, that so far from feeling my uneasiness lessened, it became more powerful than before, through a vague apprehension of treachery, for which I could not satisfactorily account. I resolved, however, to be peculiarly on my guard; and perhaps it was well for our little party that my suspicions chanced to be thus easily excited.

Having established our men in one of the out-buildings, (as many of them, at least, as were not required to keep up the communication between the chateau and the nearest picquet,) we inquired, before entering the house, how many servants there might be about the place, and in what manner they were disposed of. It

appeared, that, independently of domestics, no fewer than thirty male slaves, besides women and children, dwelt in the huts adjoining. Now, though we were not afraid of these poor creatures themselves, the thought occurred to us, that were their master disposed to play the traitor, he might make of any or all of them, very ready instruments. We therefore, though with a thousand declarations of regret for the necessity under which we lay, insisted upon lodging the whole body, for this night, under one roof; and planted sentinels so as to hinder them from holding any secret intercourse with the family. Besides this, we mustered all the domestic servants, placed soldiers in the kitchen beside them, and took every other precaution which the singularly exposed nature of our situation seemed to require.

This done, we followed our host, who conducted us through a spacious and well-lighted hall, up a winding oaken staircase, and introduced us into a drawing-room, fitted up and furnished with considerable taste and elegance. There we found the rest of the family assembled; it consisted of an old lady, whom he introduced to us as his mother—a young lady, whom he named as his daughter—and a middle-aged person in black, who, we were given to understand, was the family priest, or confessor. Our acquaintance, it appeared, was a rigid Catholic; and there being no Romish place of worship in his neighbourhood, he afforded a home and a maintenance to a domestic chaplain. They were all, especially the master of the house and his chaplain, well-bred people. The old lady was frank and loquacious; the young one, without being either shy or forward,

maintained her own share in the conversation; and both the priest and his patron had seen the world, and seen it to advantage. Nor was it by their conversation alone that they sought to amuse us. Tea, or rather a sort of compound between tea and dinner, was ordered in. On the same table were arranged cups and saucers, several dishes of cold meat, a few bottles of different kinds of wine, and fruit in plentiful variety. Of all of these we were hospitably invited to partake; and, as the reader will easily believe, it required no violent pressing on the part of our entertainers to urge us to a compliance.

All this was satisfactory enough, nor had we any better reason to complain either of the beds or lodging-apartments which were offered for our accommodation. Our meal being concluded, and as much claret consumed as we felt disposed to indulge in, the master of the house led us up stairs, and ushered us into a large well-furnished chamber, from which a door opened into a smaller apartment beyond. In the former stood a capacious four-post bed; in the latter, a neat French couch was erected. These conveniences he pointed out, and leaving us to decide by whom they should respectively be occupied, he wished us good night, and withdrew.

My companion happened to be, at this time, in a delicate state of health,—the fatigues of the two last days overcame him, and he readily and gladly threw himself upon the bed. It was not so with me. If not robust, I was at all events capable of enduring my full share of privations; and I felt myself, under existing circumstances, called upon to exert my powers of vigilance to the utmost. I did exert them. Instead of lying

down, I wrapped my cloak about me, and descending quietly to the court-yard, walked about in the cool night air; sometimes looking in upon the men to see that they were in a state of preparation, and at other times trudging from post to post, in order to keep the sentinels on the alert.

I was setting out, a little after midnight, to perform the last mentioned of these duties, when the appearance of Williams, who advanced through the court with rapid strides, greatly surprised me. I had heard several of the sentinels challenge; but neither tumult nor the report of fire-arms following their challenges, I paid little heed to either. As may be imagined, I eagerly inquired into the cause of his visit; and my consternation may be guessed at, when he informed me that an American straggler had fallen into the hands of his picket, from whom information was obtained that an attempt was about to be made to cut off the party at the chateau. This, he alleged, was to be done by the connivance, and under the directions of the master of the house; for whom, or for a messenger from whom, who might act as a guide, the corps intended for the enterprise now waited.

The reader will easily believe, that I listened to the preceding intelligence in no very enviable state of mind. Our numbers, as I well knew, were not equal to a successful resistance, provided the assailants chose to do their duty, and there was not a point on which we might not be assailed to advantage. The house stood in a sort of corner, between two roads; the one, that by which our column had advanced in the morning; the other a

cross road, which came in upon it at right angles. Along either of them, not infantry only, but cavalry, and even artillery, might march; whilst the broken nature of the ground in our rear, afforded a thousand facilities for the approach of troops, who might collect, unnoticed by our sentinels, within a few yards of their posts. There was no room for hesitation as to how it behoved us to act. Hurrying to the hut where the body of the picquet was housed, I ordered the troops under arms without delay; and, planting sentinels over the different entrances to the house, I took with me a file of men, and proceeded, without any scruple, to secure the person of our host. But the bird had already flown. How, or when he escaped, no one could tell; but that he had escaped was certain.

By this time Charlton, roused from his sleep, had joined us, and learning in what predicament we stood, proceeded to make the best dispositions, which circumstances would allow, to meet the threatened danger. It was from the two roads, principally, that we had reason to apprehend an attack. That which joined the road to Alexandria, of which I have already spoken as a by-path, fell in between our mansion and the camp; from it, therefore, we concluded that the principal effort would be made. Patrols were accordingly directed to proceed along that road every quarter of an hour, and, by way of making certainty doubly sure, he and I took it by turns to accompany them. But whilst we thus carefully watched that quarter, we were not neglectful of others. One-half of the men were ordered out on sentry; and the other half stood during the remainder

of the night with their arms in their hands in the courtyard.

The house-clock had struck one; and as yet no noise had been heard, nor any circumstances taken place, calculated, in an extraordinary degree, to excite alarm. We were beginning, indeed, to persuade ourselves that the enemy, daunted by the absence of the straggler Williams had taken, or apprehensive, from some other cause, that their plans were discovered, had laid aside their intention; when suddenly a sentry on the right of the court challenged. This was not the quarter from whence we looked for an attack—the man who gave the alarm stood upon the Alexandrian road, not upon the cross road; yet an enemy might be there also; so, leaving me to watch beside the by-path, Charlton hurried off in the opposite direction. The sentinel challenged again; a third time we heard the cry, “Who goes there?” but in a more abrupt tone; and then Charlton himself exclaimed, “Fire, if they will not answer.” The tread of many feet was now audible, followed by an indistinct hum of voices; but just as our anxiety respecting the issue had attained its height, our attention was called away to other objects, by one of our own sentries, who likewise challenged. There could not be a doubt, that if any persons were moving in his front, they must be Americans, for this sentinel stood upon the cross road. I hastened forward, a sergeant and three men following me, and reached him just as he had challenged for the second time. The soldier was perfectly justified in so doing. Not only could we even hear, distinctly enough, the tramp of people marching,

but their very forms were distinguishable in the starlight. Without a moment's hesitation I commanded the men to fire. The enemy halted, seemed to hesitate, and then, without so much as returning the salute, melted away. All this was a matter of extreme mystery to me; but in a few minutes it was cleared up very satisfactorily.

The sound of our firing drew Charlton, with the rest of the picquet, to the spot immediately; and from them we learned, that the troops, whose advance in an opposite direction had first alarmed us, proved to be an escort of our own people conveying ammunition and provisions from the fleet. This intelligence at once accounted for the precipitate retreat of the Americans. They had doubtless obtained information of the coming up of this detachment, and supposing that its object was to reinforce us, they not unnaturally concluded that their intentions were known, and their plot defeated. Such, at least, was the opinion which I formed at the moment; and though I profess not to speak upon any ground more sure than my own surmises, I see no reason to suppose that it was incorrect. Be this, however, as it may, one thing is certain, that the force which but a moment ago had threatened us disappeared, and that neither it, nor any other, gave us the slightest annoyance during the remainder of our watch.

I am quite aware, that the preceding account will convey to the mind of the reader but a very inadequate idea of the state of painful and feverish excitement which affected us during the greater part of the night. From the instant that we became acquainted with the

attempt which was about to be made against us, we naturally looked for its commencement ; and hence every noise, the sighing of the wind through the trees, the waving of the branches, the creaking of a gate or door upon its hinges, one and all of these, as often as they occurred, were construed into the sound of an advancing enemy. Nor was this feeling of anxiety less intensely experienced by the sentinels than by us. All their senses may truly be said to have been upon the stretch ; and as there was no moon, nor any other light except that which the stars afforded, it is not to be wondered at if the sense of sight repeatedly deceived them. Many a bush and stake was pointed out as the leading file of a column of troops ; more than one musket was levelled at such imaginary foes ; and but that most of them were old soldiers, well trained to coolness and caution, the worst consequences might have followed. Our situation, be it remembered, was totally different from that of an ordinary out-post. In the latter case, your detachment forms but one link of a connected chain, any effort to break in upon which must be made at the hazard of alarming the whole army ; and if you be forced, your retreat is always direct and sure upon the main body. We at this moment stood perfectly alone ; and though a few sentinels doubtless communicated from us to the picquets, 5000 men might have thrown themselves between us and the camp, without our being able, by any exertions, to know it. There is not a doubt that we owed our safety altogether to the opportune arrival of the convoy ; though even that, which consisted of no more than 120 men, might have

been cut off as well as we, had the Americans been somewhat less cautious of risking their persons.

I have said, that after the retreat of the corps which threatened us from the cross road, we neither saw nor heard anything more of the enemy that night. The Alexandrian road continued, indeed, to the last to furnish occupation for the vigilance of our sentries; for there was no end to the stragglers, sailors, companies, and troops, which moved along it. But this circumstance, though abundantly harassing at the moment, tended not a little to increase our security, inasmuch as it gave intimation to the Americans, if any lay near, that our people were awake. At length, however, the moment of our departure drew on, and we waited its arrival with the most unfeigned satisfaction. The first streaks of dawn were barely visible, when, calling in the more remote sentinels, we began our march towards the camp; and, gathering up the rest as we proceeded, reached Woodyard just as the army was making ready to prosecute its advance.

CHAPTER VI.

ACTION AT BLADENSBURG.

THE sun had not yet risen, when, under the guidance of two natives, whom our Quarter-Master-General had impressed into the service, the column began to move. Notwithstanding the excessive fatigues of last night, Charlton and I were far from being displeased at finding that an increase to the strength of the advanced guard was necessary, and that it fell to our lot to fill that important situation. Our men, likewise, were manifestly delighted with the post assigned to them, for the few hints which had been dropped as we pursued our way from the chateau, as to the desirableness of a little repose, after so many hours of watching, were heard no more. We cheerfully took our ground as one of the five companies committed to the direction of Major Brown, and marched off in the same excellent spirits which had animated us during the operations of yesterday.

We soon cleared the few open fields which surrounded the place of last night's bivouac, and struck into a wood, more dense and more tangled than any which we

had yet traversed. The path was so narrow, that four men could with difficulty move abreast; and the thickets were so close and rough on either side, that the flank patrols could make their way through only by dint of painful exertions, and at a very leisurely pace. Yet of one comfort we were all very sensible. The boughs meeting overhead, completely sheltered us from the rays of the sun; and notwithstanding the gloom which so broad a canopy cast around us, we saw, from the colouring which fell upon the grass, that to be so sheltered from such a sun, was a source of no slender self-congratulation. We were now, it appeared, crossing the country, by a way little used except for sportsmen, and hastening back into the great road to Washington, which had yesterday been abandoned.

Not a single event fell out worthy of repetition, during the four hours which were expended in traversing this forest. No ambuscades lay in our way, nor did any skirmishers attempt to harass our movement. Extreme bodily weakness, and the almost impervious nature of the thicket, alone served to make our progress tardy. But at last the wood began to assume a more open appearance; spaces occurred here and there, which gave proof of attempts made to clear it away; and the path became wider, more firm, and more like a road adapted to the common traffic of a civilized country. In a word, about nine o'clock in the morning, we found ourselves within view of the point to which our steps were directed; and in half-an hour after, the by-path was abandoned, and we were once more in full march towards the capital.

Nothing can be imagined more striking than the change which became immediately perceptible in all the outward appearances of nature. Instead of trackless wilds, we found ourselves marching through a country sufficiently open to convey the idea of its being well peopled, and yet so far feathered with groves and plantations, as to give to it a degree of beauty, of which a state of over-population will doubtless some day deprive it. Green meadows and corn fields were separated from one another by patches of the ancient forest, which seemed to have been left standing, not so much for the purposes of use as for ornament; whilst here and there a gentle hill would swell up, cultivated to, perhaps, the half of its ascent, and crowned with wood. Nor were villages and solitary dwellings wanting. Within the space of three miles, we passed two hamlets, built each in a single row, by the wayside; while numerous farm-houses, steadings, and larger structures rising from time to time on either hand, indicated that we had at last attained to a region of something like refinement. We were all, both officers and men, conscious that a powerful revulsion in our feelings was effected by this change in our circumstances. Numbers who had begun to lag behind, acquired new vigour from the contemplation of so many signs of life; and conversation, which for some time past had almost entirely ceased, was renewed in every rank with fresh volubility. To add to the general spirit of exhilaration, the bugles of the light corps sounded a lively march, and the troops moved on, in spite of heat and weakness, merrily, gayly, and rapidly.

But it was not alone because we beheld houses and

barns abundantly around us, that our spirits returned to us on the present occasion. There were other objects discernible, not less capable than these of putting soldiers upon their mettle. The road by which we travelled was deeply indented with the track of men's feet and horses' hooves, and by and by a few green fields on each side presented manifestations of a recent encampment. The ashes of fires not long extinguished were still smoking. Morsels of provision, bits of clothing, a firelock here and there, and numerous bundles of straw, all told a tale of troops having spent the night here; whilst palings, torn down in large quantities, seemed to imply, that of the force whose route we were following, no inconsiderable portion was composed of cavalry. The expectation of being momentarily charged, could not, under these circumstances, fail to arise in the minds of all; and as we had no horses of our own competent to protect the infantry even from the attack of a single squadron, the infantry made ready to form into squares at a moment's notice, and protect themselves.

It was at this juncture that the mounted drivers proved of the most essential service to the expedition. Being attached to the advanced guard, they were placed, like us, under the general orders of Major Brown, and, directed by their own officer, (Captain Lempriere of the artillery,) they were most active, and most daring, in their efforts to hinder a surprisal. They rode, sometimes as far as musket-shot, a-head of the light infantry, and posted themselves, in sections of three or four, at the corners of every grove, round which they found it either unsafe or impracticable to attempt a circuit.

The infantry of the advance, too, was particularly active; not a single hiding-place was left unexplored; by which means, though prudently on the alert, the main body was enabled to move on, under the full assurance that no enemy could reach them without time enough being allowed for the assumption of any order which might be necessary.

Things continued thus, no enemy making his appearance, till about ten o'clock, when the worn-out condition of his troops compelled the general to halt. We had traversed a distance of not less than twelve miles, and had journeyed for the last hour under a sun, than which it were hard to conceive any more scorching. There was not a breath of air to fan our cheeks, and the dust and fine sand were not less annoying to our eyesight and respiration, than they had been on the afternoon when our inroad began. Numbers of our best men had already fallen by the way-side, and numbers more were prepared to imitate their example. It was, therefore, with a degree of satisfaction, of which the very memory has doubtless departed from those who experienced it, that we listened to the notes which directed us to rest. We threw ourselves down upon the grass, and in five minutes the mass of the army was asleep. For myself, the exertions of to-day, superadded to the toil and anxiety of last night, completely overpowered me. Though the loss of life had been the consequence, I question whether I should have been able to resist the drowsiness which overwhelmed me. My eyes were closed before my head reached the ground, and I continued

perfectly ignorant of all that was passing, for a full hour and a half.

It was not without some difficulty, as he himself informed me, that at the close of that period my young friend Williams contrived to shake me into a state of renewed consciousness. At length, however, by dint of violent exertions on his part, I was enabled to open my eyes, and to see that the corps to which I was attached had already begun its march, and that the others were preparing to follow. Hurrying after it, we soon overtook our division; and the same routine of scouring fields, scampering through thickets, and feeling our way over defiles and hollows, was repeated, with the same results as before.

We had proceeded about a couple of miles from the halting-place, and the hour of noon was past, when our attention was suddenly drawn to the left, by several heavy clouds of dust which rose in that direction. Though we could not doubt from what source the dust proceeded, the intervention of a considerable copse between us and it, hindered us from saying with certainty that the enemy was in the position. The screen thus interposed was, however, speedily withdrawn. A farther advance of some hundred and fifty yards brought us clear of the plantation, and the American army became visible. Williams and I were walking together at that instant. "Are these Yankees?" said he, with all the naïveté imaginable; "or are they our own seamen got somehow ahead of us?"

I could not repress a smile at the question, though,

to say the truth, an older soldier than Williams might have easily mistaken the force opposed to us for anything rather than the army, on whose valour the safety of a great capital depended.

The corps which occupied the heights above Bladensburg, was composed chiefly of militia; and as the American militia are not dressed in uniform, it exhibited to our eyes a very singular and a very awkward appearance. Sufficiently armed, but wretchedly equipped, clothed part in black coats, others in blue, others in ordinary shooting-jackets, and some in round frocks, the three motley lines of infantry, but that their order was tolerably regular, might have passed off very well for a crowd of spectators, come out to view the approach of the army which was to occupy Washington. A few companies only, perhaps two, or at the most three battalions, wearing the blue jacket, which the Americans have borrowed from the French, presented some appearance of regular troops. The rest, as I have just mentioned, seemed country people, who would have been much more appropriately employed in attending to their agricultural occupations, than in standing, with muskets in their hands, on the brow of a bare green hill. There were, however, upon the right, some squadrons of horse, whose bearing was sufficiently warlike, whilst about twenty pieces of cannon, arranged at different points along the ridge, spoke of another and more serious affair, than a mere triumphal march through the middle of this levy.

I have seldom been more forcibly struck with anything than with the contrast, which a glance to the rear

afforded at this moment, with the spectacle which was before me. A column of four thousand British soldiers, moving in sections of six abreast, and covering an extent of road greater than its windings would permit the eye to take in, met my gaze in that quarter. The dress, the perfect regularity of their step, the good order which they preserved, and, above all, the internal conviction, that they were only advancing to victory, excited in me feelings for which I have no words, and which he only can conceive who has stood in a similar situation. Nor was it the sense of sight alone, which, on the present occasion, was forced into a powerful comparison. The Americans, from the instant that our advanced guard came in view, continued to rend the air with shouts. Our men marched on, silent as the grave, and orderly as people at a funeral. Not a word was spoken, scarcely a whisper passed from man to man, but each held his breath, and mustered up his best courage for the shock.

The head of the column had just turned the corner of the wood, when it halted, and an aide-de-camp riding up to Major Brown, desired that he would proceed with the advanced guard, ascertain the state of the village of Bladensburg, and, in case it should be occupied, dislodge its garrison. This order the Major prepared to obey, and, calling in all his skirmishers, except about half a company, he formed his men into one little column for the assault.

I have said, that the Americans, in three lines, occupied certain green hills, about a couple of miles to the left of the point from whence we now beheld them.

Between their position and ours, ran a branch of the river Potomac, across which a bridge was thrown at the extremity of the main street of Bladensburg. The road which conducted to the bridge ran parallel with the stream, and compelled us to move for some time completely under the eyes of the enemy, whilst the town itself stood on our side of the river, and was commanded by several of their guns. It is a place of inconsiderable size, not capable, I should conceive, of containing more than a thousand or fifteen hundred inhabitants; but the houses are, for the most part, composed of brick, and there is a mound on the right of the entrance, very well adapted to hold a light field-piece or two, for the purpose of sweeping the road. Under these circumstances we naturally concluded that an American force must be here. Though out of the regular line, it was not so far advanced but that it might have been maintained, if not to the last, at all events for many hours, whilst the means of retreat, so soon as the garrison should be fairly overpowered, were direct and easy. Our surprise, therefore, was not less palpable than our satisfaction, when, on reaching the town, we found that it was empty.

As our orders went no farther than to direct that we should ascertain in what condition the place stood, our commanding officer deemed it needless to attempt anything beyond its mere occupation. Even this, however, was not effected without annoyance. The principal street which conducted to the bridge, lay completely exposed to the fire of a two-gun-battery, which the enemy had erected about the centre of their position;

and instantly on our showing ourselves that battery opened. It was well served, and the guns were admirably laid. The very first shot cost us three men; one killed, and the other two dreadfully wounded; and the second would have been, in all probability, not less fatal, had we not very wisely avoided it. We inclined, at once, to the right and left of the road; and winding round the houses, made our way without any farther loss, as far as the last range; when we were commanded to lie down, and wait for the column.

In the meanwhile, the main body being informed how matters stood, resumed its march, and approached the town. It was saluted, as we had been saluted, by a heavy and well-directed cannonade; but being warned by some of our people, where the danger lay, it so far avoided it, as to close up its ranks, and effect all the arrangements necessary for the assault, under cover of the green mound. Whilst this was going on, Charlton, Williams, and myself, having got our company as well together as might be, were lying behind a house, in momentary expectation of the word. Cannon shot, after cannon shot, continued all the while, to pass through the thin brick walls about us; nevertheless we felt it derogatory to our character to move, and we treated these visitations with no other notice besides an ill-applied raillery. At last a ball struck a soldier who lay between Williams and myself, and carried off his leg. The boy looked at me, as much as to ask how, under such circumstances, he ought to behave; and though, I dare say, his courage was quite equal to mine, I really could not help laughing at the peculiar expression which

passed across his countenance. But no great while was granted for consideration. The accident just recorded had hardly happened, when Colonel Thornton, riding up, exclaimed, "Now, my lads, forward!—You see the enemy; you know how to serve them." So saying, he spurred on, and the whole of the advance, springing, with the celerity of thought, into their places, rushed towards the bridge. It was gained in a moment: but a couple of guns, which had doubtless been laid with special care, instantly opened, and seven men were swept down. No pause, however, occurred. "Forward, forward," was the only word heard; and forward we hurried, as fast as the excessive fatigue which we had undergone during the last eight-and-forty hours would allow.

I had forgotten to mention, that whilst our bank of the river was bare and exposed, that occupied by the enemy was covered with a pretty thick belt of wood, which they had very judiciously filled with a host of riflemen. These, taking cool and deliberate aim from their lurking places, soon began to gall us with their fire. Not a few of our men fell beneath it; but the bridge was instantly cleared; the advance was quickly scattered into skirmishing order, and in five minutes, or little more, the belt was emptied of its defenders. Never did men with arms in their hands, make better use of their legs. Though we did our best to kill a few of them, I question whether one American lost his life in that copse; so rapid, or if you please, so judiciously conducted, was their retreat.

We had hardly cleared this little wood, when the 85th

regiment, and the light companies of the 4th and 44th, came pouring up to our assistance. To these we now attached ourselves, and the whole of the light brigade, forming into one extended line, advanced to the attack. It was our fortune to act upon the left of the road, where the copse happened to be more thick, and the ground considerably more uneven, than on the right. The consequence was, that we moved on for several minutes without seeing any enemy; but the wood suddenly ending, an open sloping field lay before us; and in the rear of a high paling, which ran across the centre of that field, the enemy's first line presented itself. I have stood under many heavy fires of musketry in my day; but I really do not recollect to have witnessed any more heavy than that which they instantly opened upon us. Had we been a numerous body, and in compact array, our loss must have been terrible; but we were few in number—certainly not more than one hundred in all; and our order was that of skirmishers, each file being full ten paces apart from the other. The Americans, on the other hand, were in line, wedged together as closely as they could stand; their number could not fall short of a thousand men, if they exceeded it not, and they fired volley after volley as fast as they could load their pieces, and raise them again to their shoulders. Five guns, moreover, played upon us without intermission: in a word, I can compare the shower of balls of all sizes and descriptions, which whistled round us, to nothing more aptly, than the pelting of a hail storm, which a strong north-easterly wind drives into your face. The whole ground at our feet

was ploughed up with them, and their singing was like that of a tempest through the bare cordage of a vessel at anchor.

Under this really tremendous fire, Williams bore himself, as his gallant conduct in the skirmishes which had diversified our march, led me to expect that he would bear himself. There was a railing, similar to that behind which the Americans were drawn up, which cut off the copse from the cultivated fields. He was one of the first to spring over it; and shouting out to the men to follow, he called to me by name, and said, "Now, who will be first in the enemy's line." Without once pausing to look behind, he rushed on. I kept my eye upon him; indeed, we were near enough to converse, had it been possible to hear the sound of a human voice in such a tumult; and I did what I could, rather to restrain his ardour, than to give it encouragement. But at the very moment when I was repeating my entreaties, that he would look to the men, instead of thus rushing on ahead of them, a musket-ball struck him on the neck, and he fell dead at my feet. He never so much as moved. The bullet passed through his wind-pipe and spinal marrow, and he was a corpse in an instant. Poor fellow! even in the heat of action, I looked at him with a feeling of bitter agony, of which words can convey no impression. But I could not pause to pay the slightest tribute of respect to his remains; I ran past him, and soon found my attention so completely occupied by other matters, as to forget even that such a one had lived and was dead. So overwhelmingly exciting

is the interest of a battle, and so perfectly engrossing are the thoughts to which it gives birth.

Notwithstanding the paucity of our numbers, the American line began to waver as soon as we arrived within twenty or thirty paces of their front, and the shouting preliminary to a charge had hardly been uttered, when they broke, and fled. Our men were too much fatigued to follow with any celerity, but we pursued as quickly as we could, and bayonetting some seamen, who pertinaciously clung to their guns, took possession of two, out of the five pieces of cannon, which had so severely galled us. Our work was, however, but beginning. In five minutes, we found ourselves in front of a second line, more numerous and more steady than that which we had defeated. It was composed wholly of regular troops, who received us, as we came on, with a murderous fire, and instantly advanced to the charge. We could not pretend to meet them. At the first, we hardly mustered a hundred men; we were now diminished to little more than half the number; a whole regiment bore down upon us, and we gave ground. We fell back, however, slowly and indignantly, halting from time to time, and firing with effect; whilst the enemy, instead of a determined rush, which, if attempted, must have destroyed us at once, followed at the very same pace, and with the very same precautions. But their fire was very destructive; at least it would have been, had there stood opposed to it men enough to deserve it.

We had reached almost to the edge of the thicket,

when Colonel Thornton, with a reinforcement of fresh troops, coming up, restored to us our former confidence, and we resumed the offensive. The enemy, in their turn, fell back; but we could not follow with our accustomed rapidity,—our men were scarce able to walk, far less to run; so there was time for their line also to receive reinforcements, before we succeeded in breaking it. The battle became now little else than an unintermitting exchange of tremendous volleys. Neither party gained or lost ground, but, for a full half hour, stood still, loading and firing as quickly as these operations could be performed. Whilst this was proceeding, Colonel Thornton received a ball in the thigh, and fell. The Americans raising a shout at the event, pressed on; and our people, a little disheartened, retired. Charlton, myself, and several other officers who were in the field, did our best to stay them, and we succeeded, though not till Colonel Thornton, in order to avoid falling into the hands of the assailants, had been obliged to roll himself down the slope, to a considerable distance. We had retired, in part, as far as the ground where poor Williams lay, when one musket-ball, hitting the scabbard of my sword, broke it, and another, at the same instant, slightly wounded my arm. Yet I hardly felt the wound, so intent was I in rallying the men; and General Ross himself coming up at this instant, with the better part of the 4th regiment, the fortune of the day was speedily decided. There was no more distant firing on our part. Charge, charge, was the only word of command issued. It was heard with repeated acclamations; and the very music of our cheers acting

like magic upon the Americans, they dispersed and fled in every direction.

It were vain for me to attempt any description of the state of feeling which pervades a man, when, after some hours of hard fighting, he first sees the line of the enemy become confused, and the manifestations of a flight exhibited. His whole soul is engrossed with the desire of overtaking them; and if there be a moment in man's existence at which he would sincerely thank Providence for the loan of wings, it is surely then. For my own part, I strained my throat till it became dry with cheering; and running on, as well as exhaustion would permit, made an effort to overtake the Americans, who escaped from me, as persons who are fresh will always escape from those that are weary. To do them justice, however, their *regulars*, or rather *riglars*, as Jonathan himself calls them, were not unmindful of the lessons which they had learned upon the parade. They covered their rear with a cloud of riflemen, at least equal, in point of numbers, to the troops who pursued them; and the riflemen very deliberately, and very judiciously, took up positions, from time to time, wherever the cover of bushes or underwood invited them. Nor was their fire harmless. Several individuals, myself among the number, received wounds from them. I plainly saw the person who thus honoured me; he lay behind a little copse, and took aim three times before he hit me; but, at last, his ball passed through the fleshy part of my thigh, and he escaped.

Too eager to be aware that I was again scratched, I pushed on with my companions as long as the last of

the retreating force continued in sight; nor ever dreamed of halting, till fatigue and loss of blood together overpowered me, and I fell to the ground. Happily for me, I dropped beside a pool of water;—it was muddy and foul in no ordinary degree;—yet my thirst, violent before, and doubly violent now, from the exhaustion consequent upon a pretty considerable hemorrhage, gave to it a delicacy of flavour which I had never perceived in water before, and shall probably never perceive again. I drank till that thirst was appeased; and then looking round, perceived that there were but three British soldiers near me. They sat down beside me, till I, in some degree, recovered my strength; and having kindly assisted me to wrap a handkerchief round the bleeding limb, we crawled, rather than marched, back to rejoin our regiment.

CHAPTER VII.

DESTRUCTION OF WASHINGTON.

I FOUND the brigade gathering together its shattered remains, upon the summit of the high ground which the enemy's reserve had occupied in the morning. I say shattered remains, for out of the twelve hundred men who bore the brunt of the battle, nearly one-half had fallen; whilst of those who survived, and were fit for duty, many were absent for the purpose of attending to the wounded, and burying the dead. As was but natural, my first and most eager inquiry was for Charlton. One friend,—not indeed of long standing, but still sincerely beloved,—had this day been taken from me. I trembled lest I should be doomed to learn, that another was in the dust. But my fears were groundless, for Charlton was safe and unhurt, and we embraced, as friends are accustomed to do when they meet again at the close of a hard-fought action.

My wound, though not severe, began about this time to trouble me; the limb was stiff, and the exertion of walking had produced some inflammation. A little to the rear of the field of battle stood a cottage, into which

my friend conducted me. We found in it few accommodations: but it afforded at least clean water and a towel, which, with a fresh handkerchief, we applied to the hurt, as the best, and indeed the only dressing, which could at that moment be obtained; for the surgeons were all too busy to attend to a case so little urgent. This done, we gladly threw ourselves upon a sort of box-bed at one end of the room, and were asleep in five minutes.

Our repose was not, however, of long continuance. The cottage soon became a place of general rendezvous to all the officers of the brigade, and the scene thereby occasioned was at once too lively, and too striking, not to call into play the senses both of actors and spectators. Congratulations and hearty greetings, mingled with an occasional expression of sincere regret, broke in upon our slumbers; and the many anecdotes which each was enabled to relate—the mode in which affairs were conducted at different parts of the field—of the conspicuous valour of this or that soldier; of the daring or timidity of the enemy at this or that point in the field—were all a great deal too interesting to be listened to with drowsy ears. We quitted our couch, and joined heartily in the conversation and mirth of those about us. Of sober thought it must be confessed that little intervened; the excitement of battle was yet too recent; and it is not under such circumstances that man's better and holier feelings are in force. Sorrow we did profess—ay, and felt it too—that more than one comrade whom we loved, were absent; but our minds were too much occupied with other thoughts, to afford room for any profound or even acute repinings.

We had been thus employed for perhaps an hour or something better, when an orderly sergeant arrived with intelligence, that the second and third brigades were in motion, and that we also should be required to push on as soon as the men were collected. A few minutes only elapsed, before the bugle gave notice, that the corps was mustered. We obeyed the summons instantly; and in five minutes more, the Light Brigade took the road to Washington.

It was dusk when we quitted the position, and perfectly dark before we reached the high-road; but neither confusion nor delay took place. The path was broad and well-marked; and the troops were all in that state of discipline, which would have carried them through more serious difficulties, had such come in their way, whilst the consciousness of having done their duty, and the expectation of reaping the fruits of their toil, supported them under the exertion which was required. For my own part, though the effort to keep up became, by degrees, seriously painful, I shall never cease to congratulate myself on having persisted in making it. No one, unless he has chanced to travel under similar circumstances, can form the most distant notion of the state of our feelings during the progress of that journey. The destruction of Washington, or rather of the stores or public buildings in Washington, had already begun; and the heavy explosions which from time to time occurred, the sheets of fire which quivered through the air—the very waving of the flames heard in the stillness of night to an extraordinary distance—formed altogether such a scene as I have no words adequate to

describe. The field of battle was distant not more than four miles from the city ; from the first, therefore, these sights and sounds reached us ; but as we drew nearer and nearer to the spot from whence they proceeded, we all felt that conversation, under such circumstances, would have been sacrilegious. We moved in that state of admiration, or rather awe, which locks up the voice, and oppresses the very reason.

Having arrived at a sort of common about a quarter of a mile distant from the town, the halt was sounded, and a bivouac directed to be formed. With this view the men piled their arms and lighted large fires, for which fuel was found among the fences and palings near, and set about preparing their evening meal. That done, all sat down ; not with our usual noisy merriment, but to gaze in silence upon the conflagration which still proceeded. The hum of conversation which generally murmurs through a camp, was not heard to-night ; those who spoke at all, spoke only in whispers, as if we had been guilty of some act which made us ashamed to hear the sound of our own voices, or were placed in a situation of extreme peril. It was thus with us for full two hours. At last, however, a consciousness of great bodily fatigue overcame every other sensation, and we turned our feet towards our fires ; and, wrapped up as usual, soon fell asleep.

But the night was not even now destined to be passed in quiet. It might be about twelve or one o'clock, when a tremendous peal of thunder, so loud as to drown, for an instant, every noise, awoke us. The rain was falling in torrents, and flash after flash of vivid lightning

displayed not only the bivouac, but the streets, the houses, nay the very windows in the town, with a degree of minuteness far greater than the beams of a noon-day sun would have produced. The effect was magnificent beyond the power of language to describe. Not even the drenching, against which cloaks and blankets failed to afford protection, could lead me to neglect the occurrence; for I really do not recollect, at any period of my life, to have been witness to a spectacle so imposing.

The thunder-storms in Virginia, though violent to a degree unknown in European countries, are seldom of very long continuance. In less than an hour, the present had died away, and there was again nothing to break in upon the quiet of the night, except an occasional roar as a magazine blew up, or a crash, as a wall or roof fell to the ground. But these were already familiar to us; they interfered in no respect with our slumbers, which, being speedily renewed, continued unbroken till the hour of general muster dispelled them.

As soon as dawn appeared, the brigade moved from its bivouac upon the common, and marched into the town. Proceeding along a narrow street, which was crossed at right angles by two or three of a similar description, we arrived at a large open space, surrounded on three sides by the rudiments of a square, and having its fourth imperfectly occupied by the ruins of the Senate-House. It is slightly raised above the level of the rest of the city, and is crossed by a paltry stream, called, in true Yankee grandiloquence, the Tiber, as the hill itself is called the Capitol. Here the brigade halted,

and piling their arms in two close columns, the men were permitted to lie down.

Whilst the corps continued thus, I very gladly accompanied the surgeon into a house hard by, for the purpose of having my wound properly examined and dressed. I found the building deserted by its owners; but of the domestics some had ventured to remain behind; and from one of these in particular I received the kindest treatment. She was an old negress; a free woman, however, as she took care to inform us, and at the head of the establishment. The good-natured creature not only produced the contents of her master's larder, but conducted me up stairs, took a nice linen shirt from a drawer, carefully aired it, and then begged that I would accept and wear it for her sake. Now, I know not whether an offer thus made ought, according to the strict letter of moral propriety, to have been attended to; the good woman was certainly giving away that which was not hers to give. Yet let the truth be told. I had worn my shirt by night and by day, under broiling marches, and through rainy bivouacs, the better half of a week; and I confess, that the opportunity of exchanging it for a snow-white piece of linen and cambric, was a great deal too tempting to be neglected. I gladly took the American shirt; and saved my own conscience, and the housekeeper's reputation, by leaving an English one upon the dressing-table in its room.

It so happened, that neither my friend nor myself were employed in perpetrating any one of the deeds of violence by which the visit of the English army to the capital of the United States was distinguished. Of the

arsenal, public rope-works, armoury, bridge and palace, we accordingly saw nothing, except the smoke and flame which marked their destruction. Neither was an opportunity afforded of making ourselves very intimately acquainted with the general appearance of the ruin. Having procured a horse, I rode indeed through a few of what were called streets; that is to say, along extensive lanes, paved only in part, and boasting, in numerous instances, of no more than five or six houses on each side of the way, planted at the distance of some eighth part of a mile from one another. But with such opportunities of gathering information, it would ill become me to speak at large of a place, which has doubtless changed its aspect greatly in the course of twelve years, and may be, for aught I know to the contrary, as it might have been then, possessed of a thousand secret attractions, known only to its own denizens. The feature, in its general aspect, which remains most prominently in my recollection is, however, not quite in accordance with our notions of a great capital. I perfectly recollect, that in the line of several of its public thoroughfares, as well as throughout the range of its more fashionable quarters, remnants, and no inconsiderable remnants, of the ancient forest were left standing.

Noon had passed, when heavy columns of dust, rising from certain high grounds on the opposite bank of the Patomac, attracted our notice. We were not long in doubt as to the cause from whence they proceeded; for the glittering of arms became instantly visible, and a large American force showed itself. It took up a position immediately before us, and pushed

forward a patrol of cavalry as far as the suburbs of Georgetown. There was not an individual in the army to whom these circumstances communicated a feeling at all akin to surprise. We had been led to expect an attack, from the hour of our advance into Washington, and we were both ready and willing to meet it, let it happen when it might. But the elements interfered to frustrate the design of the enemy,—if indeed they seriously entertained such a design—of driving us from our positions; for just at this moment the heavens became black with clouds, and a hurricane, such as I never witnessed before, and shall probably never witness again, began. I know not anything in art or nature to which the noise of the wind may be aptly compared. It differed essentially from thunder; yet I never listened to thunder more deafening, and its force was such as to throw down houses, tear up trees, and carry stones, beams of timber, and whole masses of brickwork, like feathers into the air. Both armies were scattered by it, as if a great battle had been fought and won; and as it lasted without any intermission for upwards of three hours, neither party, at its close, was in a fit condition to offer the slightest annoyance to its adversary. For our parts, it was not without some difficulty that we succeeded in bringing our stragglers together, whilst daylight lasted; and if its effects upon a regular and victorious army were so great, there cannot be a doubt that it was at least equally great upon an undisciplined and intimidated levy.

In the meanwhile, the officers of the different corps had been directed in a whisper to make ready for fall-

ing back as soon as darkness should set in. From the men, however, the thing was kept profoundly secret. They were given, indeed, to understand, that an important manœuvre would be effected before to-morrow morning; but the hints thrown out tended to induce an expectation of a farther advance, rather than of a retreat. A similar rumour was permitted quietly to circulate among the inhabitants, with the view, doubtless, of its making its way into the American camp; whilst all persons were required, on pain of death, to keep within doors from sunset to sunrise. This done, as many horses as could be got together, were put in requisition for the transport of the artillery. Even the few wounded officers who had accompanied the column were required to resign theirs; and mine, among the number, was taken away. But the precaution was a very just and proper one. Not only were the guns by this means rendered more portable, but the danger of a betrayal from a neigh, or the trampling of hooves along the paved streets, was provided against; and though individuals might and did suffer, their sufferings were not to be put into the scale against the public good.

It was about eight o'clock at night, when a staff-officer, arriving upon the ground, gave directions for the corps to form in marching order. Preparatory to this step, large quantities of fresh fuel were heaped upon the fires, whilst from every company a few men were selected, who should remain beside them till the picquets withdrew, and move from time to time about, so as that their figures might be seen by the light of the blaze. After this the troops stole to the rear of the fires by

twos and threes; when far enough removed to avoid observation, they took their places, and, in profound silence, began their march. The night was very dark. Stars there were, indeed, in the sky; but for some time after quitting the light of the bivouac, their influence was wholly unfelt. We moved on, however, in good order. No man spoke above his breath, our very steps were planted lightly, and we cleared the town without exciting observation. About half a mile in rear of the city, a second line of fires had been established. We looked towards it now, and the effect of the figures, which from time to time moved across the flames, was exceedingly striking. On arriving there we found that the other brigades had likewise commenced their retreat, and that the fires which burned so brightly, had been prepared by them exactly as we had prepared ours, previous to setting out. We caused the few men whom they had left behind to join us, as *our* men had been commanded to join the picquets, and pursued our journey.

We were now approaching the field of the late battle, when the moon rose, and threw a soft pale light over surrounding objects. At first her rays fell only upon the green leaves and giant boughs of the woods which on either hand closed in the road; but as we proceeded onwards other spectacles presented themselves, some of which were of no very cheering or lively nature. When we gained the ridge which had formed the crest of the American position, open green fields lay stretched out before us; every one presenting some manifestation of the drama which had so lately been acted here.

Broken arms, caps, cartouch boxes, with here and there a dead body, naked and ghostly white, were scattered about in every direction, whilst the smell, not exactly of putrefaction, but of something nearly akin to it, and mingling with the odour of scorched grass and extinguished matches, rose upon the night air very offensively; yet the whole scene was one of prodigious interest and power. The river and town which lay near us, the former flowing quietly and beautifully along, the latter lifting its modest buildings in the silence of a moonlight night, formed a striking contrast with the devastated and torn ground over which we were marching, whilst the only sound distinguishable was that of the measured tread of feet as the column proceeded down the slope towards the bridge. It was impossible, whilst traversing the place of his death, not to think kindly and affectionately of my poor young friend; his body, I well knew, was not among the number which were bleaching in the rains and dews of heaven—it had been carefully committed to the earth beside that of a brother officer. I did not, therefore, look round under the idea of seeing it; but I did look round for the spot where he fell, and I was grieved and disappointed that I could not distinguish it. The lapse of a few moments, however, was sufficient to draw off my attention to other, though hardly less painful subjects. We were already in the village; and a halt being commanded, an opportunity was afforded of enquiring into the condition of the wounded. I failed not to avail myself of it; but whilst the men were busied in picking up their knapsacks, which in the heat of action they had cast away, I step-

ped to the hospital and paid a hasty visit to the poor fellows who occupied it. It was a mortifying reflection, that, in spite of our success, the total absence of all adequate means of conveyance laid us under the necessity of leaving very many of them behind; nor could the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers conceal their chagrin on the occasion. One of these, a sergeant of my own company, who had received a ball through both thighs, actually shed tears as he wished me farewell, regretting that he had not shared the fate of Mr. Williams. It was in vain that I reminded him that he was not singular; that Colonel Thornton, Colonel Wood, and Major Brown, besides others of less note, were doomed to be his companions in captivity; neither that consideration, nor the assurances of a speedy exchange, at all served to make him satisfied with his destiny. Yet no apprehensions could be more unfounded than those of that man; for however unlike civilized nations they may be in other respects, in the humanity of their conduct towards such English soldiers as fell into their hands, the Americans can be surpassed by no people whatever. To this the wounded whom we were compelled to abandon to-night bore, after their release, ample testimony; and they told a tale which hundreds besides have corroborated.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETREAT FROM WASHINGTON.—RESHIPMENT OF THE TROOPS.

HAVING shaken this sergeant, with such of the privates as lay near him, by the hand, I proceeded to the ward occupied by the officers; but had barely time to express my commiseration of their case, when notice was given that the column was again ready to move. I joined it without delay. The soldiers, if they had not recovered each man his own, were, at all events, in possession of a sufficient number of knapsacks; and we renewed our retreat in as good order as had hitherto distinguished it. Of that order it may not be out of place to give here a brief account.

Reversing the arrangements which had held good during the advance, the third brigade this night led the way; it was followed by the artillery, now supplied with horses, which again was succeeded by the second brigade. In rear of this came the light troops, of whom three companies, which had furnished the picquets during the day, did the duty of a rear guard. Last of all moved the mounted drivers, supported by scattered files

of infantry on each side of the way, whilst half a troop of rocket-men marched between the head of the rear-guard, and the rear of the column, in readiness to bring their horrible weapons into play at the first alarm.

Hitherto our men had moved on in profound silence. The strictest orders had been issued that no one should speak, and no one thought of disobeying the order; but as the night stole on, and the distance between us and the city became hourly greater and greater, a degree of carelessness to the wishes of those in power, became manifest through all ranks. The fact is, that we were completely worn out. The broken rest of a single day had by no means made amends for the toil of the five days preceding, and being followed by a night-march, proved absolutely useless. For some time, indeed, the novelty of the scene served to amuse us. It was highly romantic to march through thick forests and woody glens, by the feeble light of a young moon; whilst the delicious coolness of the night-air came upon us with the greater force, that we could not avoid contrasting it with the sultry atmosphere which had oppressed us when we last traversed these parts. Then, again, there was the idea of being followed,—the chance of a sudden attack, and the prospect of a night action,—all these, as long as we were near the position of the enemy's camp, served to put new mettle into our bosoms. But in proportion as we got farther and farther from the seat of danger, romance gradually lost its influence; till finally, the only sensation to which we were alive, was one of overwhelming weariness; and the only wish which we cared to form, was, that an opportunity would

be afforded of lying down to rest. About midnight, indeed, and for six hours after it, these feelings began to operate very powerfully. The men strayed from their ranks; the officers found great difficulty in urging them on; some dozed upon their legs, and fell under the feet of their comrades; others threw themselves by the way-side, refusing to proceed farther. In a word, by seven o'clock in the following morning, it was perfectly manifest that an hour's rest must be taken, otherwise one half of the troops would be in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy.

We had accomplished a journey of some eighteen or twenty miles, when to the unspeakable joy of every man in the army, the General, finding himself arrived at a convenient spot, commanded a halt. I candidly confess, that I know nothing of the nature of the ground on which the halt occurred, nor of the dispositions which were made to render it secure, for my men were hardly stretched upon the grass when I followed their example. The only precaution which I took, was to seek out a shady tree whose branches might shelter me from the sun; there, from seven o'clock till a little before noon, I slept as soundly as ever weary traveller has slept, or could desire to sleep. At that period I was awoke to breakfast; and in half an hour after, the column was again in motion.

The sun had set, and twilight was rapidly closing in, when we found ourselves once more in the vicinity of Marlborough. There it was resolved to pass the night; and as the same position was taken up which we had occupied during the advance, every man felt himself in

some degree at home. For ourselves, Charlton and I, willing, if possible, to find shelter under a roof, wandered away to a house about a stone's throw apart from the corps; but it would have been better perhaps, that we had remained in the open air. The house in question was filled with such of the wounded, as it had been found practicable to remove on horseback, and in the clumsy waggons which our troopers succeeded in capturing. There were, if I recollect right, five or six officers in one room; among whom we were persuaded to lie down. But the groans, and querulous complaints of some of these brave men,—complaints which every one who has filled their situation will understand, and for which few will hesitate to make allowance, effectually broke in upon our repose. We could not go to sleep under such circumstances; and hence the greater part of that night was spent in vain endeavours to bestow comfort upon those, whom bodily suffering rendered perfectly dead to every consideration except the desire of ease. We were glad to retire about two in the morning, and to snatch a few hours of broken rest under a shed hard by.

The dawn had not yet appeared, when the well known sound of troops mustering upon their ground, awoke us. We took our places as usual, with the men; and having waited till there was light enough to direct our steps, once more began our march. There was nothing in to-day's operations at all worthy of notice. The country we had already traversed, and it exhibited, of course, an appearance exactly similar to that which it exhibited before; whilst the absence of every thing like

annoyance on the part of the Americans rendered our whole progress more dull and monotonous than would have been wished. We were, accordingly, very well pleased at beholding the houses in Nottingham again rise in view; and our satisfaction suffered no decrease when informed, that here, as formerly, the night should be passed.

It so happened, that Charlton and I fixed ourselves in the identical barn which had sheltered us before, and the reader will not be surprised to learn, that that apparently unimportant occurrence affected us more deeply, than any which had taken place during the whole course of the inroad. It was impossible to lie down upon the tobacco without thinking of the gallant youth who had lain there beside us, only seven days ago. True, he had been but a short time our comrade; we had enjoyed few opportunities of judging as to his temper, disposition, and general character, and we, neither of us, felt for him, what we felt for one another. But the little which we had seen of him, had all been favourable; and his unaffected and noble behaviour in this very barn, forcibly occurred to us. I am not ashamed to confess that we shed some tears to his memory; and that he constituted almost the only subject of our conversation whilst we remained awake.

After a night of sound and refreshing sleep, we rose in confident expectation of continuing the retreat, and, perhaps, reaching the boats that day. But we were mistaken. General Ross was satisfied that no pursuit would take place, and if it did, he was equally satisfied that the pursuers would gain nothing by their exertions.

Thus regarding matters, he resolved to rest his army during the 28th, and, at the same time, to secure as much of the property of which it had taken possession, as was contained in the barns and storehouses of Nottingham. Nor was there any difficulty in effecting the last of these purposes. The river was now crowded with gun-boats, barges, and other small vessels, into which the flour and tobacco were removed; and the wounded being also disposed of in the same way, there remained neither impediment to retard our future movements, nor sources of anxiety to distract our plans.

In this manner the whole of the 28th was passed; the soldiers, for the most part, keeping quiet, whilst the crews of the boats removed the plunder. It fell, however, to my lot, to be placed, towards evening, in charge of one of the outposts. There always is, and indeed must be, some anxiety attending this duty, because the very consciousness of responsibility can hardly fail to create it; but on no occasion have I kept watch so peacefully, and so much at my ease, as to-night. Not so much as once was an alarm given. The sky was clear, the air mild, and the position commanding; in a word, all passed off as if I had been on duty in some military station at home, instead of in the heart of an enemy's country.

Having spent the night thus comfortably, we were in good condition for the march that was before us,—and it was a trying one. A push was to be made for St. Benedict's at once. Formerly we had divided the distance, now we were to compass it in one day; nor did we fail in performing our task, though many a good

soldier found himself sore pressed to keep his station. It was a journey of seven long leagues; and came not to a close till after darkness had set in. But like the march of yesterday, it was productive of no interesting event, and it led to the very same arrangements and dispositions in which that had ended. We bivouacked under the ridge of the hill, in the identical spots which we had occupied on the 19th, and slept as soundly, and as uninterruptedly, as we had done on the night of our landing.

The first campaign of General Ross in America, if a sudden incursion like that above described, deserves to be so styled, was thus brought to a conclusion. With a mere handful of troops, not exceeding four thousand fighting men at the utmost, he penetrated upwards of sixty miles into an enemy's country, defeated him in a pitched battle, insulted his capital, and returned in safety to the shore. It remained now only to reembark the army, and then his triumph would be complete. Nor was the shadow of a difficulty experienced in effecting this last, and not least perilous enterprise. Intimidated by his overthrow, the American leader dreamed not at any moment of harassing his conqueror, or impeding his progress; as we afterwards learned, indeed, two full days elapsed, ere he ventured to ascertain that Washington was abandoned. Though, therefore, the most judicious precautions were taken, to cover the re-shipment against danger, no opportunity was afforded of proving them; for the troops betook themselves corps after corps to the boats, and were corps after corps carried to their respective ships. The only tumult to

which they listened, was produced by the shouts of the sailors, who welcomed them back with reiterated cheers, and who received them with as much cordiality as if they had been—not soldiers, but brother-seamen.

I cannot pretend to pourtray the nature of my own feelings, when I find myself once more treading the quarter-deck of a transport, and relieved, as it were, at once, from all military occupation and responsibility. That I enjoyed the change heartily, for the moment, cannot be denied. Our fatigue had been excessive; and the prospect of a few days of unbroken rest was certainly more pleasing than almost any other which could have been, under existing circumstances, held out to me. Yet there was a consciousness went along with it, that perfect repose is not a state of existence for which a soldier is adapted, whilst the suddenness of the change was of itself sufficient to take away much of what would have been otherwise highly agreeable in it. It was not now with us, as it is with troops who at the close of a serious campaign retire into winter-quarters. In the latter case, men are gradually prepared for it; a series of bad weather, for the most part, keeps them inactive in the field, before they quit it. At present, we were hurried, in the very middle of summer, from the scene of a brisk, if not of an important war, and placed, not in a position still liable to be assailed, and so calculated to keep us in remembrance of our uses,—but on board of ship, where our time could alone be occupied in eating, drinking, sleeping, playing chess, and walking from one end of a plank to the other. I have said, that at the instant we certainly did enjoy the prospect

which was before us; but the first day of our re-embarkation passed not away without occasioning some alteration in our sentiments, and long before sun-set on the second, we were again panting for employment. So perfectly inconsistent is the human mind with itself, as often as the temperament of the body, or the state of the animal spirits, may chance to undergo a change.

CHAPTER IX.

ARRIVAL IN THE POTOMAC.

LITTLE occurred worthy of particular notice, from the morning of the first till the evening of the eleventh of September. During the first five days of the month, the fleet remained stationary; those at the head of affairs being occupied in preparing their dispatches, whilst I and my companions killed time, by having recourse to as many expedients as our situation enabled us to adopt. We walked the deck; we read the few volumes that were within our reach, till we had almost learned them by heart;—we bathed in the river, rowed about from ship to ship, and occasionally ventured to put foot upon its banks, and even to penetrate a little way beyond them. Our sportsmen, moreover, myself among the number, brought their guns and fishing-tackle into requisition; with both of which they succeeded in obtaining considerable amusement. The Patuxent abounded with fish,—we took in our nets, not unfrequently, as many as five or six dozen of different kinds in a morning; and the woods proving to be full of partridges, quails, and hares, and above all, of wild tur-

keys, there was no lack of game to reward our labours on shore. Two of the latter I was one day fortunate enough to kill, and they proved a very acceptable addition to our mess.

In the meanwhile the wounded were divided into three classes, according to the nature and severity of their hurts. Such as, like myself, had received mere scratches, being placed upon the list of convalescents, were regarded as fit for duty, and left in their respective transports. Such as had been more severely, and yet not very seriously injured, were removed to the *Majestic*, for the purpose of being carried to Halifax; whilst the dangerously wounded men, whose ultimate recovery, if they recovered at all, promised not to occur for many months to come, were lodged on board of the *Iphigenia*, already appointed to bear the news of our victory to England. Every exertion was, moreover, made, to restore to the little army that perfect discipline and order, which the progress of a dashing campaign had unavoidably weakened. His own knapsack, for example, was, as far as could be, returned to each of the men, and the necessaries of as many as had suffered a loss in the late operations, were made good. The clothing, accoutrements, and arms of all were carefully cleaned and repaired; in a word, every advantage was taken of the breathing time, to place, as perfectly as circumstances would allow, the armament in a state of renewed efficiency.

Besides these more important transactions, other little affairs occurred, which again brought our finer feelings somewhat forcibly into play. The effects of our de-

ceased comrades were put up to sale; and subscriptions were entered into for one or two widows, who had really loved their husbands, and being deprived of them, desired to return home. Soldiers, of all ranks, are, during a state of warfare, made up of singularly discordant materials. We all, for example, felt sincerely for these poor creatures, and readily contributed our respective mites, to render their homeward passage as comfortable as their frame of mind would allow. There was not a man amongst us, too, who lamented not the fall of the individual, for part of whose wardrobe he was bidding. Yet a passing observer would have scarcely discovered this; so little in accordance with the sentiments of our hearts, were our outward manner and conversation. Let me not, however, be misunderstood. Nothing was said or done on these occasions calculated to give pain to the nearest relative of the deceased, had he stood by; on the contrary, every man felt that the drama in which he now took a part, might, before long, be represented again in consequence of his own dissolution; and with this feeling upon his mind, it was not possible for him to act otherwise than he should desire his comrades to act, were that event to take place on the morrow.

Matters continued thus till an early hour on the morning of the 6th, when a signal was made to weigh anchor; the whole fleet got under sail, and, guided by a gentle breeze in their sterns, stood majestically towards the bay. I do not know that I ever beheld a more striking marine spectacle than this general movement presented. At a moderate computation, there could not be

fewer than seventy sail of vessels, of all classes and sizes, in the fleet; they lay within a roadstead, which exceeded not a gunshot from one extremity to the other; and lifting their anchors, and shaking out their canvass, all at the same moment, they gave to the river an appearance of life and bustle, such as it has probably never exhibited before, and will not speedily exhibit again. Nor was it by looking to the ships alone that we idlers found an ample fund of interest and amusement. The sun began, before long, to shine brightly upon the banks, and a shifting panorama of the most exquisite beauty presented itself, piecemeal, as it were, to our observation. I have hitherto abstained from saying anything of the extreme loveliness of this district,—partly because its most striking features have been described already, and partly because I am quite conscious that no words could do it justice. But it may be permitted me to observe, that though I have visited many countries, and beheld almost every variety of national scenery, I have never beheld any more picturesque than that which the banks of the Patuxent displayed. There was nothing grand, it is true;—no rocks, no mountains, no castles, convents, or even lordly seats, were in view; but if sloping downs, studded with the modest houses of settlers, intersected by luxuriant corn fields, and closed in by forests, dark as night, and perfectly trackless, entitle the banks of a river to the appellation of beautiful, the appellation may surely be bestowed here. It was a scene of peace, and perhaps of humility; but it was probably not the less attractive on that account, in the eyes of one, whose business was war.

We reached the bay a little after noon, and were met by the Tonnant, which had sailed a day or two before, and seemed now to be returning. Whither we were going, or what the service on which we were about to be employed, no one appeared to know; but a feeling of surprise became general amongst us, when, instead of taking advantage of a wind which blew directly up the Chesapeake, a signal was hung out for all ships to cast anchor. We had flattered ourselves that, now we had fairly begun our observations, not an hour would be wasted in carrying them on. Baltimore, Annapolis, and other towns, were all within our reach; we confidently anticipated that each would, in its turn, receive a visit. But whatever our wishes might be, there remained but one course for us to follow. We obeyed the signal, and anchored immediately.

No great while elapsed, however, before we became satisfied that every thing had been done for the best. As soon as he had got his fleet well about him, the Admiral began to hold a correspondence with the other ships of war, which, as we chanced to be in possession of a signal-book, we were enabled to decipher. Each vessel was required to send in a return of the number of seamen, independently of marines, which it could afford to land with small arms; and it was farther ordered, that no time should be lost in drilling them to the use of their weapon. There was something exceedingly cheering in such a communication. Not only were we quite satisfied that Jack, however awkward he might be upon parade, would prove, in the hour of a trial, a most efficient ally; but we concluded, from the anxiety

displayed to increase the land force to the utmost, that some momentous scheme was in agitation. The rest of the day was accordingly spent in far better humour than had marked the passage of some days preceding, and we retired to rest, in the full expectation, that to-morrow, or at farthest, the next day, would see us once more employed in the field.

Our hopes in this respect suffered no diminution, when, on ascending the deck on the following morning, we found that the fleet was again under weigh, and moving towards the Potomac. The last circumstance, indeed, did puzzle us a little. What could be done there? Alexandria had been already visited by Captain Gordon; nor was there any other place of note along its course. Nevertheless, we took it for granted, that there must be some object in view, and, provided only they saw fit to bring us into play, we cared but little whither the heads of the expedition should lead us. In all this, however, we were doomed to endure the misery of hope deferred. Having stemmed the current during the whole of that day, and till dusk on the day following, the fleet once more cast anchor; and we, as a matter of course, felt ourselves once more unable to guess for what purpose these repeated delays were permitted.

I well recollect, that on the night of the 8th of September, the Potomac was visited by one of those sublime thunder storms, of which I have already spoken as occurring so frequently in this hemisphere. During the whole of the day, there had been an oppressive closeness in the atmosphere; and as the sun drew towards his setting, many masses of clouds began to rise

at different points in the horizon. These gradually increased in quantity and blackness, till at last the whole face of the sky became over-spread with them. The thunder and lightning followed; thunder, which in the stillness of night made the far-off forests re-echo; and lightning, which at every flash rendered the minutest object distinctly visible, both throughout the fleet and on the shore. Nor was rain long wanting; it came down, as it generally does under such circumstances, in torrents; and as there was no finding shelter against it anywhere, except in the cabin, I was reluctantly compelled to abandon the seat which I had taken on one of the guns for the purpose of watching the storm, and retire below.

An early hour on the morning of the 9th saw us again under weigh, and stemming the current at a slow and majestic rate; but our progress was very limited. The *Tonnant*, shooting a-head, pushed on by herself; whilst the remainder of the ships, in defiance of as fair a wind as ever blew, beat backwards and forwards, from one side of the river to the other. What was to be done, we could not surmise. That a landing would take place before long, every thing about us testified, but whether the port of debarkation had as yet been determined upon, seemed extremely problematical. Thus was it with us during the whole of the morning; hour after hour passed away in anxious suspense; till at last, when the sun was again approaching the west, our doubts and anxiety were put an end to. The *Tonnant*, of which we had long lost sight, once more made her appearance; all her canvass was set, and she was

followed by a numerous fleet of small craft, each of which bore an English ensign at its mast-head, with an American flag under. The vessels thus distinguished were prizes; they soon joined us, and the whole squadron putting about, bore down in a body towards the bay. Finally, a signal was thrown out from the Admiral's ship, which directed us to steer towards the Patapsco; and it became immediately known, among all ranks, that the capture of Baltimore would be attempted.

Now men's minds became to a certain degree tranquil; curiosity was set at rest; and it remained for us only to make such preparations as each might think necessary for taking the field. Nor were we tardy in anything about that matter, inasmuch as but little time seemed likely to be granted for the purpose; for, as if Heaven had favoured our designs, the fleet scarcely reached the bay, when the wind, shifting a few points, blew directly towards the place of landing; and we stood on our course with a rapidity which promised to bring us, within a few hours, to the end of our voyage. This was, in itself, sufficiently agreeable; but there were other circumstances attending the passage, which gave to it a more than ordinary degree of interest. The breeze coming upon the larboard side, enabled us to stand in close to the shores of Maryland; and seldom have I looked upon a more striking spectacle than these shores presented.

It is well known that Maryland happens to be one of the most thickly inhabited and civilized States in the Union. Besides its two great cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, it can boast of several towns and villages of

different sizes; while a countless number of hamlets, seats, and solitary farm-houses, are scattered in every direction over its extent. Of these very many, with Anapolis among the number, have been planted close to the water's edge; partly, perhaps, on account of the additional salubrity which the sea-breezes bring, and partly because the situation accorded well with the leading habits of the people. But there were other erections, besides towns and villages, which attracted our attention. Numerous watch-towers, forts, signal stations, and places of arms, occupied the high grounds; whilst, nearer the beach, guard rooms for the accommodation of cavalry patrols, open batteries for the cover of guns, with all the other edifices which a people invaded are apt to throw up, extended, in a regular chain, from one extremity of the State to the other. Of these we were enabled, by keeping close in shore, to obtain a distinct view. We saw horsemen mount at every station, as we approached it, and gallop with all haste towards the interior. Beacon after beacon burst into a blaze; guns were fired from every tower; and telegraphic communication carried on without intermission. Then, again, as we drew near to a town or village, every house was seen to pour forth its inhabitants; while carts, waggons, and carriages of all descriptions hastened off, loaded, as we could distinctly perceive, with people and effects. In Anapolis, in particular, confusion and alarm appeared to prevail to an extraordinary excess. Being the capital of the State, and exposed, in a remarkable degree, to insult, its inmates doubtless anticipated nothing else than a hostile visitation; and

truly, if to destroy a neat, clean town, surrounded on all sides by elegant villas, had been our object, no task could have been more easily performed. We passed it by, however, unharmed; not, perhaps, quite satisfied that so fine a prize should be permitted to escape, but hugging ourselves in the idea that another, and no less valuable one, was before us.

Whilst the transports and larger vessels of war swept up the Chesapeake in a body, the Sea-Horse frigate, with one or two lighter ships, dashed forward to ascertain the course or channel of the river. This measure was resorted to, because, though the Patapsco was known not to excel in depth, it was deemed highly desirable that some part of the navy should, at all events, co-operate with the troops in the reduction of Baltimore. Captain Gordon was accordingly directed, not only to take soundings with all accuracy, but clapping a press of canvass upon his ship, to drive her, in case of any sudden obstruction, through the mud; and to break, at all hazards, such booms, or other impediments, as might be laid across the channel. That gallant officer failed not to execute his orders as far as it was possible to obey them. He actually sunk his frigate's keel some feet in the slime, and tore through banks, by which the progress of almost any other individual would have been arrested,—but all would not do. The frigate stuck fast in the end; and it was only by lightening her of her main-deck guns, and most of her stores, that he succeeded in bringing her off.

The day was drawing rapidly to a close, when the Sea-Horse, which lay at anchor off a sharp promontory

ahead, gave notice that it would be necessary for us to bring up. We obeyed, and came to our moorings just where the Patapsco falls into the bay; by which, indeed, on one side, and a sort of creek, or inlet of the sea, on the other, the promontory in question was formed. It was a beautiful evening. The sun went down in softened majesty, tinging the whole surface of the waters with his departing glory. The wind, falling with the sea, sunk into a perfect calm; and the waves, which had never been boisterous, became gradually more and more quiet, till the Chesapeake presented at last the appearance of a placid lake. The reader must, doubtless, be aware, that in these regions the night is but of short duration. The sun left us to-night with its usual abruptness, but its last feeble rays had not yet been extinguished, when a bright full moon arose. By her light, not the shipping alone, but the beach, the green fields beyond it, and the hoary forests in the background, became again distinctly visible. Another writer has spoken in terms of rapture of the effect of that moonlight; nor could I pursue the subject without quoting his very words; but this I must say, that at no moment in my life have I felt the influence of a night-scene more forcibly than I felt it then.

But no great while was granted for such indulgences. Orders had already been issued to prepare the troops for immediate disembarkation, and these it was the duty of every officer to exert himself in carrying into effect. Like my comrades, I accordingly devoted the greater portion of my waking hours to the inspection of arms, the arrangement of necessaries, and the handing out

of accoutrements. On the present occasion, as the distance between Baltimore and the beach could, it was calculated, be traversed in twelve hours, the men were not encumbered as they had been encumbered during the inroad upon Washington, with their full quantity of baggage. Three days' provisions were, indeed, put up in their haversacks, but as far as clothing is concerned, a knapsack, containing a spare shirt, with a blanket strapped over it, constituted the whole load that each was required to carry. In one respect, however, the burden was increased:—some inconvenience having been formerly experienced in bringing up ammunition, the store of powder and ball committed to our charge was, on the present occasion, greater than usual. A soldier's pouch, as any military man knows, is made to contain sixty rounds of cartridges; to-night, twenty additional rounds, carefully wrapped up in stout paper, were assigned to each of the privates.

This done, all, both officers and men, addressed themselves to repose. We lay down, some in the bed-places, others upon the deck, clothed and accoutred for service; and in a shorter space of time than might have been expected, the majority were fast asleep; but I know not whence it came, I could not follow their example. It was in vain that I had recourse to the expedients customary in such cases,—closing my eyes, and counting hundreds and thousands, and tens of thousands. Sleep obstinately refused to come upon me; till wearied at last with the fruitless effort, I rose and ascended the deck. The night was as clear and balmy as ever; a heavy dew, indeed, fell, but its moisture, so far from being dis-

agreeable, served to refresh both living and dead substances, after the excessive heat of the day. There was not a sound to be heard, except the ripple of the water against the ship's side, the cry of sentinels exclaiming, as every half hour came round. "All's well!" and the heavy breathing of those who preferred the cool deck to the suffocating atmosphere of the cabin. It was, take it all in all, as striking a night-scene as I recollect at any time to have witnessed. What my own feelings were, however, I cannot pretend to state. That I looked forward to the morrow without something like uneasiness, it would be the height of folly to affirm; no man can believe himself to stand on the brink, as it were, of eternity, without uneasiness; yet were all the anticipations of what that morrow might bring forth, inadequate to repress a consciousness of exquisite enjoyment, to which the sights and sounds about me gave birth. I walked the deck for some hours in a state bordering upon enthusiasm;—nor did I quit it, till the bells of the different ships striking eight, warned me that midnight was passed.

CHAPTER X.

DISEMBARKATION IN MARYLAND.—MARCH UPON BALTIMORE.—AND DEATH OF GENERAL ROSS.

THE moon had set, and there was no light in the sky, except that which a multitude of brilliant stars afforded, when a general stir throughout the fleet gave notice that the moment of disembarkation was at hand. The soldiers, rousing from their sleep, began to assemble upon the decks in the order in which it had been previously agreed that they should step into the boats; the seamen, applying sedulously to their tasks, hoisted out barges, launches, gigs, &c. with all dispatch; whilst the few stores deemed essential to the operations of the campaign were so arranged, as to be transported at once from the shipping to the beach. All, however, was done in profound silence. No conversation passed from rank to rank, and even the cries of the sailors were repressed; lest being overheard by the parties which, we could not doubt, were watching us from the shore, an alarm might be communicated, and the people of Baltimore apprised of their danger.

Whilst these things were doing in the other vessels,

a light gun-brig, which had weighed anchor for the purpose about an hour before, ran in with the tide; and took her station, broad-side on, within cable's length of the beach. There she lay ready, in case of need, to sweep the shore with her fire. Every gun was loaded to the muzzle with grape and cannon shot. But the event proved that no opposition to the landing was contemplated. The leading boat touched the strand in safety; the soldiers contained in it sprang up the slope, and spreading themselves at extended order along the ridge, lay down. Others quickly followed, and in half an hour after the first movement had been made, a thousand men were in line, to cover the arrival of their comrades. All this took place before the first blush of dawn had shown itself in the eastern horizon. Nor was the remainder of the army tardy in reaching its destination. Exerting themselves to the utmost, our gallant tars, without any intermission of labour for several hours, pulled backwards and forwards, and by seven o'clock, infantry, artillery, baggage, and horses, appeared to be all on shore.

It so happened, that the transport in which I was embarked lay very near the land, by which means our division made good its debarkation among the first; and I shall not readily forget the nature of the scene which was thus brought before me. When we gained the shore, only a single small boat, containing about twenty soldiers, had reached it. We leaped from the bow, one after another, and collecting close to the water's edge, proceeded, at a quick pace, to ascend a sloping sand-bank; at the summit of which we found our compan-

ions. The officer in command of that small party alone stood upright; the men were flat upon their bellies; but at our suggestion they rose, and advancing about forty yards farther inland, we all lay down again. Let the reader recollect, that we knew nothing of the preparations which had been made for our reception: for aught we could tell, a whole army might be in position within a stone's throw of our ground; and he will not be surprised to learn, that we held our very breath, in anxious expectation of what the next instant might bring forth. Yet was the excitation very far from being disagreeable. True, we might be called upon to sustain the first shock of a force a great deal too numerous to be long opposed with success; but we were aware, that succour would not be slow of arriving; and we could not for a moment doubt as to the final issue. Then there was much in our very position and attitude in the highest degree imposing. You could tell that troops were in line beside you, only by an occasional rustle in the long grass among which they couched; for all kept close to the earth, and not a man spoke, even in a whisper, to his nearest neighbour.

As day dawned, however, it became abundantly manifest that so much caution had been quite unnecessary; not a living creature was in sight, nor could the smallest trace that even a picquet had kept guard here, be observed. Before us lay a few open green fields, measuring, perhaps, some three hundred yards across, and then their condition furnished proof enough that neither infantry nor cavalry had traversed them. The grass waved in the breeze, undefiled by horses' tread or hu-

man tramp; no track of foragers intersected it; and even upon the road, which ran a little to our right, the dust lay wholly undisturbed. In these fields the army accordingly mustered. The different regiments drew up according to their brigades; the officers took their stations, and the word was given to advance. The following is the order in which the column moved.

Major Browne, the officer who led the advance in the inroad upon Washington, having been severely wounded and left behind at Bladensburg, General Ross saw fit to dissolve the little corps altogether. Whether this arose from a feeling that there was not, in the army, another man capable of guiding it aright, I know not. All that I do know is, that in Browne he reposed the most unbounded confidence—that Browne fully deserved that confidence—and that if he changed his plan from the apprehension that there was no fit successor to him, his judgment was not very erroneous. When I say that this advance was dissolved, I mean not to affirm, that the army began its march with a front entirely uncovered. Three companies were, as formerly, pushed forward; but instead of forming a separate division, placed permanently under the command of a distinct leader, they fell, for the moment, under the guidance of the officer who chanced to be senior in rank among those attached to them. It was to that unfortunate arrangement, without doubt, that the country owed the early death of our gallant leader. After the first day's march towards Washington, General Ross gave himself little or no concern about the advanced guard; he saw that the individual to whom he had in-

trusted it, understood his business perfectly; and to him the business was entirely left. It was not so now. Ignorant of the talents of those on whose sagacity the welfare of the whole column so much depended, the General could not keep behind; he would, in his own person, see that things were going on as he wished them to go on; and he fell in the very first skirmish.

In rear of the three companies, leaving, however, a sufficient interval between, came the light brigade, now under the command of Major Jones. Next to that corps moved a brigade of seamen, armed with muskets, and amounting to nearly a thousand men; then followed the artillery, of which eight pieces—six guns, and two howitzers—were in the field; and as a sufficient number of horses to drag them had been procured, they bid fair to prove of marked utility in the enterprise. Immediately upon the artillery came the second brigade; and immediately upon the second brigade came the third. Of the exact number of combatants thus brought together, I can hardly venture to offer an opinion. We had lost at Bladensburg about five hundred men in all; but of these many were already so far convalescent as to take the field again; and our reinforcements from the fleet were considerable. Balancing the one against the other, therefore, I should be disposed to say, that somewhere about five thousand, or five thousand five hundred men, moved from the water's edge this morning.

It fell to the lot of my friend and myself, on this present occasion, to form part of the flank patrol. Having cleared the open fields, we soon found ourselves in a country resembling, in many respects, that which we

had traversed in our late operations; that is to say, thick woods hemmed us in on every side, and the spots of cultivated soil were few and of small compass. There was, however, one striking difference to be observed. Little lakes, or other large ponds, abounded here; they were equally plentiful on both sides of the way; and being in general deep enough to hinder us from fording, they, for the most part, occasioned us no little trouble, and some fatigue, before we succeeded in passing them. Small streams, likewise, landing in the heads of creeks, more than once interrupted our progress. In a word, the country presented a thousand defensible posts, even to a people so little accustomed as we were to examine a country with the eye of soldiers; and it surprised us not a little to find, that no attempt was made to defend it.

We had continued our journey about an hour, when arriving suddenly at a space of open ground, three troopers, dressed in dark-green uniforms, were discovered. They occupied the summit of a gentle eminence, and appeared to be anxiously watching the movement of the column along the high road. Instantly the word was passed to be attentive; and instantly we began to steal round the height, keeping just within cover of the wood, for the purpose of surprising them. But scarlet is an inconvenient colour, in cases where concealment happens to be desirable;—the Americans soon discovered us; and clapping spurs to their horses, galloped off. Concluding, of course, that they must be well acquainted with the different roads which intersected the forest, we very naturally gave them up as lost,

and continued our journey, with the conviction in our minds that more work would be cut out for us, ere many hours should pass by.

Soon after this, the bugles of the army sounded a halt, and we, as well as the main body, prepared to obey it; but just as we had fixed upon a convenient spot for the purpose, a soldier came running up with intelligence that the three horsemen were still in the thicket, about musket-shot from our right. Taking with me a dozen men, I instantly plunged into the wood; and here, sure enough, they sat upon the edge of one of the lakes, their horses being fastened by the bridles to a tree hard by. My party preserved a profound silence, and we closed gradually round them; but the crashing of the boughs there was no stifling, and when we reached the spot they were gone. They had leaped into a canoe on the first alarm, and were now paddling, as fast as they could, to the opposite shore. There was no time to be lost. I called out to them to surrender, and by way of enforcing the summons, commanded the whole of my people to level their pieces. The spectacle was too alarming for raw recruits; so they held up a white handkerchief in token of submission, and pulled back again. Immediately on landing, they were, as may be supposed, disarmed, and then, with their three beautiful chargers, conducted to head-quarters.

On coming in with the prisoners, we found the army halted near a farm-house, around which were several cleared fields, well adapted, in case of need, for a rapid military formation. The General himself, attended by Admiral Cockburn, was sitting in the midst of his staff

by the way side, and a few orderlies were leading their horses backwards and forwards. Of the soldiers, a few had strayed from their ranks; but blue jackets might be seen in every direction, pursuing pigs, fowls, and other live stock, at full speed, and with much apparent satisfaction. Nor was it possible to refrain from laughing at the singular behaviour of these men. All the threats, orders, and entreaties, of their officers were set at defiance; they knew nothing about discipline on shore, and they were not now going to learn it. At last, the very endeavour to bring them back was abandoned, and they continued to amuse themselves, as well as us, till the column again began to move. Nor did any one appear to enjoy the joke more than General Ross. He was laughing heartily, as were the Admiral and the rest of the group, when we appeared; and he with difficulty suppressed his mirth, even though the presence of the prisoners drew his attention to other graver matters.

Having put a few questions to the young men, as to the duty on which they had been themselves employed, General Ross proceeded to catechise them respecting the number and position of the force appointed for the defence of Baltimore. Their answers were neither very distinct nor very satisfactory. They spoke of a levy *en masse*—hinted that every male capable of bearing arms was enrolled—and calculated the strength of the whole, including three thousand regulars, at twenty thousand men. The cavalry, they said, consisted principally of volunteer troops, to one of which they had themselves belonged; and most of it, as well as a large portion of the infantry, had met us in the field of Bla-

densburg. In artillery, again, they affirmed, that the strength of the Americans was prodigious; upwards of one hundred pieces of cannon were in battery; and these being manned by seamen from the fleet, would, they observed to us, do their duty. The General heard all this with a countenance which never once varied in its expression; and then ordering them to the rear, in spite of many urgent entreaties that he would dismiss them on their parole, he commanded the bugle to sound, and the troops again stood to their arms.

Whilst the column was making ready to prosecute its more orderly advance, we stoutly plunged once more into the thickets, and pressed on. For about half an hour we proceeded without the occurrence of any circumstance calculated to excite in us a more than usual degree of alacrity. There were the same obstacles of brake and brier to overcome, and, from time to time, the same impediments of ponds and creeks to be surmounted; but still no enemy, nor any trace of an enemy, could be descried. At length, however, the face of affairs underwent a change. A few figures suddenly showed themselves, stealing from tree to tree, and bush to bush; they became more and more numerous as we went on; and, finally, we beheld about four or five hundred riflemen scattered through the wood, and prepared to dispute with us our farther progress. Nor were many moments wasted in idly gazing at each other. Having warned the column, by the sound of our bugles, that an enemy was in sight; we rushed forward, and the forest echoed again to the report of ours and the Americans' muskets.

There is nothing in war more interesting, and, if it be conducted with any science, more entertaining, than a skirmish in the bosom of a deep wood. The cover is generally so abundant, and so excellent in kind, that fewer casualties take place, than one unaccustomed to such affairs might expect; whilst, from the very nature of the encounter, your thoughts are never for an instant unemployed, nor your body for an instant at rest. When advancing, you dart from tree to tree, passing with the rapidity of thought over the space between, as if you had singled out one or two individuals among the enemy, to overtake whom was the great object of your wishes. Then, again, there is the necessity imposed upon you, of watching that your men keep well up; that they are careful not to expose themselves unnecessarily; that they are cool, take a good and deliberate aim, and abstain from throwing their fire away for no purpose. As to preserving a regular line, that is seldom attempted; men rarely carry into the field the niceties of the parade-ground; it is enough if you see, that when the right is hard pressed, the left shall not push too far ahead of it; nor, when the left hangs back, that the right pass it by. Above all, the officer must, in such situations, be careful to show his men a becoming example. He ought not, indeed, to hurry too far before them, because by so doing, though he may lead some to follow, others taking advantage of the license which his blind impetuosity grants, may keep out of the fire altogether; but still less ought he to lag behind. He is the best director of a skirmish who moves backwards and forwards among his troops; cheers and ani-

mates them by his voice and gestures; scruples not to expose himself occasionally more than may be exactly required, and appears to treat his enemies with contempt. The spirit which actuates him never fails to arise among his followers, and when once men despise their enemies, they seldom fail to beat them.

Our skirmish to-day was for a while tolerably hot, and extremely animated. The Americans outnumbered us beyond calculation, whilst, as individuals, they were at least our equals in the skill with which they used their weapon; yet, from the very commencement, it was on our part a continual advance, on theirs a continual retreat. We drove them from thicket to thicket, and tree to tree, not, indeed, with any heavy loss, for they were no less expert in finding shelter than in taking aim; but occasionally bringing down an individual as he was running from one cover to another. Our own loss, again, was very trifling. Two men killed, and about a dozen wounded, made up the sum of our casualties; and it may with truth be asserted, that everything was going on as the General himself could have wished. But unhappily he was not satisfied of this. The firing struck him as being more heavy and more continued than it ought to be; he was apprehensive that we had fallen into some serious ambuscade, and, unwilling to trifle with the safety even of a few companies, he rode forward for the purpose of satisfying himself that they were safe. How bitterly had the whole expedition cause to lament that step! He had scarcely entered the wood, when an American rifleman singled him out; he fired, and the ball, true to its mark, pierced

his side. When the General received his death-wound, I chanced to be standing at no great distance from him : I saw that he was struck, for the reins dropped instantly from his hand, and he leaned forward upon the pommel of his saddle ; and though I would not suffer myself to imagine that there was any danger, I hastened towards him, but I arrived too late. His horse making a movement forward, he lost his seat, and, but for the intervention of his aid-de-camp's arm, must have fallen to the ground. As it was, we could only lay him at length upon the grass, for his limbs could no longer perform their office—it was but too manifest that his race was run.

No language can convey any adequate idea of the sensation which this melancholy event produced in the bosoms of all who were aware of it. It may with truth be asserted, that a general, young in command, has rarely obtained the confidence of his troops in the degree in which General Ross had obtained it, or held out more flattering assurances, that he would continue to possess and to deserve it to the last. As a colonel of a regiment, a general of brigade in Lord Wellington's army, his name had long stood high ; and the brilliant success which attended his operations against Washington, satisfied his own soldiers, at least, that his fame was not unmerited. It has been said, that in conducting the inroad last alluded to, he exhibited more of hesitation and diffidence in himself than belongs to a really great mind. Perhaps he might hesitate a little ; perhaps he did lose an hour or two in considering, whether, with a mere handful of men, it would be advisable to march

upon the capital of a great nation, more especially as he could not but feel, that little or no permanent advantage to the cause would accrue even from success. But this praise, at least, has never been denied him; that when once his mind came to be made up, no man ever pursued his object more steadily, or with greater vigour. In the present course of operations, this was conspicuously the case. He was in the act of pushing on, cautiously indeed, but with all the celerity of the school in which he had been trained, when, through the absence of a few able supporters, he was led to throw his valuable life away. Peace to his ashes! A braver and better man the British army never produced; nor has it lost an officer of brighter promise or higher character.

His aide-de-camp, (Captain M'Dougal,) having seen the general laid by the road side, left him to the care of Admiral Cockburn, and galloped back for assistance. For myself, my duty called me elsewhere. The firing still went on in front; it was kept up by my own men, and I could not desert them; so I too quitted the mournful group, and once more plunged into action.

CHAPTER XI.

ACTION WITH THE AMERICANS.

WHEN I overtook the skirmishers, they were in full pursuit of the Americans, now flying with all precipitation before them. The wood was accordingly emptied in a trice; but on reaching its skirts, we found what we had, to say the truth, expected to find, that the riflemen now dislodged were nothing more than the outposts, or rather advanced corps, of a regular army. At the opposite extremity of a few open fields, about six or seven thousand men were drawn up in line. Their left resting upon a lake, and their right extending to the mouth of a creek; their centre was protected by high palings, and a row of lofty trees, whilst all before them was exposed and bare, to the distance of nearly half a mile. Of artillery, they appeared to have some six or eight pieces in the field. These were arranged, two upon the main road, which fell in towards the right of the position, three somewhat farther to the left, and the remainder singly, and at different intervals between the corps of infantry. About half-musket shot in front of them, was a farm house, surrounded by numerous barns, sta-

bles, and a stack-yard. Whether or not they had filled it with troops, we had no means of ascertaining; but it occurred to Charlton that it might be worth while to seize it, in case they should have neglected a measure to them of so much importance. With this view, we lost no time in rushing on. We sprung over the paling, and having received two discharges of grape from the guns upon the road, reached the house in question, with the loss of only three men. The enemy had not occupied it; we took possession without delay; and rejoicing sincerely in the error of which they had been guilty, determined that no efforts should on our parts be wanting to hinder them from retaking it.

Established in this snug post, abundant leisure was granted for observing as well the dispositions made by the enemy to receive the attack, as the advance of our own troops to make it; and a most animating spectacle both the one and the other presented. On the side of the Americans, mounted officers could be seen riding backwards and forwards, apparently encouraging their men to do their duty. Some companies moving from its rear, wheeled up into the line; others quitting the line, fell back towards the reserve. But the corps which attracted the chief share of our attention, consisted of the identical riflemen, whom we had so lately driven before us out of the wood. They continued for some time to drop in, by sections of eight, six, and ten, and taking post in rear of the line, resumed, as they best could, something like order. Nor were other manifestations of a resolution to keep their ground wanting. Several tumbrils and ammunition wagons arriving,

were speedily emptied of their contents; and casks of cartridges, ranged at intervals behind the men, bore testimony to the zeal with which the store-keeper's department had been attended to. Such was the condition of affairs on the right. Away towards the left, again, a good deal of marching and counter-marching went on; but whether it arose from some mismanagement in the original disposition of the force, I cannot tell. It struck me, however, as being highly injudicious, to render raw troops thus unsteady, at the very moment when they were about to come under fire; and I confess that I did not augur very favourably of the determination which, on that flank at least, the Americans would exhibit. Lastly, the heads of two columns appearing in the skirts of the more remote thicket, pointed out how the reserve was stationed, and almost told of what numbers it consisted.

How different was the prospect to which a glance towards our rear introduced us! We had taken possession of the farm-house perhaps ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before the leading divisions of our own troops began to emerge from the forest. As soon, however, as they showed themselves, a flank movement to the right was made, and the 85th regiment, in beautiful regularity, spread itself at extended order, over the whole of the enemy's front. The seamen, who came next, marched straight forward along the road, till they had arrived within cannon shot of the American line, where they halted. The 4th Regiment arriving after them, wheeled off, as the 85th had done, to the right; but instead of extending itself, filed along in column of

half companies, by the rear of the light troops, till it was lost to farther observation in a grove. A similar movement was made by the 44th, and a battalion of Marines, who, forming line in the open field, stood to support the skirmishers; whilst the 21st, taking up its ground on the road, came in on the rear of the column, of which the seamen constituted the front. All these formations were executed with as much coolness and precision as if the whole had been nothing more than a review; and in the eyes of us, who watched it, the spectacle was in the highest degree interesting.

In the meanwhile, neither the American artillery nor our own remained idle. The head of the column no sooner appeared, than the enemy's pieces which commanded the road opened upon it, and though the range was somewhat long, did considerable execution. To check this, Captain Carmichael, by whom the British artillery was commanded, instantly ordered two guns and a howitzer to the front, and pushing them forward within point-blank distance of the Americans, soon paid them back, with interest, in their own coin. I do not know that I ever saw shots more accurately thrown. At the first discharge, five American gunners were killed; at the next, one of the pieces was disabled; upon which, turning their attention to the infantry, our artillery-men mowed them down by whole sections. On this occasion, the missile principally used was the Shrapnel. It may, perhaps, be necessary to inform the unmilitary reader, that the Shrapnel is a hollow globe of iron, the cavity in which is filled up, not with powder only, but with a quantity of musket-balls. It is dis-

charged from a cannon exactly as a round shot is discharged; and being supplied with a fuse, more or less short, according to the distance to be traversed; it bursts just in front of its object, and throws the whole of its murderous contents forward. To-day it did fearful havoc. The Americans durst not stand before it, but shrunk away from each spot where a shell had fallen, as if there had been something deadly in the very soil.

But it was not upon the road alone that a smart cannonading was kept up. The three guns, of which I have already spoken as being stationed in the fields towards the Americans' left, opened upon the 85th regiment as soon as they had taken their ground. The soldiers, however, paid little heed to the salutation. Being commanded to lie down, they did so, and rested for twenty minutes very composedly, in defiance of the showers of balls that fell thick and fast about them.

At the expiration of that period, every necessary preparation appearing to be complete, Colonel Brooke, on whom the chief command had devolved, was seen to ride along the rear of the line, followed by his staff. Halting about the centre of the field, the little group turned their glasses, for a few moments, in the direction of the enemy's position, and then, as if satisfied that all things were in order, they began to disperse. An aid-de-camp galloped off to the right, Mr. Evans flew towards the left, and the orderly bugler sounding the charge, the whole army sprung into its ranks. The spirit-stirring notes were echoed back from all quarters, and the line moved forward.

I have said that our position all this while was among

a number of houses and corn-stalks, situated about midway between the hostile armies. Nothing can be conceived more animated, or more imposing, than the spectacle which now met our gaze. The light troops, in extended order, stretching from one thicket to another, covered the entire open space, and advanced, with the same coolness, and in the same admirable style, as if they had been marching upon a parade. In their rear, though far enough removed to be, in a great measure, secure against the fire of musketry, came a compact line, whose business it was, rather to give support wherever it should be needed, than to take any active part in the battle. On the road again, a dense column of blue-jackets pressed forward, with the alacrity and contempt of danger, which so eminently distinguish the British sailor; whilst a battalion, likewise in column, marched after it, ready to follow up with advantage whatever successes the privileged, undisciplined valour of the seamen might obtain.

On the side of the Americans, again, all was stillness and expectation. The corps which, up to this moment, had been continually changing their ground, now stood fast. The whole were in line, and, with shouldered arms, appeared to watch the progress of their enemies, like men who were determined not to be beaten. I thought, indeed, that I could perceive a little wavering at one particular point. It was a spot towards their extreme left, which, in the course of the cannonade, had received more than its due proportion of salutations; but whether I was correct or not, it is impossible for me to say, inasmuch as the vision became almost instantly

obscured by columns of smoke. The Americans had in their line several pieces of cannon, from which no discharges had as yet taken place. What their object was in keeping them so long idle, I know not; perhaps they imagined that their fire, when opened unexpectedly, would produce a double effect,—and, on that account, reserved it for the attack. Be this as it may, our infantry had not advanced ten paces, when a volley of grape was poured upon them from every gun in the field; and the plunging of balls all along the grass, the crashing of rails, trees, and other objects struck, as well as not a few prostrations among the soldiers themselves, gave proof that the salutation was not less serious than noisy.

As yet, it may be said, that I and my immediate followers ranked nothing more than spectators of the dispositions and movements of our comrades. Occasionally, indeed, a cannon-shot passing through the window of the house, or lodging in one of the stacks, bore testimony that the enemy were not wholly unmindful of us; but we were already so far in advance, that to push on till the others overtook us, would have been the height of absurdity. Now, however, we began to feel, that a state of quiescence was not exactly that which became us. Having waited till a few of the most forward of the skirmishers began to seek shelter behind our farm-yard, we likewise assumed the offensive, and dashing from our lurking-place, pressed onwards.

Immediately in front of the farm-house ran a high railing, similar to those of which I have before had occasion to speak, as intersecting almost every field or

open spot in this quarter of America. We were in the act of springing over it, when the enemy, directing against us a couple of six-pounders, swept down five or six men out of the company. Among them there was one poor fellow, who received from that fire as horrible a wound as I recollect at any period to have seen. A round shot striking him in the shoulder, tore away the whole of the limb, and left his very lungs exposed to the view of the by-stander. The man was a bit of a favourite with his master. By birth a gypsy, he possessed not only to a high degree the qualities of conviviality and good humour, but he was acknowledged to be by far the most skilful maker of fires, and therefore one of the most useful individuals in the regiment. No rain, however heavy, hindered him from striking a light, and from a light once struck, he never failed to produce a blaze. The loss of such a personage could not but be deeply and universally lamented. It may not be amiss to add here, that in spite of the severity of his wound, the poor fellow lingered many days; he was even removed to the ship before he died. Might not the blowing out of a man's brains, under such circumstances, be not only justifiable, but praiseworthy?

Up to this moment, not a single musket had been discharged on either side, and the most perfect silence prevailed throughout the ranks of both armies. The British soldiers moved forward with their accustomed fearlessness, and the Americans, with much apparent coolness, stood to receive them. Now, however, when little more than an hundred paces divided the one line from the other, both parties made ready to bring mat-

ters more decidedly to a personal struggle. The Americans were the first to use their small arms. Having rent the air with a shout, they fired a volley, begun upon the right, and carried away regularly to the extreme left; and then loading again, kept up an unintermitted discharge, which soon in a great degree concealed them from our observation. Nor were we backward in returning the salute. A hearty British cheer gave notice of our willingness to meet them: and firing and running, we gradually closed upon them, with the design of bringing the bayonet into play.

I hardly know what language to employ for the purpose of conveying to the mind of a reader, who possesses no practical acquaintance with the subject, something like a clear idea of a battle, at that period in its progress at which we have now arrived. Volley upon volley having been given, we were now advanced within less than twenty yards of the American line; yet such was the denseness of the smoke, that it was only when a passing breeze swept away the cloud for a moment, that either force became visible to the other. It was not, therefore, at men's persons that the fire of our soldiers was directed. The flashes of the enemy's muskets alone served as an object to aim at, as, without doubt, the flashes of our muskets alone guided the enemy. At last, however, the wind suddenly sprung up. The obscurity in which both parties had been enveloped was cleared away; and there, sure enough, stood our opponents, not, as they had stood an hour ago, in close and compact array, but confused by the murderous fire to which they had been exposed. Napoleon Buona-

parte has affirmed, that he never witnessed anything more terrific than the fire of a British line of infantry. The ex-emperor was perfectly correct. In the armies of other nations, particularly in those of America, many marksmen, more expert as individuals, may be found; but we may search the world over before we shall discover troops who, as a body, take aim with the same coolness, reserve their fire so well, or, as a necessary consequence, pour it in with such tremendous effect as our own soldiers. Of this the Americans had to-day received the most appalling proofs; numbers lay dead among the feet of their comrades; numbers more had retired maimed or wounded; and those who still kept the field, were broken and confused. One thing alone was required to complete the rout. Our gallant fellows, uttering a hearty cheer, threw in their last volley, and then rushed forward with the bayonet; but a shock, which the flower of European armies had never been able to withstand, the Americans ventured not to receive. They lost in a moment all order, and fled, as every man best could, from the field.

There was but one road along which horses or carriages could move, and it became crowded to excess in a moment. Whilst the infantry, dashing into the forest, thought to conceal themselves among its mazes, the cavalry, of which a few squadrons had been drawn up upon their right, scampered off by the main road; and was immediately followed by guns, tumbrils, ammunition waggons, and the whole *materiel* of the army. To arrest the progress of all, or some part of that force, became now our great object. "Hurrah for the guns!"

was a word of command first uttered by Colonel Brooke ; it was repeated, with loud laughter and tumultuous outcries, from one rank to another ; and desperate and unintermitting were the efforts which we made to overtake and cut off such as were hindmost. But unhappily the absence of even the mounted troopers told sorely against us to-day. The truth of it is, the American ordnance, drawn by fleet horses, readily escaped. And out of the whole party, only two guns, and one tumbril alone, fell into our hands. Of prisoners, however, we were fortunate enough to secure a few. The fourth regiment, which had made a detour for the purpose of turning the enemy's left, though it arrived not in time to take much share in the action, succeeded in cutting off about half of a battalion from the high road ; and this body, driven back upon its pursuers, saved itself from annihilation by laying down its arms.

Thus ended the affair of the 12th of September, after about an hour and a half of pretty severe fighting. On our part, the loss sustained could not exceed two hundred men in all ; on the part of the Americans, at least double that number had fallen. The dead, indeed, lay in clusters far more frequent, and far more numerous, than anywhere I at least discovered on the field of Bladensburg ; and as the proportion between the killed and wounded in an army is usually as five to one, it was easy to collect that the whole amount of persons rendered hors-de-combat, must have been very considerable. Yet there was not amongst us one man who did not feel that the victory had been purchased at a

terrible price,—it had cost the life of our General, and in so doing, had crippled all our resources.

The day being now considerably advanced, and the troops somewhat fatigued by their exertions, our new leader determined to halt for that night on the field which he had won. With this view, the bugles were directed to sound the recall; whilst the Quarter-Master General proceeded to fix upon a proper spot for the bivouac, and to station the out-posts. Nor were the medical attendants of the army unmindful of their important charge. There chanced to be, in the line of the late operations, two houses of some size; these were of course occupied, and the smaller and more incommodious being selected as head-quarters, the larger and better was devoted to the accommodation of the wounded. Thither, all who had not been already dressed upon the field, and sent back to the boats, were conveyed; nor was the smallest distinction made between the Americans and the English. To say the truth, however, they were but indifferently provided for. The owners having removed every piece of furniture out of the house, the poor soldiers could only be huddled together on the floors of the different apartments; and as our medical officers were few in number, the delay in paying attention to their wounds was in some cases very great. Yet few, either of the English or the Americans, complained. A groan or a shriek would, indeed, occasionally strike upon the ear of the by-stander; and even a querulous exclamation, as the moving of another's leg or arm happened to bring it into contact with some unfortunate man's

broken limb. But there were no murmurs; no whinings because one or other was not immediately looked to. On the contrary, the instances were not rare in which one wounded man would entreat the surgeon to pass him by for the present, that the wound of another more seriously hurt might be dressed in the first place. It is a great mistake to imagine that war renders men necessarily selfish. In such campaigns as that of the French in Russia, where suffering may be said to have reached its height, the better feelings of human nature become, without doubt, entirely blunted; but in ordinary cases, the inquirer will find as much of real generosity and noble-mindedness among soldiers in the field, as among any class of human society.

The troops being checked, not without some difficulty, in the midst of their ardour, the different regiments collected round their colours, and formed into close column. Fires were then, as usual, lighted; and there, but a short space removed from the bodies of the slain, we prepared to pass the night.

CHAPTER XII.

DEFENCES FOR THE PROTECTION OF BALTIMORE.

As there still remained some hours of daylight, my friend and myself having partaken of such slight provision as our commissary could furnish, amused ourselves by wandering over the scene of the last contest, and examining, at our leisure, both the nature of the ground occupied by the Americans, and the dispositions made to dislodge them. We found the enemy's position not, indeed, so commanding, in many respects, as that which they had occupied above Bladensburg, but sufficiently so, in all conscience, to have enabled troops better disciplined, and more habituated to danger, to keep their ground for many hours, even against superior numbers. The left of the line, in particular, struck us as being more strongly posted than frequently falls to the lot of small armies. Not only was the lake which covered it perfectly unfordable, but its banks, steep, precipitous, and woody, furnished the very best species of cover for light troops, by the use of which, an hundred resolute men might have checked the approach of a whole army for half a day. On the right, again, all

attempts at turning were rendered hopeless, by the intervention of the head of a creek, which in this direction stretched considerably inland; whilst a close and tangled thicket, intersected here and there by narrow pathways, absolutely invited the American General to push forward a corps, which, making a circuit, might have fallen upon the rear of our army at any moment most convenient for themselves, and most injurious to us. Besides all which, the troops themselves stood at the summit of a gentle slope, and in the heart of a belt of oaks, regular as a row of palisades; whilst the houses, now converted by us to the uses detailed above, were, from their situation, admirably adapted to cover the reformation of almost any part of the line which might by accident have been broken. But all these advantages were of no avail. There was wanting that, without which any other superiority will be found useless, a confidence in the troops themselves, which nothing, except repeated successes, and a long acquaintance with warfare, bestows.

In passing from one extremity of the field to another, it unavoidably happened, that on more than one occasion we were compelled to pick our steps among the dead; and it was then that the great disparity between the loss sustained by us, and that on the side of the enemy, struck us. On the main road, indeed, the number of British bodies was considerable; the seamen and 21st regiment, which occupied that post, had been exposed to a sweeping fire of artillery, and had suffered; but in other directions, for one body clothed in a scarlet uniform, five corpses of slaughtered republicans might

be counted. Nor did it appear to us as being the least remarkable feature in the case, that not one of all the slain was stripped. They had lain already some hours exposed, yet such was the paucity of our camp-followers, or their unskilfulness in their vocation, that they still lay as they had fallen.

Having in this manner gratified our curiosity, we returned to the spot which we had previously selected as a convenient one for passing the night. It was a bare green mound, apart from the rest of the army, and sheltered by the branches of three spreading trees which surmounted it. There we found our fire brightly blazing, a little straw got together, and a supper of boiled goose and greens ready to be served up. The reader will easily believe, that we addressed ourselves to the last with a satisfaction by no means the less lively, that we had not anticipated anything of the kind. Our servants, it appeared, intent, as all good servants ought to be, upon their masters' comfort, had instituted a search in every direction after viands, and, in a shed near the hospital, had discovered a flock of some sixteen or eighteen geese. Of these they took care to secure a couple before any other individual was let into the secret; but the birds soon betrayed themselves—their cackling was overheard by the surgeons' attendants, and in five minutes after they all paid the debt of nature. Into the fate of the birds, however, we cared not to inquire; we were pleased with our own share; and having proved this in the most satisfactory of all manners, we drank our grog and lay down. In ten minutes after we were both fast asleep.

For the first half of the night, our repose continued to be as sound and unbroken as we could possibly desire. The air was serene and mild; and the intervention of the boughs overhead, screened us pretty successfully from the dews; but towards midnight we were awakened by a visitation, to guard against which, even the dense foliage of our bower proved wholly insufficient. The rain fell in torrents. There was no thunder, it is true; but the fountains of the great deep seemed for the second time to be broken up, so tremendous was the rush of water upon our lairs. We rose, as may be imagined, not in the best humour possible; yet we soon found out that to repine would be useless; so drawing our cloaks more closely around us, we crept a little nearer to the fire, and sat for half an hour listening to the storm. By and by, however, drowsiness began again to exert its influence. The water fell as profusely as ever; our garments were not proof against it; we were thoroughly saturated, but even in that state sleep was precious. We heaped on an additional quantity of fuel, and laying ourselves as close to the blaze as a regard to our personal safety would allow, we were very soon as ignorant of passing events, as we had been before the storm awoke us.

If any judgment may be formed from the condition of our persons when the orderly sergeant roused us, the rain must have continued to fall, without any intermission, from midnight up to the moment of the general muster. For myself, I can only aver, that I got up, absolutely heavy with the load of moisture which hung about me. To say that I was wet to the skin, would

be to convey a very feeble picture of my predicament. My very skin was perforated,—I was wet to the bones and marrow. Yet I rose in the highest possible spirits, and took post beside my men, every one of whom was as completely drenched as I, and I firmly believe, as merry and light-hearted.

We stood in column upon the ground of our encampment, till day-light began to appear; after which we moved down, and took our stations on the high road, at the head of the column. There we found the other corps and brigades assembling; and I perfectly recollect, to this moment, the degree of mirth which was excited among us soldiers, when our gallant allies, the blue-jackets, proceeded to take up their ground. Even the unmilitary reader will probably understand, that when a column forms, the different companies of the battalion or brigade draw up, as nearly as may be, at regular distances from each other. No men ever set this technical arrangement so completely at defiance, as the sailors. To them it appeared to be a matter of the most perfect indifference how or where they stood; whilst their garrulity exceeded all conceivable bounds, and their laughter made the very woods ring. Jack is certainly not in his element, when brought to act with a regular land force. In storming a battery, or making a sudden dash for any purpose, he is, perhaps, the most efficient animal you could employ; but in a series of operations, where patience no less than courage, and regularity no less than daring, are required, he is certainly not the being whom we would select as most efficient. He had done his duty, however, in the affair of

yesterday, and done it nobly; and if we did smile a little at his ignorance of tactics, there was not, in the feeling which produced it, the most remote assimilation to disrespect, or the most distant disposition to deny to him the full meed of praise which his gallantry had already merited, and, we were aware, would merit again.

I know not whence it came about, but the company to which I was attached, had again the good fortune to be employed as a flank patrol. The column having formed in marching order, we, who stood at its head, were ordered to cast off our blankets, and dash into the woods; and we had hardly done so, when a bugle from the rear, sounding the advance, warned us to go on. We delayed not one moment in obeying the signal. The rain had ceased, but the branches of the trees, the underwood, and long grass, were all loaded with water. These, however, were circumstances which we never dreamed of taking into consideration—we pushed on. Wet enough we were already—every step that we took made us more so; for the grass reaching to our middles, had all the influence of a mire equally deep; yet we contrived to keep our arms dry, and doing that, we cared for little besides. A brush of a few minutes put our blood in rapid circulation; no leisure was granted, in which it could again become stagnant; and it was speedily apparent enough, that our minds would receive to the full as much employment in this excursion as our bodies. We had not proceeded a quarter of a mile before we fell in with about twenty armed men. They were stragglers from yesterday's battle, and submitted immediately; but they informed us that the whole of

the wood was filled with riflemen; and that our progress, if we made any progress at all, would be effected by dint of hard fighting.

It will be readily imagined, that, with such a prospect before us, we pushed on eagerly and rapidly, but with extreme caution. The face of the country was even more wild than any which, on the present excursion at least, we had yet passed. The high road wound for many miles through the centre of a dark forest; and the course of the flankers was rarely indeed diversified with any other prospect, besides that of an apparently interminable wilderness of trees. At last, however, a few open and cultivated spots burst upon us. Sweeping along, at the distance of not less than a quarter of a mile from the column, the section which I commanded arrived suddenly at a hamlet, completely embosomed in the woods, and to all appearance cut off from intercourse with every other part of the world. It consisted, as far as my memory may be trusted, of five houses, each of which stood about a stone's throw apart from the rest, and was surrounded by a little enclosure, in the highest state of cultivation, and even of beauty. But the circumstance which delighted us most of all, was to find, that not one cottage out of the whole cluster was deserted by its inhabitants. There they were, males and females, young men and maidens, old men and children; and they scrupled not to assure us, that our own proclamations had kept them there, because they believed that British soldiers were incapable of violating their promises. I need scarcely add, that both their persons and property were treated with the same

respect as would have been shown to the persons and property of the inhabitants of an English village. The milk, bread, cheese, and whiskey, which they were good enough to offer, we, of course, made no scruple to accept; but not one among them had occasion to complain of a solitary act of violence committed. Our stay among them, indeed, exceeded not five minutes; and we left them as we found them.

We had quitted the village about a quarter of an hour, when, pushing my way through the middle of a copse more than ordinarily close, I suddenly found myself opposite to two American soldiers. I was alone; that is to say, my men, though following the same track, had diverged to the right and left of this thicket, whilst I forced myself, with some difficulty, through its centre. Whether I felt in any degree alarmed by the vision, is a problem which, at this distance of time, I cannot undertake to solve; all that I remember is, that, holding a cocked pistol in my hand, I ran towards them, and commanded them, on pain of death, to surrender. When I first caught sight of them, the one was lying at length upon the grass,—the other, in a kneeling position, was hanging over him; but the latter, as soon as he observed my approach, sprung upon his feet, and levelling a short rifle at me, demanded a parley. I could not, under such circumstances, grant his request; but rushing forward, knocked up the muzzle of the piece, which he, not through any deficiency in courage, clearly enough, but from motives of proper prudence, abstained from discharging; and then required that both he and his companion, who still remained motionless, should

regard themselves as prisoners of war. The reader will guess my surprise when I beheld the individual to whom I was addressing myself, burst into tears. "Do with me," said he, "what you will; my life is of little value; you may take it now, if you choose; but I beseech you, by all the ties of kindred, if such you acknowledge, have mercy upon my father. He was wounded in the battle of yesterday; I bore him so far on my back, but my strength failed me, and I could bear him no farther." I was much affected by this appeal; and stooping down, looked anxiously to ascertain in what plight the wounded man lay. He was perfectly motionless. Not a muscle quivered,—not a breath heaved his chest; he was dead; and the state of his skin, which was warm and clammy, indicated, that life must have gone out only a few minutes ago. "My poor fellow," said I, "your piety has, I fear, been of little avail; but God forbid that I should do injury either to a father or a son under such circumstances. There is but one duty now which you can perform; go and perform it." So saying, I dashed on, leaving the youth, (for a mere youth he was,) at perfect liberty to do with the corpse of his parent what he chose.

I have no recollection that any other adventure worthy of record befell us during the remainder of our march. We passed, indeed, one or two houses in addition to those already mentioned, and it may be observed, that they were all inhabited by German emigrants; but nothing occurred, either there or elsewhere, calculated to excite an interest at the time, or to make an impression upon the memory. Towards four or five

o'clock in the afternoon, however, the face of affairs underwent a change. We then began to perceive, by a thousand palpable signs, that we were drawing near to the outskirts of a large city; at all events, that we were approaching a more populous district than any which we had yet passed. The woods suddenly ceasing, we found ourselves in the midst of open corn fields; and well-cleared meadows; hedgerows and long lines of paling impeded our progress; and farm-houses, with their barns, steadings, stack-yards, and other offices, met us at almost every step. There was no room for doubt, as to the cause of this change in the aspect of external nature; Baltimore could not be far off,—indeed we had not proceeded above half a mile through this district, when our guides, pointing to a range of hills immediately in our front, informed us, that behind them lay the city devoted by us to destruction. A moment's survey of these hills served, however, to convince us that something more than a mere continuance of our march would be required to make the prize our own. The heights in question were occupied by an army of Americans; and such were their numbers, as well as the formidable nature of the preparations which they had made for our reception, that the least skilful amongst us became instantly aware, that some hard fighting, as well as judicious management, must be displayed, before we could hope to force this position.

Few of my readers can be ignorant that Baltimore, a city containing about forty thousand inhabitants, stands upon both banks of the Patapsco, about twenty miles from the point where that river falls into the Chesapeake.

On the right bank of the stream, that by which we now approached, it is girdled in by a range of hills, which, beginning at the edge of the water, sweeps round almost in a circle about the town. To such, therefore, as advance upon it in this direction, it is accordingly quite invisible, till they gain the summit of the heights; and as we were not permitted to attain that eminence, it continued to us invisible to the last. Under such circumstances it is of course impossible for me to attempt any description of its streets, squares, or public buildings; all of which are, I doubt not, worthy of the most minute delineation which the pen of a finished traveller could draw out; but I can say something of the defences, by means of which this greatest of all the ports of the Chesapeake was protected; and as an account of these may prove not uninteresting to my readers, I proceed to give it.

The approach to Baltimore by water, is defended by two forts, one on each side of the river. The fort on the right bank, which mounts some twenty guns, formed, on the present occasion, the extreme left of the enemy's position, which extended along the face of the hills, directly across the road, and ended at a redoubt, thrown up for the purpose, just where the hills bend back upon the town. In the centre, between these two covering redoubts, batteries, breast-works, *fleches*, and traverses were thrown up; where time had not been granted for this, deep ditches were dug—and stakes and palisadoes completed the entrenchments, which mud-banks and parapets had begun. In the range of these works were mounted one hundred and twenty pieces of ordnance,

many of them twenty-four and thirty-two pounders, and all were manned by the choicest seamen from the fleet. To support this powerful artillery, some twenty thousand infantry were under arms; and of these the greater numbers were, as might be expected, militiamen; but as far as we could learn, there were full five thousand troops of the line who had been called in, but had arrived too late, for the defence of the capital. Of cavalry, I never happened to hear what force was before us. Without doubt, the squadrons which showed themselves at Bladensburg were here, and perhaps they were reinforced by some local troops; but I will not venture a conjecture as to their number, because I possess no ground upon which to frame it. I do not think, however, that I shall err greatly from the truth, if I conclude that two-and-twenty thousand men, with upwards of a hundred heavy cannon, now stood in a position naturally strong, and rendered doubly so by entrenchments, to oppose the efforts of five thousand infantry, with eight pieces of light artillery. The odds were unquestionably tremendous; yet sure I am that I speak the sentiments of the whole army, when I aver that the order to halt, and take up ground for the night, which was issued almost as soon as the enemy became visible, was received with one feeling, and one feeling only, that of bitter, I had almost said indignant regret.

The march of the column this day had been more deliberate than usual. The enemy, by felling trees across the road at various points, had contrived to render the progress of the artillery somewhat difficult; and hence, though we began our journey as early as seven

o'clock in the morning, it was found, at five in the afternoon, that little more than ten or twelve miles had been compassed. To us, however, who had forced our way through brake and brier, diverging, in a multitude of instances, from the straight direction, the march appeared sufficiently long; and seeing that we were not about to be led into action, no man regretted the order which consigned him to repose. But in the rest which was granted to our comrades, Charlton and I took no part. It again fell to our lot to be put in charge of a picquet; and hence, we had no sooner rejoined the main body with our followers, than we were directed to move off towards the right, where our station for the night was assigned us.

CHAPTER XIII.

PREPARATIONS FOR ATTACKING THE AMERICAN ENTRENCHMENTS.—SUDDEN RETREAT.—AND RE-EMBARKATION.

WE had hardly taken possession of the post allotted to us, when the rain, which during the whole of the day had ceased, began again to fall with renewed violence; it unfortunately happened, too, that there was nothing within our reach which we could oppose to it. Our station was at the edge of a belt of oaks, that cut off one portion of a large field from another, and our advanced sentinels were planted about half-musket-shot in front of us. But the branches of the trees were not sufficiently close to afford the slightest shelter nor was there a hovel or shed of any kind, under which we could retire. To add to our miseries, both the officers' cloaks and the men's blankets, having been kept behind, we were denied the means of keeping ourselves ordinarily warm; whilst it was not without much difficulty that we succeeded in getting a fire to blaze. The wood within our reach was all green the rain of last night had completely soaked it and it more than once occur-

red that the sheets of water which poured down from the clouds, extinguished in a moment the spark which we had wasted a full quarter of an hour in coaxing into life. At last, however, our patience received its reward, and a couple of fires, roaring and crackling beneath the green wood, had the double effect of increasing our bodily ease, and elevating our spirits.

About a couple of hundred yards in front of our vi-
dettes, stood a mansion of considerable size, and gen-
teel exterior, upon which we cast many a longing look,
without venturing for some time to approach it. That
a place so neat in all its arrangements, and so well sup-
plied with out-houses of every description, could be
wholly devoid of the necessaries and comforts of life,
was a matter which we were very unwilling to believe.
Without doubt, the pens that stood at its western gable
contained their due quantity of pigs,—the hen-roosts
could not be all tenantless,—and the flights of pigeons,
which went and came, gave decisive proof that the dove-
cot had not been built for purposes of empty show.
Neither was it probable that the larder would be abso-
lutely cleared out, or the cellars totally empty. Our
very mouths watered as these reflections occurred to us;
and at last it was determined that, at all hazards, the
mansion in question should be examined.

The charge of conducting the search fell, as it was
proper that it should fall, upon me, as the junior; and
I set off, attended by four men, to effect it. Being as-
sured by the sentries that no Americans had shown
themselves there since they assumed their posts, we
pushed on without much apprehension, and our satis-

faction was far from being slight when we found that the house was empty. But the satisfaction arising from that source, suffered a very considerable diminution when, on proceeding to look round for the viands, in quest of which we had come, nothing of the kind could be found. There was not a pig, fowl, or other living creature about the place. The pigeons alone, of all the stock upon the farm, remained, and they were a great deal too wary not to baffle every effort which was made to surprise them. Disappointed and chagrined at an event so little anticipated, we were preparing to quit the inhospitable domicile, when a whole crowd of stragglers, artillerymen, sappers, sailors, and soldiers of the line, rushed into the hall. In a moment the walls of the building re-echoed with oaths and exclamations, and tables, chairs, windows, and even doors, were dashed to pieces, in revenge for the absence of food. By and by, however, a shout of joy was heard. Like those about us, we ran in the direction of the sound, and beheld, through a chasm in a brick wall underground, the interior of a wine cellar, set round in magnificent array, with bottles of all shapes and dimensions. The wily Yankee to whom this house belonged, unable or unwilling to remove his wine, had adopted the common precaution of blocking up the entrance to his vaults with brick-work. But the absence of all uniformity between the old and the new masonry failed not to strike one of our soldiers who passed by it; and applying the but-end of his musket to the portion which seemed to have been last thrown up, he easily forced a few bricks out of their places. An exclamation indicative of the

highest degree of pleasure, instantly gave notice that some great discovery had been effected; it drew the whole of us to the spot, and in five minutes, the cellar was crowded with men, filling, in the first place, their own haversacks and bosoms, and then handing out bottles, with the utmost liberality, to their comrades. In less than a quarter of an hour, not a single pint, either of wine or spirits, remained out of all this magnificent stock.

Well pleased with the issue of our undertaking, we retraced our steps to the picquet, where we were received with the cordiality which our burden was calculated to produce. There the spirits were equally divided, and the men receiving their due proportion, there fell to the share of Charlton and myself a flask of exquisite cogniac, with two magnums of superior Bourdeaux. With the help of these, we contrived to make a very comfortable meal upon salt pork and biscuit, which alone remained to us, and then lighting our pipes, we sat down by the side of the fire, in a state of excessive moisture, it is true, but still of considerable enjoyment.

By this time darkness began rapidly to set in, and the scene acquired every moment more and more of interest and sublimity. The rain still fell, though not with so much violence as it had fallen a little while ago; whilst the wind rising by fits and starts, waved over the flat, and whistled through the wood in violent gusts. The clouds rushed before it, and totally obscured, from time to time, a young moon, which seemed to struggle against their supremacy, and then di-

viding into their grey fleeces, suffered her for a moment to smile out upon the storm. But it was not in the operations of nature alone that we found much to admire. Our outposts, extending in a sort of curve, permitted us, who occupied one of the extreme flanks, to look at once upon the fires, both of the British and American armies, and the effect of these, in a dark and tempestuous night like the present, was in the highest degree striking. Our troops lay all along the plain; in part among the wood which skirted the open country, in part upon the open country itself; and their order, probably through motives of policy, was as loose and scattered as a due regard to safety would permit. The consequence was, that their fires stretched out in a single line, presented an appearance far more imposing, than if they had been confined, as usual, to one or two spots. On the part of the Americans again there was no need for any artificial extension. Their fires ran along the whole face of the hill. Like our own, they were arranged in a sort of semicircle, only the horns of their crescent, instead of advancing, fell back, on both sides from the centre. It was impossible not to feel the contrast, which the dense arrangement of their bivouac presented, to the scattered and somewhat irregular disposition of ours. That they surpassed us in numbers, at least three-fold, we had all along been aware; the very nature and extent of their works were, of themselves, sufficient to prove this; but I am not sure that the knowledge of that superiority produced its full effect, till after the establishment of the two camps for the night had brought it completely

home to us. Yet there was not a man amongst us who entertained a doubt as to the issue of the battle, let it begin when it might. We despised the Yankees from our hearts, and only longed for an opportunity to show them how easily they could be beaten.

Nor was this eager desire to engage the mere offspring of an impetuosity, which British soldiers always experience when in the presence of an enemy. It had been explained to us, that as soon as a communication could be opened between the army and the fleet, of which all the bombs, and many of the lighter frigates, were in the river, an attack upon the American lines would be made. This was to begin with a heavy fire on the right, for the purpose of drawing to that part the principal share of Jonathan's attack; after which, the 85th regiment, and the seamen, supported by the 4th and 44th, were to penetrate the left silently, and with the bayonet. Having overcome all opposition, the column was to wheel up upon the summit of the ridge, to remain stationary till dawn; and then taking the whole of the works in flank, to carry them one by one in detail. But everything, it was understood, must depend upon the ability of the fleet to co-operate. There was, upon the extreme right of the American position, a strong post, well supplied with heavy ordnance. To pass it by unheeded, would be, our leaders conceived, to expose the attacking column, even should it succeed in the dark, to certain destruction, as soon as daylight enabled the artillery to play; whilst to attempt it by escalade, was esteemed a project too hazardous. To the fleet it was accordingly left, which, by bombard-

ment, would, it was presumed, reduce it to ruins in a few hours; and the commencement of a serious cannonade from the river, was to be the signal for a general movement in line.

Thus instructed, the reader will easily believe, that as hour after hour stole on, we turned our gaze, with feverish anxiety, towards the river. All, however, continued as it had been before. No flash told that the shipping had taken their stations; the noise of firing was unheard, and the most serious apprehensions began to be entertained, that the plan had, for some cause or another, miscarried. At last, when midnight was close at hand, a solitary report, accompanied by the ascension of a small bright spark into the sky, gave notice that the bombardment had begun. Another and another followed in quick succession; and now every man instinctively sprung from the earth, and grasped his arms. The point to be passed was, we well knew, in our immediate front. We were aware, that in forcing it, our detachment would take the lead; and we listened, in breathless attention, for the coming up of the column which had been appointed to support us. Our ears, too, were on the stretch for the musketry which ought soon to be heard in the opposite direction; in a word, we stood in our ranks for a full hour, under the influence of that state of excitation, which, while it locks up the faculty of speech, renders the senses, both of sight and hearing, acute to an almost unnatural degree.

Such was our situation, both of body and mind, from midnight, when the ships began to open their fire,

up to the hour of two. That all things went not prosperously, was manifest enough. The precious time, at least, was escaping us; and for that loss we all felt that nothing could make amends; but we were far from anticipating the total change of resolution which had occurred, and of which we were so soon to receive proofs the most decisive. At last, when murmurs, "not loud but deep," began to pass from man to man, an aide-de-camp arrived, and our sentries were ordered to be called in. This being effected, we proceeded, under his guidance, towards the left; till, being arrived at the high road, we found the whole army in marching order, and, to our inexpressible astonishment, preparing to withdraw. The column was formed, as soldiers express themselves, left in front; and the men's faces were then towards the shipping.

It is impossible for me to convey any idea of the disappointment, or rather humiliation, experienced and expressed by persons of all ranks, when it became apparent that a retreat was determined upon. It was no consolation to us to be told, that the frigates had been unable to force their way within cannon-shot of the enemy's works, and that even the bombardment of which we had been spectators, proved all but harmless to those against whom it was directed. We could not believe that our success depended, in any essential degree, upon the operations of the navy. What were the American entrenchments to us? In the first place, the most unpractised eye could not fail to perceive, that of the field-works begun, not one had arrived at completion; and the most ignorant in the art of war is aware, that in

works only half defensible troops repose very little confidence. In the next place, no truth can be more apparent, than that, in all night-operations, a compact body of veterans, well-disciplined and orderly, are at all times an overmatch for whole crowds of raw levies. Perhaps our leaders acted prudently in deferring the moment of attack till after nightfall. By doing so, they at all events rendered the enemy's superiority in artillery of no avail; but why the plan of a night-attack should be given up, because a single redoubt escaped cannonading from the river, we could not divine. Our business, however, was a simple one; we had only to obey; not, indeed, with the same satisfaction, which would have marked our obedience of other orders, but promptly, and in good spirits.

It fell to the lot of the companies which had furnished the picquets, to perform, on the present occasion, the office of a rear-guard. Among these our company took its station; and as we were commanded not to move till daylight began to break, we no sooner saw the column fairly set out, than we gathered round a large fire by the road-side, and sat down. There still remained in our flask some portion of the cogniac, a few crumbs of biscuit lay about the recesses of our wallets; and upon them, early as it was, we proceeded to make our rude meal, lest an opportunity of so doing should not occur again.

At last, a few faint streaks of dawn showing themselves in the eastern sky, our sentries were called in, our men took their stations, and the retreat began. To guard against surprisal, two files, each at the distance

of thirty or forty paces from the other, were commanded to move about fifty or sixty yards in rear of the company. Six other files, three on each side of the way, swept the woods as a sort of flank patrol; whilst the body of the company, amounting to exactly twenty-four men, proceeded in column. Of the rest of the army we saw nothing; it had set out a full hour and a half before us; although it necessarily moved more slowly than us, we could hardly expect to overtake it till it should halt. But so little were we apprehensive of pursuit, that the idea of being cut off never once occurred to us; and hence we were not altogether so careful in providing against such an accident as we ought to have been. We were, however, taught, before the day's journey came to a close, that things do occasionally happen which have not been anticipated.

The storm of wind and rain having died away, our march became, before long, exceedingly agreeable. Of the country through which we now travelled, none of us during the advance had seen anything; the scenery accordingly possessed all the attractions which novelty bestows. The road, too, though sandy, was a good one, and the late moisture rendered it better than it had been before, by hardening it; whilst the trees, bending over from both sides, afforded an agreeable shelter from the sun's rays, which soon began to beat upon us somewhat powerfully. With all these pleasant circumstances about us, it was but natural that we should trudge on in excellent humour. But the carelessness to which, as our distance from the enemy's lines increased, we began to give way, suddenly received its chastisement,

and our attention was drawn from lighter topics to the important business of our duty.

It might be noon, or a little past it, and we were approaching the scene of the action of the 12th, when a shout from the files in the rear, followed by the discharge of a couple of muskets, attracted our attention. We halted instantly, and looked back ; but no time was allowed for any regular formation, ere a troop of some twenty or thirty horsemen dashed round an angle of the road, and, sword in hand, galloped towards us. "To the right and left," was the only word of command that we could give ; the men understood it ; and springing, some to the right, and others to the left of the way, they threw themselves into the wood, where the cavalry could not reach them. Then was a fire opened, which in a trice brought men and horses to the ground. The cavalry paused ; one or two attempted, with great bravery, to force their horses into the thickets, and two of our people, who chanced to be more exposed than their comrades, were sabred. But the alarm having spread to the main body, now not far ahead of us, a howitzer and a field-gun came at full speed to our assistance. The Americans waited not for the guns to open. Instantly that they appeared every man turned his head ; and as they rode for life and death our gunners had only an opportunity of firing two shots.

Ignorant, as we necessarily were, whether the corps which had just charged, formed part of the advanced guard of the whole American army, or was a mere patrol, sent out to track our steps and ascertain our plans, we broke not at once into marching-order as soon as it

had disappeared. On the contrary, the whole force drew up in two lines; the artillery took its station, and every arrangement was made for fighting a general action on the spot. But nothing farther being seen or heard of the assailants, all hope of bringing matters to that desirable issue was laid aside, and the brigades, one by one, took the road, as they had done before. A recognisance was, indeed, instituted; that is to say, the rear-guard, supported by two pieces of cannon, and four additional companies of infantry, retraced its steps about a mile, for the purpose of ascertaining with accuracy how matters stood; but they meeting with nothing to excite their interest, they too turned back, and followed their comrades unmolested.

The rest of our journey was performed without the occurrence of any remarkable incident. We passed, as we were necessitated to pass, our yesterday's position, where men and officers recovered the cloaks and blankets which had been left behind; and we saw the dead lying as they lay on the evening of the action, still unburied. Many had, however, undergone the process of stripping, though by whom it was impossible for us to guess; and all were beginning to emit an odour the reverse of acceptable to delicate organs; but we could not pause to give them sepulture; and both the sight and smell were too familiar to affect us very deeply. We pushed on, and arriving about four o'clock in the afternoon at a convenient piece of ground, a halt was ordered. There all the customary arrangements of lighting fires, piling arms, and planting outposts, were gone through; and here, under the shelter of gipsy-

tents, composed of blankets and the ramrods of muskets, we passed the night.

It is not necessary that I should continue the detail of our subsequent operations very minutely. Enough is done when I state, that on the following morning, as soon as broad daylight came in, the retreat was resumed and that we arrived about nine o'clock A. M., at a position which promised to furnish every facility for a safe re-embarkation. The boats were already on the beach in great numbers; a couple of gun-brigs were moored, as before, within cable's length of the shore; and the sailors, in crowds, were waiting to receive us, and to convey us to our respective vessels. No hearty cheering, however, gave notice this time of the satisfaction of these brave fellows with the results of the expedition. On the contrary, a solemn silence prevailed among them; and even the congratulations, on the safe return of their individual acquaintances, were accompanied by an expression of deep sorrow for the loss of General Ross, and the profitless issue of the inroad. In this humour they conducted us, regiment by regiment to the boats; and the evening was as yet very little advanced, when the whole army, with all its material and stores, found itself again lodged on board of ship.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE feelings which took possession of us now were similar in their nature, though perhaps less vivid, than those which had come into play after the re-shipment of the expedition to Washington. At first, the change from constant excitement to absolute rest, was received as a positive boon; by and by the sameness of the rest itself became a thousand degrees more irksome than its very opposite. During the remainder of the day which witnessed our return to the transport we were, upon, the whole, happy enough; that is, we enjoyed the luxury of clean linen, a social dinner, and a cheerful glass of wine after it. But the day after rose somewhat heavily, and it became more and more heavy as it proceeded on its course. There was nothing whatever to be done. The weather chanced to be singularly ungenial; the rain fell in torrents and the cold—or rather the damp chill was excessively disagreeable. Of course, there was no such thing as walking the deck; and our wretched library had long ago become an object of loathing to most of us. For my own part, as soon as I had finished my letters for England, and

played a game or two at chess, I went fairly to bed and slept or rather dozed confusedly till dinner was announced.

In mercy to us, a fine breeze sprang up on the morning of the 17th, and the rain ceasing, the weather again smiled upon us in all the luxuriance of the western hemisphere. The deck was accordingly converted to its old uses; and a regular promenade from the taffrel to the mizen-mast, and from the mizen-mast to the taffrel, was established. A rumour, likewise, somehow or another got into circulation, that a large fleet, containing ten thousand fresh troops, with Sir Rowland, now Lord Hill, to command them, had been seen and spoken to off the entrance of the bay. It will be easily believed, that a piece of intelligence so desirable was received with every demonstration of extravagant joy. With such a force, and such a leader, we all felt, that there was nothing which we would not readily attempt, and hardly anything which we could not easily accomplish and if a whisper of a complaint was heard at all, it rose only from the idea, that had the reinforcements come in but a week earlier, we should have been now in quarters in Baltimore, and the gallant Ross alive. Nevertheless we were philosophers enough to rest satisfied, that an event in itself so fortunate would never occur out of due time; and we soon brought ourselves to believe, that a day or two at the farthest would see us again on shore, and that Baltimore would not, after all, escape its visitation.

We were in this ardent frame of mind when about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Admiral fired a sig-

sal-gun, and the fleet got under weigh. The breeze had by this time increased to a pretty strong gale; but as it blew in the direction to which our prows were turned, no man, either soldier or sailor, complained of its violence. We flew like eagles down the bay; but as we were approaching Kent Island the wind suddenly shifted, and we were compelled to cast anchor under its cliffs for the night. On the morrow, however, we were again steering our course; and it soon became apparent, from the direction in which we moved, that the Patuxent was again about to afford us a temporary roadsted. In the course of to day's passage we passed, as we had done before, within gun-shot of Annapolis, and of the villages, and hamlets in its vicinity. Almost the same spectacle which had previously arrested our attention rose to attract it now. Again the beacons were set on fire—again signal-guns were fired, horsemen mounted, and telegraphic communications were carried on at every station; whilst the provincial capital, with all the inhabited places near it, again sent forth crowds of men, women, and children, flying in manifest confusion into the interior. I must confess, that though the course of some three years' campaigning had by this time pretty effectually blunted my finer feelings, I could not but pity the ill-fated denizens of this devoted district, and then I regarded our present proceedings with no very triumphant eye, inasmuch as they reminded me more of the operations of the ancient Danes against Alfred and his subjects, than anything in the annals of modern and civilized warfare. Yet was there a great deal in this kind of

life calculated, in an extraordinary degree, to interest and amuse. We came at last never to look upon a town or a village, without having, at least, the wish, that we might be allowed to pay to it a hostile visit; and though I am sure that the peaceful inhabitants would have suffered no wrong at our hands, I am equally sure, that there was nothing in the shape of public property, or public works, which we did not regard as furnishing a legitimate source of plunder and outrage.

Our voyage continuing throughout the whole of the 18th, we arrived, at an early hour on the morning of the 19th, at our old anchorage in the Patuxent river. Here every ship in the fleet brought up; and here, as far as we could gather, it was more than probable that we should be condemned to remain, in a state of useless inactivity, for some time to come. A sort of rumour began about this time to get abroad among us, that the ultimate object of our transportation to America was not to be looked for here. A permanent conquest, it was whispered, would somewhere or another be attempted; but when, how, or in what direction, continued a mystery. There were persons, indeed, who spoke of a descent upon New York. There were others who insinuated, that one of the southern states lay more open to an attack, and if subdued, might more easily be retained. All, however, confessed themselves ignorant of the real undertaking meditated, though all seemed to agree, that in this quarter of the United States our campaign was at an end; that however long we might continue here, would be in idleness and confinement. With such rumours afloat, the reader will

not be surprised to hear that we soon began to find that enemy of all unemployed persons, ennui, gaining ground rapidly upon us; and that we looked forward to a move with the same impatience that a betrothed female experiences, when she is counting the hours which intervene between the first publication of the banns to the day of wedding.

I will not attempt to record, in regular order, the methods which were adopted to kill time, from the 19th of September, the day on which we cast anchor, up to the 13th of October, when we finally quitted the Chesapeake. It was, upon the whole, but a dull and uninteresting period of our existence. We moved, indeed, from the Patuxent to the Potomac, and from the Potomac back again to the Patuxent. We landed, too, sometimes in small parties, sometimes in large, and twice in whole brigades. But the journal, were it regularly transcribed, with due attention to dates and circumstances, would, I fear, prove as little interesting to the reader to peruse, as it would be irksome and disagreeable to the writer to detail it. It will be better to relate only such events as appear to myself most worthy of relation.

In the first place, then, I recollect that whilst the fleet lay at anchor in the Patuxent, a signal was hoisted at the mast-head of the Royal Oak, requiring a certain number of captains and other naval officers to come on board, for the purpose of holding a court-martial. Two seamen, captured in some of the late operations, had been recognized as deserters from one of his majesty's ships, and they were now about to be tried. The court met,

the prisoners were convicted, and they were sentenced to be hanged; and at noon, on the 20th of September, the sentence was carried into execution. As the circumstances attending the execution of a criminal on board of ship are rather solemn, I shall take the liberty of describing them somewhat at length.

Having heard that such an event was about to occur, two or three others and myself, obeying the dictates of a curiosity not, perhaps, of the most refined nature, took boat, and went on board the Royal Oak, about an hour previous to the fatal moment. Whether any ceremonies were gone through previous to the general muster of the ship's company, and if they were, of what nature they consisted, I cannot speak, because, till all hands were piped upon decks, I sate with the lieutenants in the ward room. About ten minutes before twelve o'clock, however, the drum beat to quarters, and all, both officers and men, hurried to their stations. This done, the boatswain's whistle sounded, and all hands crowded the fore-castle, quarter-deck, and poop, in a moment. There we stood, in profound silence, till eight bells were tolled; and exactly as the last stroke ceased to reverberate, the captain made his appearance.

All eyes were now turned in fearful expectation upon the fore-hatches; nor was expectation long kept upon the stretch. A sergeant of marines, followed by a file of men, mounted the ladder; then came two persons, dressed in blue jackets and trowsers, heavily ironed, and after them came another file of marines. They moved towards the quarter-deck, and having arrived

opposite the gang-way, stood still. In the meantime, it had not escaped our notice that a couple of nooses hung from the fore-yard, one on each side of the mast; and that the ends of the ropes lay at length upon the fore-castle, ready to be hurried aft by the ship's company. Of course, we were all perfectly sensible to what uses these rope-ends were about to be turned; and though there was not one amongst us who felt disposed to deny the justice of a deserter's fate, there were few indeed who experienced no pity for the unhappy wretches about to suffer. No great while, however, was granted for the indulgence of such thoughts. The captain unfolding a roll of paper which he held in his hand, read aloud the proceedings of the court martial, which sentenced the prisoners before him to suffer death; and having stated, that the sentence in question received the approbation of the admiral on the station, he silently motioned to the culprits that their hour was come. I cannot pretend to convey to my reader any notion of the expression which passed across the poor men's countenances, whilst these preliminaries went on. They were both deadly palé; the limbs of one, too, appeared to totter under him, but neither of them spoke a word, they seemed, indeed, especially one of them, to feel as men may be supposed to feel, if indeed they feel at all, on whose heads a heavy stunning blow has fallen, for they suffered themselves to be led back towards the fatal noose without uttering one exclamation, or offering the slightest resistance. Their lips moved, however, though whether in prayer or execration, I cannot tell;

and one raised his manacled hands with great apparent energy, to his breast. But the struggle was soon over. The chains were struck from their legs, which were bound about at the ankle and thigh with cords; their hands, loosened from the handcuffs, were pinioned behind them, and a white night-cap being drawn over each of their faces, they were placed upright, with their fronts towards the mast. Then was the noose silently cast on their necks, and a signal being given by the first lieutenant, about twenty stout fellows seized each of the ropes. One instant's, and only one instant's pause occurred, for the boatswain piping "hoist away," the executioners ran with all speed towards the poop; and the unfortunate culprits, hurried aloft with the rapidity of thought, died in an instant. I forced myself to gaze steadfastly upon the whole proceeding, and I can vouch, that not so much as a quiver, or motion of the limb, gave evidence of suffering; it seemed to me, to be the most humane execution which I had ever witnessed. And now all was over. The sailors returned to their berths, and we to our transport; whilst the bodies of the deserters were left to swing in the air till sunset.

I have said that whilst the fleet lay both in the Patuxent and Potomac, it was a common practice among the officers to land and amuse themselves during the whole of the day, upon the banks of the rivers. Sometimes these debarkations took place for the purpose of laying in fresh provisions; on which occasions they were usually conducted with prudence, and protected by armed parties. At other times mere individual ca-

price directed them; and then they were, for the most part, as rash as they were agreeable. I know not how it came about, but rarely indeed was a day permitted to pass by, without my spending some portion of it on shore; and to one of these casual excursions was I indebted for my first acquaintance with the writings of an author now well known in this country,—I mean Washington Irving.

I perfectly recollect that both the 21st and 22d of September were spent by a friend and myself on the right bank of the Patuxent. The air, though cooler than it had heretofore been, was mild, and even enervating; and the scenery partook just so much of a mixture of wilderness and cultivation, to be in the highest degree interesting and attractive. Not far from the brink of the stream there stood a large chateau, from which, as may be imagined, the family had long ago retired. It was surrounded by grounds laid out with very considerable taste; and the furniture, and general arrangement of the interior, gave evidence, that its owner, whoever he might be, was not wanting either in aristocratic feeling, or elegant propensities. Strange to say, the chateau in question had escaped plundering; its very library was entire—though the only individuals left in charge of it were an old gray-headed negro and his wife. In that library we found a work not long ago republished in this country—The Salmagundi; and though we could not enter into the local pleasantries interspersed through it, I remember that we read it with great gratification. To say the truth, our admiration of the talents of the author quite overcame our regard

to honesty ; for we not only read the volume on shore, but brought it off with us to our transport.

We were not, however, on every occasion, so intellectual in the objects of our search. Our fresh provisions being expended, it became a consideration of some moment with us, how we might procure a second supply, and for this purpose parties were more than once landed, and sent some way up the country. Several of these I accompanied ; but as the adventures which befell us on one occasion, resembled very nearly those which befell on others, it will suffice if I select a single excursion, and give a narrative of it, as a fair specimen of the rest.

On the 24th of September, a brother officer and myself took with us twelve men well armed, and landing at a particular point, pushed off for the house of a gentleman named Carrol, which stood at the distance of some two or three miles from the river. Mr. Carrol had already been visited by several parties from the fleet, to whom he had sold, at considerable profit to himself, sheep, geese, turkeys, and other live stock. The purport of our excursion to-day was to obtain from him a similar favour, and we found no difficulty in persuading him to accept about twice its value, for any article that we coveted. To do him justice, however, Mr Carrol was extremely hospitable ; he made us heartily welcome to all that his larder and cellar would afford ; and we became, as it was right that we should become, the best friends imaginable. But our visit was not doomed to pass by wholly without accident. We had sat with him about half an hour, during which time our

men had caught and brought in six sheep, two pigs, and a quantity of poultry, when a negro, rushing into the apartment, informed us, in a hurried tone, that two hundred horse had just arrived at a village about a mile distant, and that he entertained no doubt of their design to cut us off from the boats, and put us all to death. I know not whence it came about, but we had brought a bugler, bugle and all, on shore with us. Not doubting that our African friend was in the right, we instantly assembled our party; and placing the live stock in the centre of half a dozen men, we caused the other half dozen to extend in covering order, and gave the bugler directions, on the first appearance of an enemy, to sound. We had good reason to think, that the sound of a bugle would convey to the minds of these troopers the idea that a large force was on shore; nor were we deceived.

We had traversed about a mile, and were approaching the open country on the immediate margin of the stream, when a squadron of some twenty horse suddenly showed itself, close upon our rear. The bugler blew, as if it were intended to alarm a whole brigade, and our men flocking to the spot in ones and twos, doubtless impressed the Americans with a belief, that a large force was in front of them. They halted, wheeled round, and slowly rode away; nor did we see anything more of them that morning. I need not add, that we made no delay in gaining our boat; or that we half resolved not again to venture, so few in number, even as far from the fleet as Mr. Carrol's residence.

Besides these private landings, as they may be termed, in the course of which, by the way, four officers of

the 85th regiment narrowly escaped being made prisoners, two disembarkations of troops, under the command of Colonel Brooke in person, took place. The first of these occurred on the occasion just referred to. A party of the 85th having incautiously exposed themselves, and a report having reached the fleet that they were betrayed, the light corps landed for the purpose of chastising the traitor, and forcing a release of the prisoners. The first of these proceedings was not, they found, required; there had been no treachery, but much honour and good feeling displayed towards the English; the last, I believe, came to nothing. The officers having been concealed all day by an American farmer, effected their own escape: the privates, who had fallen into the hands of some cavalry were instantly removed up the country. The light troops accordingly returned to the ships, without having effected anything. Nor was the second debarkation one whit more profitable. A rumour having come to Colonel Brooke's ears, that ten or twelve hundred Americans, with a park of six pieces of cannon, were encamped about five miles up the country, he determined to attempt their surprisal. With this view, the 4th, 44th, and 21st regiments, as well as the battalion of marines and the corps of rocketers, were landed, on the 4th of October, upon the left bank of the Potomac. The landing took place during the night; and as the weather chanced to be stormy and moist, there was very little comfort whilst it went on. Nor, to speak the truth, did any man's enthusiasm rise sufficiently high to make him satisfied even under the petty grievance of a ducking. We could not but feel,

that the object in view was utterly worthless; and we were far from being sanguine, that, worthless as it was, it would be obtained. We were not mistaken. Having marched all night under a soaking rain, we arrived about ten o'clock in the morning, at the site of the enemy's bivouac, and found, as most of us expected to find, that it had been abandoned. The Americans were not quite so careless of themselves, as that two thousand men could step on shore unobserved. Intelligence of our design reached them long before we began our inroad; and they returned leisurely into the interior. Under these circumstances, there remained for us but one course to pursue; we retraced our steps, and returned on board of ship, wet, weary, and empty-handed.

CHAPTER XV.

VOYAGE FROM THE CHESAPEAKE TO JAMAICA.

BUT besides taking part with my comrades in these different pursuits, it was a common custom with me to spend whole days on shore, either seeking for game in the woods, or loitering about the beautiful banks of the river with my fishing-rod. No man who has not experienced the irksomeness of a four months' confinement on board of ship, can at all comprehend the degree of gratification which these solitary excursions afforded. On such occasions, the air always appeared to blow with peculiar sweetness, and the noises produced by things animate and inanimate about me were all most musical. Every branch overhead was alive with birds, which made the forest ring with their clear and varied notes; whilst the rustling of the breeze through the foliage, the murmur of the large stream, broken in upon and varied from time to time by the indistinct cries of the seamen, created altogether a harmony more exquisite than any other to which the human ear can listen.—Towards nightfall, in particular, these sounds came upon me with peculiar force. Nor were the bleating of sheep, or the lowing of cattle, which met me as often as I ventured to any distance from the boats, thrown away.

I am not sure that I ever spent days more perfectly to my own satisfaction than those which were passed in solitude upon the banks of the Potomac.

Things continued thus with us during several weeks, the boats rowing daily to the beach, and bringing off stores of fresh water from wells which had been dug there, and the horses and some part of the artillery being landed on an island in the river. But at last a signal was made for all parties to repair to their respective vessels; and on the evening of the 6th of October, the whole expedition was again embarked. On the morning of the 7th, the anchors were raised, and a fair wind happening to blow, we stood in magnificent array towards the Chesapeake. Having fairly entered it, a pause was made for the night; but on the morrow we were again under sail, with prows turned towards the eaves, and before dusk we had the satisfaction to observe the mouth of the James' river open on our starboard bow. Nor was this the only or the most agreeable event which befell us that day. A beautiful schooner, carrying a white flag at her main-topmast head, shot after us from the Patuxent; she overtook us just as we were preparing to bring up for the night, and great was the joy of every man on board when it appeared that she was the bearer of the majority of the men and officers who had been left behind wounded at Bladensburg. Among the individuals thus restored to the army were Colonels Thornton and Wood, (Major Brown's hurts were too serious to admit of his removal,) and not a few of the best non-commissioned officers and privates belonging to the light brigade. I need not add,

that a reunion of friends, under such circumstances, was productive of the highest exultation on all sides; whilst the reflection, that two officers of experience had returned to their stations, gave universal satisfaction, on higher grounds than those of mere personal attachment.

From the date last referred to, up to the evening of the 14th, the fleet either continued at anchor, or beat about the bay, as if the Admiral were in expectation of dispatches from home, or had not yet made up his own mind as to the course which it behoved him to follow. At last, however, though not before we soldiers had begun to give utterance to many and sore complaints, a signal to steer in a SSE. direction was displayed. All the transports, most of the line-of-battle ships, the bombs, brigs, and small craft, instantly obeyed; and as the wind blew fine and fresh, we bounded over the water like eagles through the skies. Capes Charles and Henry both hove in sight before dusk. We rushed through between them, and the rising moon found us once again at sea in the Atlantic ocean.

Of the circumstances which attended our passage from the Chesapeake to Jamaica, it is not necessary that I should give here any minute account. The usual varieties of rough and calm, fair and foul weather, presented themselves; and the customary formalities of shaving and administering oaths on crossing the line were gone through. Sharks were fished for, dolphins harpooned, and flying-fish secured on the quarter-deck, whither they had leaped; and water-spouts, thunderstorms, and other children of the tropics, came by turns to amuse and to alarm us. Yet was the period of our

lives which extended from the 14th of October up to the 28th of November but a dull and monotonous one. The scenery, indeed, after we had fairly entered what is called the windward channel, became interesting and beautiful in no ordinary degree. It was delightful to behold the bold shores of St Domingo on the one hand, and the no less magnificent cliffs of Cuba on the other; whilst the unvarying progress which we made under the influence of the trade-winds proved of itself a source of hearty congratulation. But in spite of these ameliorating accompaniments, a six weeks' voyage is, after all, nothing more than a six weeks' imprisonment, where, as Dr. Johnson has observed, in addition to the loss of liberty, you run the risk of being drowned. It was, therefore, with feelings of unspeakable satisfaction, that we at length beheld the blue mountains of Jamaica cast their shadows upon the distant horizon; and our satisfaction received tenfold greater force when the anchor was dropped in Port Royal bay. The reader will readily believe that we lost no time in putting foot upon dry land; indeed, the vessel had not swung round to the tide, when every officer, except such as were absolutely required for duty, abandoned her.

In spite of the excessive sultriness of the climate, I shall never cease to look back upon the period of my brief sojourn in Jamaica with sentiments of unqualified satisfaction. So many months had elapsed since an opportunity of mixing at all in civilized English society was afforded, that though I can hardly venture to compare the society of Kingston and its vicinity to the polished circles of Grosvenor Square or Portland Place,

even it, with all its drawbacks, (and they were neither few nor trifling,) brought a charm along with it, such as I cannot adequately describe. There was something in the very domestic arrangement of the planters' houses, which men, so little accustomed of late to the sight of such things, could not behold with indifference. True, the absence of well-bred and well-educated white women was severely felt. Not that there were none such in the island—nay, far from it, those with whom we did form an acquaintance were at least as polished as women of their own stations at home. But they were few in number; and where they existed not, their places were but indifferently supplied by the Mulatto and Mustee girls, who, in too many instances, presided at our entertainers' boards. Then the manners of the men, hearty and sincere, no doubt, were at the same time abundantly rough, uncultivated, boisterous, and dogmatical. To a stranger, too, the being waited upon by filthy blacks, male and female, proved disgusting in the extreme. In spite of all this, however, we enjoyed the change in the order of our existence amazingly.—The people were all, without any exception, frank and hospitable; they gave us dinners and balls, as well quality as not quality; they did their best, in short, to make our visit a pleasant one, and it would ill become me, whom they entertained thus liberally, to speak of them in terms of disrespect. If I have appeared to err in this particular, I assure them that I do not feel what I may have unwarily written.

I am not going to enter into any discussion of the Slave Question; neither shall I waste my reader's time

by laying before him a minute description of Kingston, or the country round it. On the subject of slavery, it will be sufficient to observe, that I landed as strongly imbued with prejudice as most men, and that a little close inspection of the behaviour of both Whites and Blacks, served to convince me, that the first were not the monsters which they were so frequently represented to be, nor the last the objects of that mawkish compassion which it is the pleasure of a certain class of worthies to stir up in their favour. The domestic slave in Jamaica, is, generally speaking, as well treated, and in every respect as happily situated, as a domestic servant in England; and, from what I saw of the tasks imposed upon the field-negroes, I should certainly not say, that the slave in the sugar or coffee plantation, is much more heavily oppressed with toil, than the English ditcher or reaper. No doubt there are many respects in which the slave stands upon less enviable ground than the European labourer, though I cannot rank among them the mere fact of his being a bondsman; because, to people so little advanced in the scale of civilization, there is really no pain in a degradation, which, after all, is but ideal. But I do consider their liability to be separated at the will of their owner, from their nearest relatives, as a very grievous hardship. It is a sad sight, too, to behold both men and women walked backwards and forwards, as in this country we walk a horse through a cattle-market: yet the individuals themselves seem not to regard the thing,—in all probability they do not feel it. Of the wanton cruelties so much talked of here, my own observation brought not before

me so much as a solitary example. They may sometimes occur; wherever a multitude of persons possess absolute power, some will always abuse it; but it is mere folly to speak of drivers and overseers as men who delight in the sound of the whip, and in the agonies of their fellow-creatures. There is yet another class of slaves, on whose condition a word or two may be hazarded. Many owners teach their negroes trades, and these negroes afterwards labour, not for the exclusive benefit of their owners, but for their own. Men even hire themselves of their masters; that is, undertake to pay the masters so much per week, on condition that they shall be allowed to apply their earnings to their own uses; and the balance, as often as it proves to be against the master, is punctually made good. All these facts I deem it proper to state, not in the spirit of one who wishes to involve himself in the controversy which has so long raged between the planters and abolitionists, but as the results of a pretty accurate investigation, set on foot with no design whatever to discover excellencies in a system which all Englishmen must constitutionally abhor.

With respect to the general appearance of the island, again, I saw too little of it to authorize my entering upon minute details. Stoney Hill Barracks at the foot of the mountain, on the one hand, and Spanish-Town, with the Governor's residence, on the other, bounded my tour in this quarter; and even when the ships proceeded to the place of assembly at Negril Bay, I never ventured ten miles from the beach, because our stay was expected to be at most a brief one; the exact mo-

ment of its termination no one could tell ; it would have been as rash as impolitic, under such circumstances, to wander very far away from the shipping. Yet I saw enough, both in the bold outline of its mountainous coasts, and in the fertility and richness of its mid-land plains, to satisfy me, that few places more deserve the notice of a traveller, whose search is after natural beauty alone.

It was on the 17th of November, just as day began to break, that the little squadron of vessels which had rendezvoused at Port-Royal, weighed anchor. The rest of the fleet having steered direct for Negril Bay, and it being understood that a large reinforcement had been ordered to join the expedition in that roadstead, it was necessary for us also to direct our course thither, as soon as our stores of water and provisions should be complete. All things were in readiness for the move on the evening of the 16th, and on the following morning we put to sea.

Our short voyage, for it was accomplished in less than forty-eight hours, proved an exceedingly agreeable one. Keeping constantly within sight of land, we slid with the tide round the promontory, and moved along sometimes slowly, at other times with considerable velocity, according as the light airs which wafted us, freshened or lulled. The scenery brought by this means into view, was as interesting as a constant succession of rock and mountain, wood and glen, could render it ; and the rate of our going enabled us for the most part to enjoy every change to the utmost. Towards evening, again, the smell became gratifying in a

degree not less palpable than the sense of sight. It is probably needless for me to mention, that in this quarter of the world, the wind invariably changes with the rising and setting of the sun; and that as it blows on shore, in every part of the island, during the day, so it blows off the land in all directions, during the night. By this means the most delicious odours, from oranges, myrtles, and all the sweet-scented shrubs of a tropical climate, load the evening breezes; and being to-night just within their influence, we sat upon the deck long after it became dark, to inhale their fragrance. Then the morn arose in cloudless majesty, making rocks, woods, and sloping downs again visible, and casting over them a radiance a thousand times more beautiful than that of-day, whilst the ripple of the sea, as the ship cut her way across its smooth surface, and the small waves broke upon some cliff more precipitous than those about it, filled up the measure of our delights with the most exquisite harmony. On the whole, I do not recollect to have passed a similar space of time, especially on board of ship, with greater gratification, nor to have witnessed the termination of any water-journey with greater regret.

We reached the entrance of the bay just after sunset on the 18th; but as the breeze died wholly away before we could enter, we were necessitated to cast anchor till it should spring up again. It did spring up early in the morning of the 19th, when, having stood out to secure a good offing, we put our helms up, and bore majestically down upon our anchorage; and seldom have I looked upon a spectacle more animating

than that which was then brought before us. About seventy or eighty sail of vessels, some of them ships of the line, and many more entitled to display the pendant, lay within compass of a small natural harbour, so closely wedged together, that to walk across the decks, from one to the other, seemed, when at a little distance, to be far from impracticable. Behind this gallant navy rose a shore, not mountainous certainly, but so far the reverse of flat, that hill upon hill lifted its modest green head, feathered with plantain, cocoa-nut trees, and the other graceful plants peculiar to those climates. Immediately upon the strand, and under the shelter of a few plantain trees, stood about half-a-dozen cottages; the habitations of some families of free negroes, who gained a livelihood by fishing, and selling refreshments to such ships as touched at the place. They were but simple edifices, formed merely of the boughs of trees, and thatched with the stubble of Indian corn. But they were not the only domiciles in sight. A sort of encampment had been formed along the sea-side, for the accommodation of a party of artillery drivers, sent on shore to look after the horses, which it had been deemed advisable to land; and not a few of the officers, as well of the navy as of the army, preferred taking their residence there, to a continuance on board of ship. The display of life and activity thereby occasioned, added not a little to the general effect of the scene, which afforded every moment fresh power of attraction, as we drew nearer and nearer to the beach.

As soon as we had cast anchor, boats from almost every vessel in the fleet boarded us. There were little

pieces of intelligence communicated, not indeed so important in their nature as to deserve a repetition, but sufficiently interesting at the moment, both to the persons who told, and those who listened to them; while a thousand anxious inquiries were instituted as to what was going on at Kingston, and when the long-looked-for reinforcements might be expected. All this was natural enough; nor was it less natural, that an early hour on the morrow should see us in numerous groups upon the land; either threading our way through the graceful forests, for the purpose of forming some acquaintance with the interior, or lounging about in idleness by the sea-shore. But these employments were not sufficiently attractive to hinder us from feeling or expressing our utter distaste of a life of idleness, or prating, till the subject grew stale, about the folly of wasting our precious time in a friendly settlement.

Though I profess not to be writing a regular history of these campaigns, it will not, perhaps, be deemed out of place, if I state here, that long before the expedition arrived at Jamaica, an error, the fatal effects of which were felt in all our future operations, had been committed. Though the point of attack was kept a profound secret from the troops, there was hardly a coffee-house in Kingston in which the views of the English government were not openly discussed,—not as a subject of conjecture, but as a truth, of which no doubt could be entertained. How this matter first got abroad, various rumours have been in circulation; but I believe the truth to be as follows. The conquest of New Orleans was from the first the grand object, for the attainment

of which our expedition was fitted out. The capture of Burlington, and the landing at Baltimore, with the whole series of operations in the Chesapeake, were undertaken simply as blinds, to divert the attention of the American government from the district really threatened; and so anxious were ministers to effect this, and that though a general rendezvous, at Jamaica, of the invading army, had been long planned out, not a hint of the matter was dropped to the naval officer commanding there, till the forces, both from England and the Potomac, were ready to set sail. It unhappily occurred, however, that in the interval, the Admiral on the Jamaica station died, and the dispatches designed for him were necessarily put into the hands of the senior captain. That gentleman, with a singular absence of all common prudence, opened these dispatches in the presence of a Jew merchant; and, like a perfect simpleton, informed him of their contents. An opportunity so favourable of earning a rich reward, the son of Israel could not permit to pass. He fitted out a fast sailing schooner without delay, and dispatched them to the enemy. Nor was he satisfied with this. The projected inroad became, through his instrumentality, a matter of universal discussion; and the American governor of Florida learned, from a thousand different quarters, that he was in danger. The information was not wasted upon him. He set himself instantly to work, raising men, planning out fortifications, laying in stores, and making other preparations to receive us; and so diligent was he in the prosecution of his task, that the means of defence got together, were such as we found

ourselves quite unable to overcome. The name of the naval officer to whose womanish garrulity so much mischief is attributable, I do not choose to record; but the fact itself is too generally known to make me at all scrupulous about repeating it. But I will not break through my established rule, by entering, even slightly, into the politics of the war; let me rather go on at once with my own personal narrative.

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CHAPTER XVI.

VOYAGE TO NEW ORLEANS.

BREAKFAST being ended, we were walking the deck on the morning of the 24th, to indulge, as usual, the spirit of grumbling which had of late sprung up among us, when a cry of "a fleet in the offing," suddenly turned all our attention to other subjects. For a while little could be seen, except an indistinct line in the horizon, in which none of us were sufficiently imaginative to discover the smallest resemblance to a fleet. But the line began, by degrees, to change its appearance; it became broken into detached spots; by and by these spots began to assume distinct shapes; and at last the masts and sails of vessels could be distinguished. We rent the air with shouts as soon as the truth burst fully upon us; and our joy exceeded all bounds, when, towards noon, a magnificent squadron of ships, of all classes and dimensions, steered into the bay. They contained the long-looked for reinforcements, amounting in all to upwards of two thousand men; and, above all, there accompanied them a new general to command us. Now, then, were hope and good humour, once more renewed in all ranks; and now we

looked forward with confidence to a speedy restoration of that active career, the abandonment of which had so long and so severely galled us.

One day only, besides the evening of that on which General Keane arrived, having been devoted to the adjustment of a few necessary preliminaries, the signal for sailing was hung out ; and at an early hour on the morning of the 26th, the whole fleet put to sea. For some hours, our progress was but tardy. There was a dead calm from sun-rise till noon ; and from noon till two or three o'clock, the light breeze that blew was against us ; but towards evening, the land-winds began to exert their influence, and long before dark, all trace of Jamaica disappeared. Away, then, we bounded, with a blue and cloudless sky overhead, and one wide waste of ocean around us ; and meeting with no accident, nor any squalls or adverse gales to detain us, we soon began to feel, that our distance from the tropic was increasing. The climate became by degrees more and more temperate ; we were enabled to keep the deck, unscreened by an awning, at mid-day ; and at last the shelter of a cloak, when exposed to the night-air, became highly agreeable. Our spirits rose with these changes in our circumstances. We resumed our former occupations of promenading, eating, drinking, and reading, with fresh spirit, and we introduced a moral source of amusement before long into our little circle. My friend Charlton happened to be an amateur in music ; he had provided himself with a violin before the regiment quitted France ; and now, for the first time, was it brought into general use. Every

evening, after coffee, the cabin-floor was cleared, and about ten of us danced to his music waltzes and country dances till midnight.

Nor were the men less sensible than their superiors of the change for the better, as well in the temperature of the atmosphere, as in their own frame of mind. There were among them many who played the fife well ; these, taking a cue from their officers, produced their instruments, and the forepart of the ship soon resounded to the voice of piping and making merry. All on board, in short, from the officer commanding down to the cabin-boy, appeared to acquire additional vivacity as we proceeded farther and farther from the tropic ; insomuch, that I will take it upon me to affirm, that a ship has rarely navigated the Gulf of Mexico, among the crew of which so much good humour and genuine conviviality prevailed.

Such was the order of our existence, from the 3d of December, when the romantic shores of Cuba were lost sight of, up to the 9th, when the low coast of the Floridas first came into view. The wind had, generally speaking, been in our favour ; if a squall did occasionally occur, it never lasted above an hour or two, nor did the fleet the smallest damage. On the 8th, indeed, our master experienced no little uneasiness ; for, at a moment when we were proceeding under a press of sail, the horizon became suddenly overspread with clouds, and a violent hurricane seemed at hand. But our ship's company was a good one ; and the soldiers, brave by habit, had all acquired some knowledge of naval tactics ; we were accordingly enabled to take in our canvass in

good time, and so averted the danger. The storm, however, left one disagreeable consequence behind it; —the wind changed; and hence, instead of seeing land before dark that day, the evening of the next was approaching before we were enabled to discover it. I perfectly recollect that the 9th of December was an exceedingly cold day. A sharp north-easterly wind drove into our faces a keen sleet; and it was not without having recourse to cloaks and blankets, that we were enabled to keep the deck.

I shall not readily forget the effect produced by the first appearance of the land towards which our course was directed. The coast of America is, I believe, for the most part low, at least I never chanced to approach it in any quarter, where it presented a different character; and all along the compass of the Mexican Gulf, it is peculiarly so. When, therefore, the cry was uttered from the mast-head of "land on the weather-bow," it was in vain that we who stood upon the quarter-deck strained our sight in order to discover it. We saw nothing, and more than an hour elapsed ere any object rose upon the view, calculated to satisfy us that the look-out seaman had not reported falsely. At length, however, some dark specks, resembling the masts of ships lying at anchor, stood between us and the horizon. As the vessel held her course, these appeared gradually to assume the appearance of thick, or bushy substances; and by and by it became manifest enough, that we were gazing upon the upper branches of a grove of fir-trees. As to the leaves and roots, however, they were entirely hidden from us. The entire

picture was as if a grove of cedars had been lopped off about twelve feet from the ground, as if the higher branches had been suspended by some unseen rafter in the air, whilst the stumps being cleared away, the sea obtained free course where they had stood. So great was the refractive power of the atmosphere in these parts; and so very low the beach upon which this cedar wood was growing.

It happened, that during the whole of the 10th and 11th, the winds proved baffling in an extraordinary degree. The consequence was, that we were not only compelled to cast anchor each evening after sunset, but throughout all the hours of daylight we could only beat off and on, without gaining one inch of way, or approaching one jot nearer to the point of debarkation. On the 11th, however, a clear, sharp, and bracing frost set in; and the breeze getting slightly round, we managed to hold our course so well that at noon the inhospitable beach of Chandeleur Island became conspicuous from the poop. Never have I gazed upon a spot of earth more woefully barren and uninviting. A low red sand, just rising above the level of the tide, seemed to give nourishment to nothing more than a few miserable cypress trees. There was not a house, hovel, or any other symptom of a human habitation to be noted; no batteries, no beacons, no watch-towers, nor any other thing, capable of proving to the spectator, that the foot of man had ever trodden there. I need scarcely add, that the island in question lies at the entrance of Lake Borgue, and that it forms the most

advanced district of West Florida, of which New Orleans is the capital.

Having come close in with this bleak coast, we hove to, but refrained from casting anchor during the night, and on the morrow made sail, with the earliest appearance of dawn. The air was still, clear and frosty, and the fleet, steering in one compact body, under the rays of a brilliant sun, produced one of the most striking marine panoramas which it has been my good fortune to behold. But its progress in this order was not of long continuance. The lake which we had entered soon becoming shallow, the ships of war, at least the line of battle ships, to hinder themselves from running a shore, were obliged to anchor; and then began a scene as stirring and uncomfortable as the imagination can very well conceive. The troops who had taken their passage in them were all embarked in boats and transported to the lighter vessels, which became, in consequence, crowded to excess. We escaped not the fate of our companions; instead of ten officers, the evening of the 12th saw full twenty huddled into one small cabin; yet we none of us abated one jot of our former good humour; and Charlton's fiddle being, as usual, brought into play, we danced till a late hour in the morning. This was the last ball which we were enabled to get up, previous to the disembarkation; it was the last in the strictest sense of the term, to more than one of those who took part in its merriment.

On the 14th we still held our course, without any other event occurring, except that in the evening a squadron of boats which had been employed in the at-

tack of the enemy's flotilla, passed us. How they fought and conquered on that occasion it is unnecessary for me to relate: but this I must state, that they were greeted as they rowed along, with loud and hearty cheers which their brave crews failed not to return. They had suffered severely; but they had completely opened to us the navigation of the lakes, besides adding considerably to our means of transport by the reduction of six light cutters, which General Jackson had stationed here, to oppose our landing. The same remarks may serve as a narrative of our proceedings on the 15th. We sailed on, till at last even we took the ground; and it became manifest that all further progress, otherwise than in boats, was impossible.

It is hardly necessary for me to state, that from the moment land became visible, I and my companions began to make such preparations as seemed necessary for our disembarkation. The usual supply of linen; that is to say, a spare shirt and pair of stockings, were carefully laid aside by each of us for service; three days' provisions were in like manner cooked, and packed up; whilst as much of rum as we could either spare from our daily allowance, or prevail upon the Master to issue out, was put into a large horn. Similar precautions had been taken by the men; so that from the evening of the 10th we were ready, at a moment's notice, to step upon shore. Not the slightest hurry or confusion, therefore, ensued, when at an early hour in the morning of 16th, it was announced, that a flotilla of boats were approaching the vessel, and that the troops would be required to load them without de-

lay. In an instant every man buckled up his knapsack and haversack, putting on his accoutrements, and grasped his musket; and when the leading barge drew up alongside the gangway, the first division stood in order to step on board. In something less than half an hour, about two hundred men, with a competent supply of officers, quitted the deck of No. 375; and in a few minutes after, the squadron began its voyage.

We were so far fortunate, that the day chanced to be a remarkably fine one. There was little wind, it is true, and the little that blew, blew against us, compelling us to make way entirely by rowing; but there was no stream to bear up against, so that we proceeded at a tolerably rapid rate. As we went in, we had the satisfaction to discover, that other ships, besides ours, were pouring forth their inmates. Nearly one hundred boats of different sizes covered the surface of the lake; and as they were all crowded with soldiers, not less than two thousand infantry moved together towards the landing place. It was a magnificent spectacle. What an enemy snugly stationed behind stone walls, and having a few pieces of heavy ordnance at their command, would have thought of it, I know not; but it appeared to me, that no opposition could possibly hinder such a force from gaining the shore; and that having gained it, no army, at least of Americans, would have the hardihood to dispute with it its ground of encampment.

From the naval officer who commanded our boat, we learned, that there was no intention of pushing for the main land to-day. About thirty miles from the shipping, and not less than twice that distance from the

main, was a small desolate spot of earth, called Pine Island, upon which the General had determined to collect and arrange his army, previous to their entrance upon actual service. Of this place, the naval officer who, it appeared, had already visited it, gave us the most discouraging account. It was indeed a miserable swamp; not only devoid of all human habitations, but bare even of trees and shrubs. A large pond or lake, shallow and reedy, occupied its centre; and its edges consisted of nothing more than a circle of sand, slightly diversified, here and there, with a thin coat of herbage. There certainly was nothing in such an account calculated to excite any overweening expectations of comfort; yet, to confess the truth, when the island itself appeared, we were more than half disposed to accuse our pilot of dealing in misrepresentations; so far did the reality exceed the description of this most melancholy bank of sand.

The sun had set ere we reached the landing place, but there was still light enough left to convince us, that we had indeed arrived where all hope of comfort, even in the limited sense in which soldiers are so often called upon to employ that phrase, had better be laid aside at once. Two stunted firs, with about half-a-dozen sycamores, formed the only growth in the whole island; and they grew out of a soil, which manifestly contained not moisture enough to nourish any other vegetable substance besides themselves. There was not a bank or hill to shelter us from the blast, nor a dell or green spot upon which to lie down; and as to fuel, unless we could get the sea-beaten plants to take fire, we must

make up our minds to subsist as we best could without it. I have no wish to laud myself when I say, that few men are, or rather were, in those days, less mindful of luxuries, or more capable of enduring hardships, but I must confess, that I could not contemplate the prospect now before us, without experiencing a degree of alarm, such as I am not conscious of having felt on any similar occasion. I not only dreaded the sojourn, as it threatened to affect myself, but I trembled for the health of the troops, if it should be found necessary to keep them many days exposed on this horrible desert.

Happily for us, the night of the 16th, though cold and frosty, proved fair. For myself, having seen my men arranged in as snug a situation as could be procured for them, and superintended the fall of one or two of the trees, I returned to the sea-side—the boats, it appeared, had received orders to rest their crews during the night, and were not to set out for fresh troops till dawn; I gladly availed myself of the circumstance, by taking up my abode in one of them. We spread a sail over from gunwale to gunwale, and lying down under the seats, contrived to sleep as soundly, as a very cramped position, and no slight suffering from frost, would allow.

It was still dark, when a general stir among the sailors warned me to quit my uneasy couch. I rose stiff and uncomfortable; and having broken my fast with a little hard biscuit, and a glass of rum, I proceeded to the ground where the men were bivouacked. I found them all up and employed; not from any apprehension of an attack, or because they had fallen instinc-

tively into their old customs, but because they felt the necessity of motion to keep their blood in circulation, and were heartily tired of their uncomfortable lairs. Their fires, poor at the best, were all burned out; and as there is no period of the day so severe as that which immediately precedes the dawn, they felt the absence of fires now very severely. Some accordingly set to work, for the purpose of renewing them, whilst others ran about to recover their limbs from a state of absolute torpitude. But as day dawned upon them, better humour, and better hopes, began to prevail; and when the sun once more shone out in splendour, not a murmur could be heard, from one end of the encampment to the other.

There was no difficulty in discovering that Pine Island, though uninhabited by rational creatures, was not entirely devoid of animal life. Wild fowl, of various descriptions, abounded here. Flocks of geese, duck, widgeon, and a species of wood-pigeon, careered over our heads continually, and seemed to challenge us to a pursuit. We had brought no fowling-pieces on shore; we came with no idea that they would be wanted, or that an opportunity of using them would be furnished. But my friend and myself made a couple of muskets supply their place to-day, and set out at an early hour in quest of game. To say the truth, we were but clumsily equipped as sportsmen. Our powder, taken from his Majesty's stores, might have passed, in the eyes of a Norfolk game-keeper, for small shot; whilst in lieu of small shot, we carried, each of us a paper of slugs; yet, even with these rude instruments, we

contrived before dark to bring down no trifling quantity of birds, for which, indeed, the stupidity of the birds themselves was much more to be thanked, than our skill. Of the wood-pigeon, we found immense covies; which sitting down upon a few fir trees that grew at the other side of the island, permitted us to approach under the very branches, and even when we fired, would scarcely shift their quarters for a moment.—Those which were not killed, barely rose at the report, wheeled a few times round their roosts, and actually came back again to the same spot. Had our shot been somewhat smaller, we might have killed game enough to furnish the whole regiment with a meal; as it was, we brought back about three dozen of birds to the camp.

But the satisfaction arising from the consciousness that we had thus amply provided against the cravings of hunger, was not sufficient to console us under the misery of a night of incessant and tremendous rain. It appeared to me, whilst I was lying upon the sand, exposed to this pelting shower, that, till that moment, I had never known what rain, real genuine rain, was. My cloak afforded no protection against it; in less than half an hour from the period of its commencement, I was as if I had been dragged at the stern of one of the boats, all across the lake. And then it was that the absence of all tolerable fires was most severely felt. What were a few half-kindled sticks, sputting and smouldering upon a bare beach, under such circumstances. We crept around them, it is true, and held our hands by turns over the feeble embers, till the points

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of our fingers became half baked ; but the influence of the baking extended not beyond the fingers,—our bodies were chilled in perfection. In a word, I do not recollect, in the whole course of my military career, to have suffered so much from cold or damp in any night, as I suffered in this night of the 18th of December. How the bulk of the unfortunate black troops, of whom two battalions had joined us at Negril Bay, stood it out, I know not. But this I do know, that the first rumour which reached us on the morning of the 19th was, that numbers of them had fallen asleep beside their fires, and expired.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE progress of our shooting excursion having brought us into contact with a greater number of trees than were supposed to adorn this desolate spot of earth, an early hour on the morning of the 19th saw several working parties sally forth, bill-hook in hand, to fell them. The expedition was not undertaken in vain. In less than a couple of hours the whole of the south side of the island was rendered as bare and bleak as the side upon which we had landed, whilst the bivouac presented the appearance of a timber-merchant's yard, so numerous were the trees, bushes, and shrubs which were dragged into it. It is probably needless to add, that of the fuel thus procured, the greatest possible care was taken. Like the food and liquor, it was put under the charge of constituted authorities; and logs and branches were regularly served out to every mess, proportionate in quantity to the numbers of the men who composed it.

I know not whether the Commissary-General considered himself indebted to our spirit of adventure for this very valuable accession to the resources of the army, but he either gave, or appeared to give, to my friend and myself, a larger portion of fire-wood, than,

strictly speaking, ought to have come to our share. Among the pieces issued out, there were, I recollect, some six or eight long pine stakes, not unlike the poles with which the Kentish farmers support their hops, and the Spanish vine-dressers their grapes. In the true spirit of veterans, we determined not to throw these away by burning them. On the contrary, we set our servants to work, drove the stakes into the ground, in bee-hive fashion, with the upper extremity inclining towards one another: and filling up the interstices with reeds brought from the swamp, we contrived to erect a hut, capable of affording shelter not only from the cold winds which occasionally blew, but from the rain. Of this we prepared to take possession towards sunset; but Dr. Baxter, the chief medical officer, happening to be an acquaintance of ours, very kindly offered us a corner in his hospital tent, and the offer was a great deal too valuable to be rejected. We resigned our own habitation to certain of our less fortunate comrades, and gladly followed our host.

Let me give here some description of the domicile into which we were introduced. It was a large marquee, constructed of spars, oars, and sails of boats. The interior might measure about thirty or forty feet in length; in breadth perhaps half that extent; and in height something less than twelve feet. Being composed of double folds of canvass, it was extremely warm, and perfectly proof against the weather. Its furniture consisted of casks, pack-saddles, sacks filled with stores of different kinds, canteens, linen-chests, and cases of surgical instruments. There was no table, nor any

boards which might be substituted for a table; but a quantity of dry reeds overspread the ground, and afforded a very comfortable sofa for its inhabitants. As yet there were neither sick nor wounded to occupy it. On the contrary, as night closed in, numbers of hale and healthy persons, all of them claiming acquaintance with the Doctor, presenting themselves at the door, and our hospitable friend made no scruple about receiving them all. Lamps being lighted, a cask of excellent brandy was broached, and with the aid of pipes and cigars, and an ample flow of good humour, we passed several hours after a fashion which reminded us precisely of the many agreeable evenings which we had spent in winter-quarters upon the Douro and the Nivelle.

Such was our condition from the evening of the 16th to the morning of the 21st of Decembér. On the 20th, indeed, the whole army was reviewed, and a new disposition of the troops so far effected, that, instead of three, it was divided into two brigades, and what was termed the permanent advance. On the 21st, there came into the camp four or five American officers, who had deserted from General Jackson's army, and proposed to follow our fortunes, whilst a few warriors, I believe from the tribes of the Cherokees and Chactaws, likewise appeared amongst us. With the former personages I found an opportunity of holding some conversation. When asked as to their motives for deserting, they made no hesitation in declaring that they had come over to the side which they believed to be the strongest, perfectly satisfied that there was no force in

Louisiana capable of offering to us any serious resistance. They spoke of Gen. Jackson as an able man; but as one so hated on account of his tyranny and violence, that not an inhabitant of the State would adhere to his standard, after they beheld the British flag fairly unfurled. They gave us, in short, every reason to believe that our difficulties would all cease as soon as we reached the mainland. With such a prospect before us, the reader will not be surprised to learn, that one feeling, and one only, pervaded the whole armament. We longed for the moment which should see us fairly in the field, and our longings were soon gratified.

Whilst the troops were thus amusing themselves in Pine Island, boats from every ship in the fleet, transports as well as vessels of war, were assembling in large numbers along the beach. To protect the rear against annoyance, each launch, as well as some of the barges, was armed with a twelve-pound carro-nade in the bows; whilst the six cutters lately captured from the enemy, with all the tenders and small-craft brought from the Chesapeake, prepared to accompany them. In spite of the most strenuous exertions, however, it was found that the means of transport were extremely deficient. After every thing, even to the captain's gigs, had been put in requisition, it appeared that hardly one-third of the army could move at a time; but even thus our leaders determined upon entering immediately upon the business. They were well aware, that no delay could possibly bring benefit to us, whilst every hour of respite would have enabled the enemy to mature his plans for our reception.

At nine o'clock in the morning of the 22d, the advance of the army, under the command of Colonel Thornton, stepped into the boats. It consisted in all of about fifteen hundred infantry, two pieces of light cannon, and a troop of rockets; and it was accompanied by General Keane in person, the heads of the engineer and commissariat departments, a competent number of medical officers, and the Indian chiefs. Two of the deserters were likewise put on board, to act as guides as soon as we should land; and a moderate supply of ammunition, under the care of a store-keeper, was appointed to follow. The morning was dark and cloudy, and a cold damp wind gave promise of a heavy rain before many hours should pass. Nevertheless, we pushed off in the highest possible spirits, and only repressed our cheering because silence had been strictly enjoined.

The boat in which Charlton and myself were embarked was a man-of-war's barge, rowed by six oars of a side, and commanded by a midshipman. Besides the seamen, there were crowded into it not fewer than sixty men and four officers, so that the full complement amounted to seventy-eight souls. Under these circumstances the space granted to each individual was not, as may be imagined, very commodious. It was, indeed, by no means an easy task to shift our postures after they had once been assumed, for we were as completely wedged together as were ever a child's bricks in their box, or a bundle of logs in what is called a cord of wood. As long, however as it continued dry overhead, the inconvenience thence arising was, comparatively

speaking, little felt; but we had not proceeded more than a mile from the place of embarkation, when the black clouds suddenly opened, and the rain fell as if a thousand shower-baths had been all at once opened upon us. Then, indeed, our situation became comfortless enough. In the difficulty of adjusting ourselves at all, cloaks and greatcoats necessarily lost their clasps, and the neck and shoulders were left bare. There was no remedying the evil now; and though water ran down our backs and shoulders like the sewers in Ludgate Hill after a thunder-storm, yet was there much in the appearance of all about us calculated to carry our thoughts beyond the present moment,—at all events, to make us think lightly of present grievances. Not fewer than an hundred boats, of all shapes and sizes, were making way in regular column over the surface of the lake; they were all filled, to repletion, with armed men, and not a sound issued from them, except that which the rowing occasioned, and an occasional word of command uttered by those in authority. Every thing was conducted in the most orderly manner. The boats moved in lines of ten a-breast; a little way a-head of them sailed a couple of cutters; the like number protected each of the flanks; and the rear was covered by three traders. There were appointed officers to each division, who, placed in light gigs, flew backwards and forwards as occasion required,—hurrying on those that lagged behind, and checking the progress of such as were too nimble; whilst Sir Alexander Cochrane, in a light schooner, kept just so far apart as to see at a glance how things were going, and to superintend

the whole. I confess, that though I could have wished for fine weather, I could not help looking round with a feeling of the highest admiration. Troops advancing upon land present an imposing appearance no doubt ; but no land movement, in which I have been an indifferent spectator, ever struck me as I was struck by the spectacle now in view.

We were well aware that the distance from Pine Island to the Bays de Cataline,—the point towards which our course was directed,—fell not short of eighty miles, and hence that there was but slender probability of our setting foot on shore before the morrow. But the prospect of passing the night cramped and cooped up as we were, was certainly not hailed by any one with either satisfaction or indifference. The rain had fallen in such quantities, as not only to saturate the clothing of every individual, but seriously to incommode us, by creating a pool ankle-deep in the bottom of the boat, while, on account of our crowded state, we could not succeed in baling it. It ceased, however, at last, and was succeeded by a keen frost, and a northerly wind as sharp and cutting as any mortal would desire to face. I need not say, that the effects of the change were perfectly felt by us. We bore it, however, with the best philosophy which we could muster ; and if a complaint or murmur happened from time to time to break forth, it was instantly rendered harmless by some rude joke, or an ironical expression of pity.

Such was the state of the weather, in our not very enviable condition, when a gig, passing along from front to rear of the column, gave order that the rowing

should cease, and that awnings should be hoisted. Both commands were instantly obeyed; and as it seemed probable that we were to remain stationary for the night, we easily persuaded our pilot to light a fire. I cannot describe the nature of our feelings, as the pan of charcoal gradually threw out its heat on all sides. As we were thoroughly soaked, and our garments stiff with ice, I hardly know whether the sudden application of external heat to our benumbed limbs was productive of pleasure or the reverse. But of whatever nature our sensations might be, they were not permitted long to exert their influence. The fire was condemned to be extinguished; and in little more than an hour after we had first dropped them, the grapplings were raised, and the squadron was again under weigh.

As day dawned, a singularly wild and uninviting waste of country opened out before us. We were now within a stone's throw of the American shore, and ran along its edge in search of the mouth of the creek. It was a complete bog. A bank of black earth, or rather black mud, covered with tall reeds, constituted the single feature in the landscape. Not a trace of human industry, not a tree or bush of any kind or description, not even a mound or hillock, served to break in upon the sameness of scene. One wide waste of reeds alone met the eye, except at the very edge of the water, where the slime which nourished them lay slightly exposed. For some time this cheerless landscape extended wholly upon one side of us; the lake which we were crossing, being as yet too wide to permit a view of both shores at once; but the waters became gradually

more and more narrow, and long before the freshness of the morning had passed away, land was visible in every direction. It was now manifest that our point of debarkation could not be very remote; and all eyes were in consequence turned in search of the point near which we considered it to be.

At length the mouth of a creek or inlet, wide at first, but rapidly narrowing, presented itself. Towards it the Admiral immediately directed his course; but the schooner in which he was embarked drew too much water, and in a few minutes went aground. We could not make any effort to relieve him from his awkward situation, for this was not a moment at which serious delay could be tolerated, and our boats were all too heavily laden already, to admit of their taking additional passengers on board. Onwards, therefore, we swept, the banks on either hand closing in upon us more and more as we proceeded, till first we were necessitated to contract our front, so as that five boats, then three, and finally that only one boat should move a-breast. We were now steering up a narrow cut, which measured, at its widest spot, not more than twenty feet across, and which, in some parts, became so exceedingly narrow, that the rowers ceased to dip the oars in the water, and propelled us by punting alone. Yet it was an admirable spot for the conduct of a secret expedition. As far as we could judge from the appearance of the soil, the bogs on either hand seemed quite impassable even for infantry. It was covered, as I have already stated, by reeds, so lofty as to obscure, in the most effectual degree, any object which could float in the canal. No

eye could therefore watch our proceedings ; and though we, too, were shut out from beholding all other objects besides our own line of boats and the blue sky, there was not a man amongst us who entertained the slightest apprehension that danger could be near.

Having continued our progress thus, till the leading boats took the ground, preparations were made to land the troops as speedily as possible. With this view, a party of sailors were directed to leap on shore ; who soon returned with intelligence that the soil was sufficiently firm, and that the debarkation might take place without any risk. The boats which were a-head lay so near to the bank, that the people who manned them, were enabled to step at once from the gun-wales to the bog ; those which came after them were not so conveniently situated. The men were, in consequence, directed to pass on from boat to boat, and so to reach the shore from one point only. This arrangement necessarily occasioned both delay and confusion ; but, happily for us, there was no enemy near to avail himself of either ; and the whole advance had itself safely in bivouac by ten o'clock on the morning of the 23d.

Though suffering still in no slight degree from the rain of yesterday and cold of last night, the lighting of fires was strictly prohibited. Concealment, it was understood, was as yet the great object in view ; and with the attainment of it, the existence of fires every one felt to be incompatible. Yet was the attempt to conceal our landing almost immediately abandoned. The Admiral and General, having put themselves on board a gig, came up some time after the men had formed ; and

a sort of council of war was immediately held, as to the most eligible course which it behoved them to follow. As yet all had gone on well. We were actually established on land, an event which they had hardly expected to accomplish so easily and uninterruptedly. What was next to be done? We were not long left in doubt on this head. The troops, who had begun to scatter themselves a little through the morass, were recalled to their ranks, and a line of march was formed. The deserters, placed in front, served as guides.—they were under charge of the advanced guard, and directed its movements,—and the little column set forward, quite indifferent as to the nature of the service in which it was about to be employed, and perfectly satisfied that success must attend its operations.

I know not by the use of what terms I shall be best able to convey to the reader's mind, some notion of the nature and appearance of the country through which our first movement was made. The bog, though soft, gave not way, as we had expected it would, beneath our tread, as long as we kept close to the margin of the creek, though any extended departure from that line of road brought us into a perfect quagmire. Yet were we compelled to move slowly, in part, because the weeds formed an obstacle to our progress, which it required a regular body of pioneers to remove, and in part, because there ran up from the canal, here and there, wide and deep ditches, across which rude bridges required to be thrown, before we were enabled to pass them. Of the scenery, again, all that can be said, is, that for the space of perhaps three or four miles, it never

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varied; reeds, and reeds only, were around us, broken in upon feebly by the waters of the canal. At length, however, the face of the country underwent a change. We were marching, be it observed, on the right bank of the creek; on the left a few miserably stunted cypress trees began to show themselves. As we proceeded onwards, these became more and more numerous; and at last formed a tolerably close wood. On our side, however, nothing of the kind occurred, till all at once the leading companies found themselves in front of some open fields, skirted by an orange plantation, and ornamented by two or three farm houses. These were the first symptoms of cultivation which had met us in this quarter of America; and it will be easily credited, that in our eyes they possessed a thousand beauties, which men more accustomed to them would not in all probability perceive. But they were soon passed by; and then the entire neck of fine land on which New Orleans is built, became visible. Before us ran the mighty Mississippi, not like an ordinary river, but like an inland sea, skirting on one side the narrow isthmus, which the marsh and lakes skirt on the other. Between these two boundaries the whole space could not measure above 800 or 1000 yards in width. It was perfectly level; at least, the inequalities were so slight as not to catch the attention of a common observer. It appeared to be laid out every where in large fields of sugar-cane. There were some half dozen houses scattered over it, one of which being surrounded by a sort of village of huts, conveyed the idea that its owner must be a person of some con-

sequence ; but the rest seemed to belong to substantial farmers, men who paid more regard to comfort than to ornament. On the whole, the contrast between this picture of industry and life now around us, and the miserable swamp which we were leaving behind, proved not more striking than it was agreeable.

But the satisfaction which every one felt at being again introduced into an inhabited world, suffered some diminution from the reflection, that in case anything like activity or enterprise should guide the councils of the enemy, we were exposing ourselves to a danger far greater than any which we had yet encountered. The head of the column no sooner showed itself in the open country, than horsemen were seen hurrying at their utmost speed along the opposite bank of the river, towards the town. Of the inhabitants on this side, too, several were known to have escaped ; and it became evident to all, that in less time than we had expended in proceeding thus far, the alarm of our landing would be circulated throughout the province. At this juncture, to the honor of Colonel Thornton be it recorded, that he urgently pressed an immediate advance upon New Orleans. We were already less than ten miles distant from it ; the troops were fresh, in excellent spirits, and full of confidence ; it required but a rapid journey to put them in undisputed possession. But to a plan so bold, our General stoutly opposed himself. He feared to leave his supplies decidedly behind him ; he was apprehensive that his little corps might be attacked, and cut off by overwhelming numbers, before reinforcements could reach it ; as if we were not already

cut off as effectually as could be from our magazines, which were established on Pine Island, full eighty miles in our rear. Acting under this impression, he would not listen to the Brigadier's suggestion; but having led the division about half a mile towards the town, he ordered a bivouac to be formed, and the troops to refresh themselves. This was done. The men's arms were piled, lines of fires were lighted; and picquets being established, so as to protect the encampment on every side, the main body regarded themselves as destined to pass the remainder of that day and night in quiet.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It fell to the lot of my friend and myself, to be employed this day on outpost duty : our station was in an open field, upon the right front of the camp, and we communicated on the one hand with a party of rifles, and on the other, with a similar party of the 85th regiment. The rifles occupied and covered the main road, which, passing all along by the banks of the river, runs up from the extremity of the province to New Orleans ; we posted ourselves a little to the right of the chateau, of which I have already taken notice, whilst the detachment that arrived on the line, faced the cypress wood, and bent back so as, in part, to shelter the rear of the encampment. As the weather chanced to be remarkably favourable, and as no traces of an enemy could be perceived, we very naturally looked forward to a peaceable and pleasant tour of duty ; and we made no scruple, as well officers as men, to wander so far from the head quarters of our post, as the prospect of a few luxuries, in the way of eating

and drinking, invited. The sentinels being carefully planted, Charlton left me in charge of the guard, whilst, with a few followers, he hurried off to the cheatau, for the purpose of ascertaining the state of its cellars and larder. He was not long absent; and when he did return, he returned not empty-handed. An ample supply of wine, with a cheese, a piece of bacon, and a turkey, fell to our share; whilst the men were made happy with a moderate allowance of brandy, which served to wash down the less delicate rations of pork and biscuit.

We were thus circumstanced, and evening was beginning to approach, when there suddenly appeared, advancing along the high road, a corpse of some two or three hundred well mounted cavalry. Our picquets instantly stood to their arms, and the buglers, obeying the orders given to them, sounded the assembly, for the purpose of putting the division on its guard. The enemy's horse, nothing daunted by these preparations, moved on. One squadron, continuing to occupy the road, the rest spreading themselves over the fields adjoining, came down at a brisk trot, apparently with the design of making an attack upon our post. The sentinels, having stood till they had arrived within point-blank range, gave them fire, and as the enemy still pressed on at a canter, they fell back. Instantly our people extended themselves, and darting forward to a dry ditch, which ran a little in front of their station, threw themselves into it, and made ready to dispute their ground with the cavalry. It appeared, however, that the reconnoitring party had either effected their purpose, or had done as much as they deemed it prudent

and safe to do ; for they ventured not within a hundred yards of us. We gave them, however, a few random shots ; upon which they pulled up, remained for a minute or two stationary, and then wheeling about, as if by word of command, retired in the most perfect order. It was not so with those upon the high road. Whether the squadron which occupied it mistook their orders, or whether it was deemed a matter of consequence to get, in that direction, as near the camp as might be, I know not ; but the enemy not only drove in the sentinels there, but charged, or rather endeavoured to charge, the body of the picquet itself. They were received by the rifles with a close and well-directed volley, which killed three men and two horses, besides wounding several others, and the rest not willing to abide another discharge, fell instantly into confusion. They galloped back with the same precipitation which had distinguished their approach, and in ten minutes after they had shown themselves, the whole body was out of sight.

This was the very first occasion, during the course of our Transatlantic warfare, that the Americans had in any way ventured seriously to molest or threaten our posts, or shown the smallest disposition to act vigorously on the offensive. I cannot deny that it produced a curious effect upon us. Not that we experienced the smallest sensation of alarm. We held them in too much contempt to fear their attack ; I question whether we did not wish that they would hazard one ; yet we spoke of the present boldness, and thought of it too, as a meeting on which we had no ways cal-

culated, and for which we could not possibly account. It had not, however, the effect of exciting an expectation, that the attempt would be renewed, at least in force; and though we unquestionably looked upon our position, from that moment, with a more cautious eye, we neither felt nor acted upon the supposition, that any serious danger would be incurred, till we ourselves should seek it. Nothing occurred during the remaining hours of daylight, calculated to produce any change in these anticipations. The enemy made their appearance no more; and having carefully ascertained that an unbroken chain of videttes was established; having examined our men's arms, satisfied ourselves that they were in good order, and taken other necessary precautions, we trimmed our fires, as darkness thickened, and drew near them.

Charlton and I were in the act of smoking our cigars, the men having laid themselves down about the blaze, when word was passed from sentry to sentry, and intelligence communicated to us, that all was not right towards the river. We started instantly to our feet. The fire was hastily smothered up, and the men snatching their arms, stood in line, ready to act as circumstances might require. So dense, however, was the darkness, and so dazzling the effect of the glare from the bivouac, that it was not possible, standing where we stood, to form any reasonable guess as to the cause of this alarm. That an alarm had been excited, was indeed perceptible enough. Instead of the deep silence which five minutes ago had prevailed in the bivouac, a strange hubbub of shouts, and questions, and as many

cries, rose up the night air; nor did many minutes elapse, ere first one musket, then three or four, then a whole platoon, were discharged. The reader will *easily* believe, that the latter circumstance startled us prodigiously, ignorant as we were of the cause which produced it, but it required no very painful exertion of patience to set us right on this head; flash, flash, flash, came from the river; the roar of cannon followed, and the light of her own broadside displayed to us an enemy's vessel at anchor near the opposite bank, and pouring a perfect shower of grape and round shot, into the camp.

For one instant, and only for an instant, a scene of alarm and consternation overcame us; and we almost instinctively addressed to each other the question, "What can all this mean?" But the meaning was too palpable not to be understood at once. "The thing cannot end here," said we—"a night attack is commencing;" and we made no delay in preparing to meet it. Whilst Charlton remained with the picquet, in readiness to act as the events might demand, I came forward to the sentries, for the purpose of cautioning them against paying attention to what might pass in their rear, and keeping them steadily engaged in watching their front. The men were fully alive to the peril of their situation. They strained with their hearing and eyesight to the utmost limits; but neither sound nor sight of an advancing column could be perceived. At last, however, an alarm was given. One of the rifles challenged—it was the sentinel on the high road; the sentinel who communicated with him challenged also;

and the cry was taken up from man to man, till our own most remote sentry caught it. I flew to his station; and sure enough the tramp of many feet was most distinctly audible. Having taken the precaution to carry an orderly forward with me, I caused him to hurry back to Charlton with intelligence of what was coming, and my earnest recommendation that he would lose no time in occupying the ditch. I had hardly done so, when the noise of a column deploying was distinctly heard. The tramp of horses, too, came mingled with the tread of men; in a word, it was quite evident, that a large force, both of infantry and cavalry, was before us.

There was a pause at this period of several moments, as if the enemy's line, having effected its formation, had halted, till some other arrangement should be completed; but it was quickly broke. On they came, as far as we could judge from the sound, in steady array, till at length their line could be distinctly seen rising through the gloom. The sentinels with one consent gave their fire. They gave it regularly, and effectively, beginning with the rifles on their left, and going off towards the 85th on their right, and then, in obedience to their orders, fell back. But they retired not unmolested. This straggling discharge on our part, seemed to be the signal to the Americans to begin the battle, and they poured in such a volley, as must have proved, had any determinate object been opposed to it, absolutely murderous. But our scattered videttes almost wholly escaped it; whilst over the main body of the picquet,

sheltered as it was by the ditch, and considerably removed from its line, it passed entirely harmless.

Having fired this volley, the enemy loaded again, and advanced.. We saw them coming, and having waited till we judged that they were within excellent range, we opened our fire. It was returned in tenfold force, and now went on, for a full half hour, as heavy and close a discharge of musketry as troops have perhaps ever faced. Confident in their numbers, and led on, as it would appear, by brave officers, the Americans dashed forward till scarcely ten yards divided us; but our position was an admirable one, our men were steady and cool, and they penetrated no farther. On the contrary, we drove them back, more than once, with a loss which their own inordinate multitude tended only to render the more severe.

The action might have continued in this state about two hours, when, to our horror and dismay, the approaching fire upon our right flank and rear, gave testimony that the picquet of the 85th, which had been in communication with us, was forced. Unwilling to abandon our ground, which we had hitherto held with such success, we clung for a while to the idea that the reverse in that quarter might be only temporary, and that the arrival of fresh troops might yet enable us to continue the battle in a position so eminently favourable to us. But we were speedily taught that our hopes were without foundation. The American war-cry was behind us. We rose from our lairs, and endeavoured, as we best could, to retire upon the right, but the effort was fruitless. There too the enemy had established

themselves, and we were surrounded. "Let us cut our way through," cried we to the men. The brave fellows answered only with a shout; and collecting into a small compact line, prepared to use their bayonets. In a moment we had penetrated the centre of an American division; but the numbers opposed to us were overwhelming; our close order was lost; and the contest became that of man to man. I have no language adequate to describe what followed. For myself, I did what I could, cutting and thrusting at the multitudes about me, till at last I found myself fairly hemmed in by a crowd, and my sword-arm mastered. One American had grasped me round the waist, another, seizing my wrist, attempted to disarm me, whilst a third was prevented from plunging his bayonet into my body, only by the fear of stabbing one or other of his countrymen. I struggled hard, but they fairly bore me to the ground. The reader will well believe, that at this juncture I expected nothing else than instant death; but at the moment when I fell, a blow upon the head with the butt-end of a musket dashed out the brains of the man who kept his hold upon my sword-arm, and it was freed. I saw a bayonet pointed to my breast, and I intuitively made a thrust at the man who wielded it. The thrust took effect, and he dropped dead beside me. Delivered now from two of my enemies, I recovered my feet, and found that the hand which dealt the blow to which my preservation was owing, was that of Charlton. There were about ten men about him. The enemy in our front were broken, and we dashed through. But we were again hemmed in, and again it was fought hand

to hand, with that degree of determination, which the assurance that life and death were on the issue, could alone produce. There cannot be a doubt that we should have fallen to a man, had not the arrival of fresh troops at this critical juncture turned the tide of affairs. As it was, little more than a third part of our picquet survived; the remainder being either killed or taken; and both Charlton and myself, though not dangerously, were wounded. Charlton had received a heavy blow upon the shoulder, which almost disabled him, whilst my neck bled freely from a thrust, which the intervention of a stout leathern stock alone hindered from being fatal. But the reinforcement gave us all, in spite of wounds and weariness, fresh courage, and we renewed the battle with alacrity.

In the course of the struggle in which we had been engaged, we had been borne considerably out of the line of our first position, and now found that the main-road, and the picquet of the rifles, were close in our rear. We were still giving way—for the troops opposed to us could not amount to less than fifteen hundred men, whilst the whole force on our part came not up to one hundred—when Captain Harris, major of brigade to Colonel Thornton, came up with an additional company to our support. Making way for them to fall in between us and the rifles, we took ground once more to the right, and driving back a body of the enemy which occupied it, soon recovered the position from which we had been expelled. But we did so with the loss of many brave men, and, among others, of Captain Harris. He was shot in the lower part of the belly at

the same instant that a musket-ball struck the hilt of his sword, and forced it into his side. Once more established in our ditch, we paused, and from that moment till the battle ceased to rage we never changed our attitude.

It might be about one o'clock in the morning—the American force in our front having fallen back, and we having been left for a full half hour to breathe, when suddenly the head of a small column showed itself in full advance towards us. We were at this time amply supported by other troops, as well in communication as in reserve; and willing to annihilate the corps now approaching, we forbade the men to fire till it should be mingled with us. We did even more than this. Opening a passage for them through our centre, we permitted some hundred and twenty men to march across our ditch, and then wheeling up, with a loud shout, we completely enclosed them. Never have I witnessed a panic more perfect or more sudden than that which seized them. They no sooner beheld the snare into which they had fallen, than with one voice they cried aloud for quarter; and they were to a man made prisoners on the spot. The reader will smile when he is informed that the little corps thus captured consisted entirely of members of the legal profession. The barristers, attorneys, and notaries of New Orleans having formed themselves into a volunteer corps, accompanied General Jackson in his operations this night; and they were all, without a solitary exception, made prisoners. It is probably needless to add, that the circumstance was productive of no trifling degree of mirth amongst us; and

to do them justice, the poor lawyers, as soon as they recovered from their first alarm, joined heartily in our laughter.

This was the last operation in which we were engaged to-night. The enemy, repulsed on all sides, retreated with the utmost disorder, and the whole of the advance, collecting at the sound of the bugle, drew up, for the first time since the commencement of the affair, in a continuous line. We took our ground in front of the bivouac, having our right supported by the river, and our left covered by the chateau and village of huts. Among these latter the cannon were planted; whilst the other divisions, as they came rapidly up, took post beyond them. In this position we remained, eagerly desiring a renewal of the attack, till dawn began to appear, when, to avoid the fire of the vessel, the advance once more took shelter behind the bank. The first brigade, on the contrary, and such portion of the second as had arrived, encamped upon the plain, so as to rest their right upon the wood; and a chain of picquets being planted along the entire pathway, the day was passed in a state of inaction.

I hardly recollect to have spent fourteen or fifteen hours with less comfort to myself than these. In the hurry and bustle of last night's engagement, my servant, to whose care I had entrusted my cloak and haversack, disappeared; he returned not during the entire morning; and as no provisions were issued out to us, nor any opportunity given to light fires, I was compelled to endure, all that time, the extremes of hunger, weariness, and cold. As ill luck would have it, too,

the day chanced to be remarkably severe. There was no rain, it is true, but the sky was covered with gray clouds; the sun never once pierced them, and a frost, or rather a vile blight, hung upon the atmosphere from morning till night. Nor were the objects which occupied our senses of sight and hearing, quite such as we should have desired to occupy them. In other parts of the field, the troops, not shut up as we were, by the enemy's guns, employed themselves in burying the dead, and otherwise effacing the traces of warfare. The site of our encampment continued to be strewn with carcasses to the last; and so watchful were the crew of the schooner, that every effort to convey them out of sight, brought a heavy fire upon the party engaged in it. I must say, that the enemy's behaviour upon the present occasion, was not such as did them honour. The house which General Kean had originally occupied as head-quarters, being converted into an hospital, was filled at this time with wounded, both from the British and American armies. To mark its uses, a yellow flag, the usual signal in such cases, was hoisted on the roof—yet did the Americans continue to fire at it, as often as a group of six or eight persons happened to show themselves at the door. Nay, so utterly regardless were they of the dictates of humanity, that even the parties which were in the act of conveying the wounded from place to place, escaped not without molestation. More than one such party was dispersed by grape-shot, and more than one poor maimed soldier was in consequence hurled out of the blanket in which he was borne.

The reader will not doubt me when I say, that sel-

dom has the departure of daylight been more anxiously looked for by me, than we looked for it now. It is true, that the arrival of a little rum towards evening, served in some slight degree to elevate our spirits; but we could not help feeling, not vexation only, but positive indignation, at the state of miserable inaction to which we were condemned. There was not a man amongst us who would have hesitated one moment, had the choice been submitted to him, whether he would advance or lie still. True, we might have suffered a little, because the guns of the schooner entirely commanded us; and in rushing out from our place of concealment, some casualties would have occurred; but so irksome was our situation, that we would have readily run all risks to change it. It suited not the plans of our General, however, to indulge these wishes. To the bank we were enjoined to cling; and we did cling to it, from the coming in of the first gray twilight of the morning, till the last twilight of the evening had departed.

As soon as it was well dark, the corps to which Charlton and myself were attached, received orders to file off to the right. We obeyed, and passing along the front of the hospital, we skirted to the rear of the village, and established ourselves in the field beyond. It was a positive blessing this restoration to something like personal freedom. The men set busily to work, lighting fires and cooking provisions;—the officers strolled about, with no other apparent design than to give employment to their limbs, which had become stiff with so protracted a state of inaction. For ourselves,

we visited the wounded, said a few kind words to such as we recognized, and pitied, as they deserved to be pitied, the rest. Then retiring to our fire, we addressed ourselves with hearty good will to a frugal supper, and gladly composed ourselves to sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

ARRIVAL OF GENERAL PACKENHAM.

AN early hour in the morning of the 25th produced a change, both in the hopes and prospects of the army in general, and in the situation of Charlton and myself, in particular. Sir Edward Pakenham and General Gibbs unexpectedly made their appearance in the camp, and the former immediately took upon himself the command of the expedition. His first measure was to alter, in a great degree, the distribution of the forces which General Kean had made. The advance was dissolved; and the entire army was divided into two brigades or columns. This arrangement separated us from the light troops, with whom we had so long acted; and we found ourselves appointed to compose part of the right column, whose line of operations lay beside the wood.

During the 25th and 26th, nothing of importance occurred, which has not been detailed with sufficient accuracy elsewhere. Of the continual approaches and

incursions of the enemy's mounted riflemen, blowing up of the schooner, and the consequent retreat of the ships which had anchored near her, you cannot be ignorant. I need not, therefore, speak of them at length, especially as it was not my fortune to come into personal contact with the one, or to be a very close observer of the other. On the 27th an event did take place, in which I was deeply interested. At an early hour on the morning of that day, the troops being ordered under arms, dispositions were made for an immediate advance. On this occasion our company formed part of a detached party, which being placed under the command of Colonel Rennie of the 21st regiment, was appointed to cover the movement of the column; and extended the skirmishing order, partly across the plain, and partly into the wood. My own section happened to be thrown among the trees, but taking post myself, chiefly on the most exposed flank, I enjoyed an ample opportunity of observing the whole course of the operations; and of the spectacle, as it presented itself, I must endeavour to give you something like a distinct account.

It was not the custom of the Americans, you must know, to protect the front of the army, either by day or night, by a regular chain of outposts. Every morning, indeed, as soon as it was light, a corps of some five or six hundred mounted riflemen came down; which, spreading themselves over the plain, watched our movements in a very irregular and unsoldier-like manner. The head-quarters of this corps invariably established itself in a house distant about long musket-shot from

our sentries, and close to the main road; whilst the rest wandered here and there, as inclination or caprice seemed to direct. Regularly as night closed in, again these mounted men withdrew, and then began that system of irritation in which General Jackson appeared to take so much delight; and which without in any essential degree influencing the issues of the campaign, served to harass and annoy our troops severely. Why no attempt was made on our part, during either of the days above mentioned, to drive back these stragglers, and to obtain a view of the enemy's position, I know not. All that I do know is, that nothing of the kind was thought of; and that even on the 27th, when the whole army was put in motion, our progress was for a while as slow, and as circumspect, as if a thousand ambuscades had been on all sides of us. The right column, for example, which skirted the wood, after moving forward about three or four hundred paces, was commanded to halt. The house, it appeared, which the enemy usually occupied, had not been examined, and it was not deemed prudent to pass it by without examination. Instead, however, of leaving this to be effected by the light troops, a couple of pieces of cannon were ordered to the front; and the empty mansion had the honour of being several times perforated with round-shot. This being done, and no troops seen to evacuate it, the columns again pressed forward. The day was clear and bright, there was just enough of frost in the air to be agreeable, and we were all in the highest spirits. On we went, therefore, for about three miles, without any halt or hindrance, either from man or in-

animate nature, coming in our way. But all at once a spectacle was presented to us, such, indeed, as we ought to have looked for, but such as manifestly took our leaders by surprise. The enemy's army became visible. It was posted about forty yards in rear of a canal, and covered, though most imperfectly, by an unfinished breast-work. The outlines of several batteries had been traced, a ditch was marked out and partly begun—in a word, the rudiments of an entrenched position were before us. We who were on the right, felt neither astonishment nor regret at the prospect. We saw that the works were contemptible, and we made no doubt of carrying them as soon as we should fairly attempt it—above all, we met with no interruption to our progress. But the case was otherwise on the left. The head of that column had no sooner arrived within range of the lines, than a tremendous cannonade, not only from the guns in position, but from the ship and a flotilla of armed boats, opened upon it. We could perceive plainly enough, that the fire was not harmless; for the column instantly deployed into lines of battalions, and the lines, after pushing forward some little way, halted, and lay down. On our side, however, an opposite course was pursued. Though the column paused, for what purpose is, I confess, a mystery to me, our skirmishers dashed in increased force into the wood, and became immediately engaged with a body of riflemen, who were posted there for the purpose of covering the right of the enemy's centre. For an instant the firing was tolerably sharp; but we drove them before us in gallant style, and had penetrated as far as

their outer defences, when an order arrived that we should proceed no farther. Whilst I live, I shall never cease to regret that such an order was issued. Contrary to all expectation, we found the bog within the cypress wood perfectly passable; whilst the entrenchments which it behoved us to carry, consisted then of nothing more than a few abattis, with a low mound of earth thrown up in the rear. One spirited dart, such as we were preparing to make, must have carried us through them. But our ardour was repressed; we were even directed to fall back, and we spent full four hours standing or sitting idly under cover of the trees, and listening to the sound of the enemy's guns, which played incessantly upon our comrades. To complete the business, we were informed, about three o'clock in the afternoon, that the main body was retiring, and a little before dark we followed the example. Thus, without so much as one effort to force through them, was a British army baffled and repulsed by a horde of raw militiamen, ranged in line behind a mud-wall, which could have hardly protected them from musketry, far less from round-shot;—there was not a man among us who failed to experience both shame and indignation, when he found himself retreating before a force for which he entertained the most sovereign contempt.

I have said, or I ought to have said, that the retrograde movement, of which I am now speaking, was conducted in the most disorderly manner. To save the men as much as possible from the cannonade, which still continued, the different regiments were directed to break off in files and small parties from the right.

This was done, and to the Americans it doubtless conveyed the idea that we were not retiring, but flying, for they rent the air with shouts, and plied us more and more briskly with grape, round-shot, and shells. It was impossible that so many missiles could be thrown without causing some loss; about thirty men out of our column fell, and at least as many out of the other. One unfortunate fellow, who was walking before me, received a nine-pound shot on the knapsack, and it literally dashed him to pieces; but we were, on the whole, fortunate to escape so well, more fortunate, perhaps, than our want of resolution deserved.

We did not fall back to our original encampment, but having accomplished as much space as was deemed sufficient to protect us against the enemy's fire, we halted. The ground now occupied resembled, in almost every particular, that left behind. It was an unbroken flat, without trees, hedges, or any other species of natural cover; and, except on the very left of the line, totally void of buildings. The troops had brought with them no tents, and of materials for the construction of huts there was a lamentable scarcity; by far the greatest number were accordingly compelled to bivouac. But continued exposure to this variable climate soon began to affect us very sensibly, and the bad quality as well as insufficient supply of food, was sorely felt. For all these grievances, however, no remedy existed, so we digested them as we best could, in the hope that better fortune might even yet be in store for us.

During the 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st, strong detachments from the different corps were employed in

bringing up a train of heavy ordnance from the boats, with ample supplies of powder and ball. It was not my fate to be employed on this service, so I can speak of it only from hearsay; but the labour and difficulty of accomplishing it, were, I am told, beyond all calculation. Nor was it the only irksome duty in which we were engaged. The picquets never mounted without suffering, sooner or later, an attack. Sometimes the enemy contented themselves with cannonading the outposts, sometimes they advanced large corps in the day, who amused themselves and us, with long and unprofitable skirmishes. But their more usual system was to steal forward in sections after dark, and to harass us with a desultory and troublesome fire of musketry till morning. That you may the better understand how these affairs were conducted, I will detail to you, at length, the circumstances which attended a tour of duty, in which I myself was engaged.

It chanced that, on the morning of the 30th, I was put in command of a picquet. My post was abundantly exposed; it was a shallow dry ditch, distant about half way between our own and the enemy's lines. Having paraded my men an hour before dawn, I marched forward, and being conducted by the officer whom I was about to relieve and the sentinels, and instructed as far as he was able to instruct me, in the manner in which it behoved me to act, I set him at liberty, by assuming the station which he abandoned. For some time, all remained quiet; the day gradually dawned, and, as its light exhibited no manifestations of hostile design on the part of the enemy, we began to flatter

ourselves that we should escape with fewer dangers and hardships than had annoyed our predecessors. But we were speedily convinced that our calculations had been formed on erroneous grounds.

As yet, neither I nor the men had ventured to light a fire; we found the party whom we came to relieve without one, and we so far followed their advice, as to act for some hours by the pattern which they had set us. But the day was piercingly cold. A heavy shower fell from time to time, and the absolute discomfort of our situation proved too much for the whispers of prudence. Two fires were made to blaze up, one for the men, the other for myself and my companion. It seemed as if the American artillery-men had waited for some such object to direct their aim, for the smoke had hardly begun to ascend, when there played upon us, from a battery of five guns, as perfect a storm of grape-shot as ever whistled past the ears of men so situated; and in five minutes the fires were abandoned. But with this the enemy were not contented; under cover of the cannonade, a body of some two or three hundred infantry advanced, in extended order, from the lines. They came on with loud shouts, and even before they had arrived within anything like moderate range, commenced a running fire of musketry upon the sentries. The orders which I had received were peremptory, that not an inch of ground should be given up, as long as I was in a condition to maintain it; so, instead of desiring the videttes to fall back, I advanced with the body of the piquet to support them. At length, a most uninteresting skirmish ensued. The Americans, it was perfectly

manifest, were raw troops; they made no determined efforts, probably it was not intended they should make any efforts to drive us in; but they pressed forward, from time to time, creeping along the ground, and running from ditch to ditch, and retreating again, as soon as they had discharged their pieces. On our side, no movement whatever was made. The men lay down as I directed, behind a row of bushes, which served, at least, to conceal them from their opponents, and each file regularly shifted its ground a pace or two to the right or the left as soon as it had fired. By this means many lives were saved, for the Americans regularly returned our fire, and they never failed to direct their aim towards the spots from whence our smoke ascended.

The affair having lasted about four or five hours, the enemy at length saw fit to withdraw, and we returned to our ditch, with the trifling loss of only two men wounded. Nor did they renew their amusement during the remainder of the day. Their cannon, however, continued to annoy us to the last, insomuch that the very sentinels were under the necessity of hiding themselves. Not another musket was fired, and we were content to put up with the one as being, at all events, less disagreeable than the other. But as darkness set in, causes of disturbance multiplied upon us, of which not the least alarming arose from the culpable negligence of some of our own people.

It was customary at this time to cover the army during the day, with a line of posts, which were considered too weak to guard it effectually at night. The consequence was, that just before dusk every evening, a

reinforcement was sent up, which, instead of being scattered among the different picquets already established, formed a distinct picquet of itself. The post attached to it lay between my party and a party of the light brigade, in other words, it was accustomed to occupy the centre of a line, of which we formed the flanks. To-night, by some accident or other, the additional picquet was late of arriving. Our orders—I mean the orders of the out-posts on the right and left—were to contract their sentries at sun-set, that room might be left for the sentries from the assisting guard to plant themselves. We obeyed them this evening, as usual. But the state of our feelings may be more easily imagined than described, when hour after hour stole on, and no force appeared to fill up the gap which we had made.—How the officer in charge of the other post behaved, I know not; but for me, having waited as long as a sense of duty would allow, I set out, attended by my serjeant, to ascertain the cause of this unaccountable delay. As I trudged along, a thousand uneasy thoughts rose into my mind. Sometimes I was apprehensive that the division might have been cut off; at other times the hazard which not we only, but the entire army ran, of a surprisal, occurred to me, and I could not, with such suspicions in my mind, quit the post of danger. On the contrary, I patrolled backwards and forwards, from the extreme left of our own line, to the extreme right of the other, listening from time to time, in the greatest anxiety, and finally I made up my mind to throw out some extra sentries. But as I was preparing to carry the resolution into practice, my attention was suddenly call-

ed off to other objects. A heavy trampling of feet became audible. There was a sound, too, directly in front, as of horses galloping, and first one vidette, then another, challenged. I ran to the spot, and reached it just as the men fired. The report was followed by a burst, as if a squadron of cavalry had broken, and was retreating. But whilst I was watching here, the same sound of troops marching, caught my ear, and on hurrying back to the void space, it became every moment more and more distinct, I called aloud, but no one answered. This was alarming enough, and what made it more so, was, that the corps, whatever it might be, seemed to approach in echelon, from the front. One man only was with me, but determined neither to suffer a surprise, nor needlessly to disturb the camp, I pushed forward, pistol in hand, towards the road. We challenged again and again—no one heeded us. My finger already pressed to the trigger, as a body of men became perceptible, and I refrained from firing only till I should have challenged the third time. It is well that I had been thus prudent, for the corps proved to be no other than the long-looked for detachment, which had, by some means or another, contrived to lose its way, and was now wandering back from the very brink of the enemy's canal, to which it had proceeded. Relieved as I could not but feel, at this discovery, my indignation was nevertheless too great not to burst forth in words. I rated the unfortunate officer in command roundly, and leaving my sergeant to assist him in placing his sentinels, returned to my own picquet.

It was now about midnight, and the darkness had

become almost, without a metaphor, such as might be felt. Instead of a frost, a thick mist hung in the air, which not only annoyed by the cold moisture which it threw around us, but effectually hindered the stars from casting even their feeble glimmer over the scene. Worn out with fatigue, I had returned to the ditch,—not to seat myself beside a comfortable blaze,—for no fire was lighted, and it would have been madness to think of lighting one,—but to rest my limbs a little by lying down, and to smoke a cigar. I was thus employed, when a heavy rolling noise, like the movement of artillery, caught my ear. It proceeded from the enemy's lines, and its direction was plainly enough towards our camp, though greatly to the left of my most remote sentinels. I sprang to my feet, and once more hurried to the front. I had traversed about half the space which divided the picquet from the videttes, when the rolling sound ceased; and the reader will not doubt, that I turned my eyes anxiously to the spot where it did so. I paused, too, for a moment; and before I could resume my progress, three distinct flashes, followed by a similar number of reports, sufficiently informed me of the cause of my disturbance. The enemy, finding that their heavy artillery hardly reached our camp, had moved two field-pieces and a mortar without their lines, and advancing them as near to the sentries as a regard to their own safety would allow, were now cannonading, not the out-posts, but the main body of the British army. It was easy to perceive that the balls fell not short of their mark. Looking back towards the position, I saw that the fires were hastily covered up; and

the murmur of voices which arose, gave testimony, that they were not thus stifled before it was necessary.

No directions had been given to us how we should act, in case of such an emergency,—because, in truth, the emergency had never been contemplated; yet both my companion and myself felt strongly tempted to try, whether or not we might, by a forward dash, make ourselves masters of their guns. We had even resolved upon hazarding the attempt, and were in the act of arranging our men for the purpose, when the firing suddenly ceased, and the sound of artillery retreating became audible. To have followed them in their retreat would have been madness—even when we thought of attacking, we hoped for success only by coming unexpectedly upon them, for we were by no means strong enough, nor was it at all in accordance with our duty to hazard an action with the whole American army. We, therefore, permitted them to depart unmolested, and contented ourselves with patrolling forward, about half an hour after, to see that all was right

From that time, till towards morning, we were left, in a great measure, undisturbed. The enemy, it appeared, satisfied with what they had done, gave themselves up to repose, whilst we continued vigilant as before, though without meeting with any serious cause of alarm. About two hours before day-break, however, a general stir took place in the American lines.—It was their mustering time; they were then getting under arms—not for the purpose of attacking us, but to oppose any attack which we might hazard, and they did so to the sound of drums and trumpets, and other

marial instruments. The effect of this warlike tumult as it broke in all at once upon the silence of night, was remarkably fine. Nor did the matter end there. The reveille having ceased, and the different regiments having taken their ground, two or three tolerably full bands began to play, which continued to entertain both their own people and us till broad daylight came in. Being fond of music,—particularly of the music of a military band, I crept forward beyond the sentries, for the purpose of listening to it. The airs which they played were some of them, spiritless enough,—the Yankees are not famous for their good taste in anything;—but one or two of the waltzes struck me as being peculiarly beautiful; the tune, however, which seemed to please themselves the most, was their national air known among us by the title of “Yankee doodle;” for they repeated it at least six times in the course of their practice.

Dawn was beginning to appear, when the party destined to relieve us came up. Having communicated to the officer in command as much information as I myself possessed, I very gladly called in my sentinels, mustered my people, and marched to the rear.

CHAPTER XX.

HAVING hitherto said but little of the positions of the hostile armies, or of the effect which a glance from the one to the other was calculated to produce, I shall not, perhaps, be regarded as stepping greatly out of my way, if I endeavour here to make up for my former omissions.

It has been already hinted, that the field of operations consisted of a narrow plain, hemmed in on one hand by the Mississippi, and on the other by the woody morass. The open space between these extremities could not exceed one thousand yards, whilst the distance of the British from the American camp may be calculated at about two miles and a half. As there was nothing to interrupt the vision, the disposition of our force could as easily be noted from the enemy's lines, as their lines could be seen from our bivouac; but the point from which to obtain the most satisfactory view of both, was the line of our advanced posts. He who stood there saw, in his front, a long parapet, composed entirely of earth, which was riveted with thin planks, and support-

ed by stakes. About thirty or forty yards in advance of it, ran a bayou, or canal, measuring, to all appearance, from ten to fifteen feet in width. This, however, ended considerably to the left of the river; indeed, it can hardly be said to have covered more than two-thirds of the entrenchment, whilst upon the high road, and somewhat out of the line, was again erected a flanking redoubt; there was a semicircular battery about the middle, and a third, called, in the language of the profession, an inverted Ridau, protected the extremity which joined the wood. On the summit of the central work, a lofty flag-staff was erected, from which a large American ensign constantly waved; whilst in rear of the breast-work, a crowd of white tents shewed themselves, not a few of which bore flags at the top of their poles. The American camp, in short, exhibited at least, as much of the pomp and circumstance of war, as modern camps are accustomed to exhibit; and the spirits of its inmates were kept continually in a state of excitation by the bands of martial music.

How different was the spectacle to which a glance towards the rear introduced the spectator, presenting exactly the same extent of front; the British army lay there without tents, without works, without show, without parade, upon the ground. Throughout the whole line not more than a dozen huts were erected, and these, which consisted only of pieces of plank, torn from the houses and fences near, furnished but an inefficient protection against the inclemency of the weather. Our men might accordingly be observed, some of them, walking backwards and forwards, collected in groups

round their fires, others stretched at length in the sunbeams, apparently rejoicing in the warmth which they conveyed. No band played among them, nor did a bugle give its sound, except to warn the hearers of danger, and put them on the alert; on the contrary, the routine of duty was conducted in as much silence as if there had been no musical instruments in the camp. It was impossible not to be struck with the contrast which the conditions, and apparent comforts, of the invading and defending hosts presented.

But if there was so much to interest and excite during the day, at night the scene assumed a thousand degrees of more excitement and attraction. Then an hundred fires, from the one encampment as well as from the other, threw up a broad red light into the air, round which groups could be seen, moving or sitting, in attitudes the most varied and picturesque. With the Americans, indeed, the light falling strongly upon a thousand tall marquees, produced an effect as beautiful as can well be imagined; while even the rude huts and blanket tents of the British troops, exhibited when begirt with flames, an appearance far more imposing than they ever assumed when the sun's rays smote them. Then again, the few solitary fires which marked the stations of some of the outposts, were not without their effect in heightening the sublimity of the panorama; while a cannon or mortar discharged, from time to time, by the enemy, gave to the whole an appearance of warlike grandeur, than which nothing almost can be conceived more imposing. In short, in spite of all the drawbacks which attended the guidance of a picquet, I

am not sure that I spent any portion of my time in a state of higher enjoyment, than when, during the silence of the night, I was perambulating from sentry to sentry, and feasting my eyes on the different objects which I have here so inadequately succeeded in describing.

I have said, that during the last three or four days, the troops were busily employed in bringing up heavy cannon, with large stores of ammunition, from the fleet. The object of this, as we afterwards learned, was to enable the artillery and engineer officers, to try the effect of a scheme which they had suggested. They proposed to the General, regularly to breach the enemy's lines, and they undertook, provided proper dispositions were made, to silence their batteries in the course of three hours. At an early hour on the 31st, about twenty long eighteens, and ten twenty-four pounders being ready, besides powder and ball enough for six hours continued cannonading, it was determined to throw up, in the course of the night, four redoubts, from behind which our gunners might take aim with increased security and effect. With this view, detachments from each brigade got under arms soon after dark, and moved to the front. Having advanced, in profound silence, about a couple of hundred yards beyond the videttes, the working parties were commanded to halt—and protected by the two battalions of the light infantry, the 85th and 95th rifle-corps, they pitched their arms and began operations. All was conducted with the most perfect order. Not a man spoke, but digging sedulously at the spot pointed out to him, each strove to execute his task, more steadily and more qui-

etly than another. Nor were the officers backward in affording them assistance. There were no idle hands here; every one wielded a spade or pick-axe, and, knowing, as we all knew, that we worked for life and death, wielded at once cautiously and zealously. The consequence was, that long before the first streaks of dawn appeared, three solid demitoons were completed, and thirty pieces of heavy ordnance placed in readiness to open the fire, as soon as there should be light enough to direct it.

Never was any failure more remarkable or unlooked for than this. The infantry, having accomplished their tasks, fell back; and took ground some hundred yards or two in rear of the batteries. There we lay, anxiously expecting the sun to rise, and confidently anticipated, that long before his setting, we should be snugly housed in the city of New Orleans. But the sun, as if ashamed to shine upon our disgrace, was slow of making his appearance; a heavy mist obscured him; and the morning was far advanced before it cleared away. At last, however, the enemy's lines were visible, and then began a fire from our batteries, so brisk, and so steadily kept up, that we, who were behind, made not the smallest doubt of its effect. It was answered for a while faintly, and with seeming difficulty. By and by, however, the enemy's salutation became more spirited, till it gradually surpassed our own, both in rapidity and precision. We were a good deal alarmed at this, and the more that a rumour soon got abroad, that our batteries were not proof against the amazing force of the American shot. We

had, it may be stated, imprudently rolled into the parapets barrels filled with sugar, under the impression that sugar would prove as effectual as sand in checking the progress of cannon balls. But the event showed that we had been completely mistaken. The enemy's shot penetrated these sugar-hogsheads as if they had been so many empty casks, dismounting our guns, and killing our artillery-men in the very centre of their works. There could be small doubt, as soon as these facts were established, how the cannonading would end. Our fire slackened every moment, that of the Americans became every moment more terrible, till at length, after not more than two hours and a half of firing, our batteries were all silenced. The American works, on the other hand, remained as little injured as ever, and we were completely foiled.

Whilst our cannon continued to play, the enemy contented themselves by returning their salute; but in proportion as the fire ceased, they began to direct their artillery, not at the batteries only, but at the infantry in rear. Our men were accordingly commanded to lie down; but even thus, all the shot passed not harmless, and about twelve persons of every rank were killed or wounded. As soon as this became known, and it could no longer be concealed, that the promises of the engineer department were not likely to be fulfilled, the army were again commanded to fall back; and it again took up its ground, foiled, irritated, and disheartened, in its former bivouac.

I need hardly observe, that men who had of late undergone so much, and saw before them so little prospect

of success, began to feel both their zeal and spirit gradually subside. The truth, indeed, is, that we were all thoroughly worn out. Every man had been busy, in some way or another, during the past week ; not a few had been without sleep or a regular meal for sixty hours ; it is not to be wondered at, if these spoke and thought less of future glory, than of immediate suffering. Yet were our fatigues by no means at an end. The enemy having made no attempt to carry off our heavy guns, which we abandoned to their fate, it was judged advisable to bring them into the camp as soon as circumstances would allow ; and for this purpose, working parties were again sent out, as soon as the darkness screened them. It was my fortune to accompany them. The labour of dragging a number of huge ships' guns out of the soft soil into which they had sunk, crippled, too, as most of them were in their carriages, was more extreme by far than any one expected to find it ; indeed, it was not till four o'clock in the morning that our task came to a conclusion, and even then it had been very imperfectly performed. Five guns were eventually left behind. These were rendered useless, it is true, by breaking their trunnions ; but it cannot be said that in the course of the late operations, the British army came off without the loss of some of its artillery.

I do not recollect to have experienced at any period of my life, a degree of fatigue at all to be compared with that which now oppressed me. During three whole nights and days I had never closed an eye ; my food, during that entire space, consisted of a small quantity of salt beef, a sea-biscuit or two, and a little

rum ; and even that I could hardly find time or leisure to consume. I was now so completely overcome, that had I been required to perform any duty at the moment, I question whether my bodily strength would have carried me through it. It was not without some difficulty that I contrived to drag my limbs back to the camp : and having done so, all the thoughts of further exertion was laid aside,—I threw myself down upon the ground, and in an instant I was asleep, and the evening was beginning to close in, before that deep slumber left me. But it proved indeed, a refreshment for which I knew not how to be sufficiently thankful. I rose perfectly restored to my natural vigor of body and mind, and perfectly willing to act or suffer whatever our leaders might think fit to require.

It has been said, that the bad quality, and insufficient quantity of provisions issued out to the troops, in the course of these operations, was sorely felt. The truth is, that the few supplies which the country at first furnished became exhausted in a day ; and we were, of necessity, reduced almost from the first, to depend entirely upon the fleet for our subsistence. That the sailors exerted themselves strenuously to hinder us from experiencing any serious inconvenience on that account, no one can deny,—they were at the oar continually ; but sometimes the weather proved such as to retard their progress, and sometimes they neglected to set out till the Commissaries' store had become wellnigh emptied. On all such occasions, we were compelled to put up with half-allowance. Yet we managed to enjoy luxuries, too, such as they were. The country aboun-

ded in sugar—and here and there an orchard of Seville oranges adorned it. It was customary amongst us to substitute burned biscuits for coffee, which there was no difficulty in rendering sweet; and we made out of the oranges and sugar no indifferent marmalade. Nor was this the only use to which we turned the former of these articles. When pork and bread ran short, it was no uncommon thing for both officers and men to appease the cravings of hunger by eating the sugar; not, indeed, as it was found in the casks, but after they had moulded it into cakes. I cannot say that any of us would have selected such food, had a choice been submitted to him; but we were very thankful for it, and in no instance did it prove otherwise than wholesome and nutritious.

In the meanwhile, neither the American general nor our own remained inactive, though, on our part, the confidence of success which once prevailed, had manifestly abated. Not only were fresh troops seen to pour daily into the enemy's camp, but a line of works was begun by them on the opposite side of the river, from which they contrived to enfilade our bivouac, with no fewer than eighteen pieces of cannon. On their main position, likewise, they laboured night and day. The parapet, which, on the morning of the 27th, any tolerably active man would have overleaped with ease, was now heightened to an ordinary altitude; whilst a ditch, measuring from ten to fifteen feet in width and from four to eight feet in depth, covered and protected it, from one flank to the other. It was understood too, that two additional lines, in rear of that before us,

were in progress of completion, whilst rafts, boats and vessels of all sizes and dimensions, crowded the Mississippi, and commanded the whole flat. With respect to the British army again, its time was now powerfully occupied, in digging a canal from the end of the bayo, by which we had effected our landing, up to the river. The object to be attained by this work could not be concealed; it was intended to bring up boats from the Lake and to transport a division over the river, so as to capture, and turn against themselves, the whole of the American artillery there planted. Now, though it ill becomes me, especially after the pledge which I have given to the contrary, to hazard any opinion on the measures pursued in this campaign, I must be permitted to observe, that never were men so severely, and so uselessly harassed as in this undertaking. Of the scheme which proposed to carry the batteries on the opposite side, it is impossible to speak in terms too laudatory; it was the only plan which in our circumstances offered any chance of success, and it ought to have been adopted at once. But why break the spirits, and wear out the strength of the troops, by setting men to excavate a trench, full two miles in length, and six feet deep? We had dragged heavy twenty-four pounders over land, from the mouth of the creek; where would have been the difficulty of transporting any number of light boats, in a similar manner? In my humble opinion, time and toil were never so thoroughly wasted as they were then. Had a few rollers been framed, barges, gigs, cutters, and even launches, might have run through the bog with perfect

ease; and all the risks and uncertainty of artificial navigation avoided.

But our Chief thought otherwise, or rather the possibility of moving boats, except through water never occurred to him. The consequence was, that the whole army, being divided into four relays, worked incessantly by day and by night, from the morning of the 2d up to the evening of the 6th of January. It was a gigantic undertaking; but we accomplished it, for, at the period last mentioned, an artificial bayo was formed, to all appearance at least, not less navigable than the natural one. All, therefore, was now expectation; nor did many hours elapse before expectation was converted into certainty.

The relay to which Charlton and I belonged, had ended their tasks at day-break on the morning of the 7th; we had retired to our hut, for a hut we happened to possess, and having stopt for an hour or two, we were seated at our breakfast, more blessed, if the truth must be told, in the excellence of our appetites, than in the means of gratifying them. The colour-sergeant entering at the moment, laid down the regimental orderly book before us. Charlton eagerly grasped it, and having read it in silence, handed it to me. I also read, and, as far as my memory may be trusted, to the following effect;—

“The troops will be under arms two hours before daylight to-morrow morning, when the army will form into two columns in the following order:—The right column, consisting of the 4th, 21st, and 44th regiments, shall take post near the wood, the 44th leading and

bearing the gabions and fascines ; the left colum composed of one company from the 43d regiment, one company from the 7th, the 93d, and 7th West India regiment, shall station itself upon the road. The 95th regiment, in extended order, shall keep up the communication between the head of one colum and the head of the other, whilst the 7th and 43d shall remain in reserve." The orders then went on to state, that a general assault would be made upon the enemy's lines ; that the commander of the forces placed the fullest reliance in the gallantry of his troops, and the skill of his officers ; that arrangements were made so as to assure success, and that he confidently trusted that to-morrow would add an additional laurel to the many which already adorned the brows of his brave followers. The order was well expressed. We read it with intense interest, and we determined, that, as far as we were concerned at least, no exertions should be spared to hinder the general's hopes from suffering a blight.

When men are made aware, that at the expiration of a few hours, they will be brought into a situation which will require all their energies of mind and body to bear them honourably through, they almost unavoidably congregate together, and indulge in numerous surmises as to the results which are likely to ensue, and the means which to each appears best calculated to render these results favourable. On the present occasion, for example, not many minutes elapsed ere our hut became a place of assembly to the greater proportion of officers attached to the corps. It was then explained, that the measures to which General Paackenham so confidently

alluded, consisted in the pushing across of the 85th regiment, a body of marines and seamen, to the other bank of the river, by whom the guns mounted there would be turned, so as to take the American position in reverse. Next came a variety of speculations as to the propriety of intrusting a regiment so miserably commanded as the 44th, with the vitally important office of carrying the ladders and fascines; whilst the chances of success or failure, the probability of individual escapes, and in the event of his escaping, the mode in which each proposed to spend his evening after he had established himself in New Orleans,—these furnished topics of conversation for several hours. At last, however, the petty council broke up, and each betook himself to the occupation which best suited him, in the full assurance that nothing short of extreme misconduct, or the most extraordinary mismanagement, could possibly hinder our obtaining a signal victory on the morrow.

For my own part, I am not ashamed to confess, that I felt this evening more singularly oppressed, not with alarm, but with awe, than I recollect ever to have done under similar circumstances. The society of my brother officers was not agreeable to me, so I walked away alone. Having striven in vain to divert my melancholy by an inspection of the canal, I turned my steps towards the river side, and sat down in a retired corner close to the margin of the stream. The day chanced to be remarkably mild; the sun was bright and warm, and there was not a cloud in the sky to obscure or diminish his glory. I felt his power and ac-

knowledged it ; and I felt in my inmost soul, the influence of that majestic torrent as it poured past me rapidly, but smoothly, and almost silently. I was not afraid of the morrow, for danger had been too long familiar with me not to have lost most of its terrors ; yet I question whether the idea of death ever came across my mind with greater solemnity than it did then. I thought, too, of my home, of my relations, and the friends of my youth, and I could not at the moment hinder a wish from passing over me, that I had been permitted to lay my bones in the grave of my fathers. But these were ensnaring images ; I knew that they were so, and I therefore determined to resist them ; I rose, therefore, from my seat, and hurrying back to the camp, spent the rest of the day in society. At an early hour, however, both Charlton and myself retired to rest ; and though our conversation partook for a minute or two somewhat of the gloomy, we soon closed our eyes, and fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXI.

BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS.

THE reader is probably aware, that, according to the plan originally chalked out, a detachment of some twelve or fourteen hundred men had received orders to embark in the Mississippi immediately after dark, on the evening of the 7th. That corps, under the command of Colonel Thornton, was destined to make good its landing, and to carry the enemy's batteries an hour before dawn on the 8th. On our side, again, nothing offensive was to be attempted till the sound of firing should give notice that our comrades were engaged—we were merely to take our ground as close to the American lines as circumstances would allow. Unhappily; however, a multitude of unexpected disasters served to frustrate the most important of these arrangements. The banks of the canal gave way, the boats were slow in arriving, and the detachment was not in a condition to move till day had actually broken; of these facts we were afterwards too fatally made aware. But at the moment we knew nothing of them; and we arose, as we had been directed, two hours before dawn, and took our stations.

Having been led to believe that the column, as soon

as it was formed, would move forward, our surprise may be guessed at, when we found minute after minute stealing away without the advance being commanded. For some time we regarded the delay as accidental merely, but by and by a feeling of apprehension arose lest matters should have gone, in some important point, awry, and we should be doomed to a continuance of that system of vacillation and delay which we had so long endured, and which we all so keenly reprobated. At length, however, the word was given to push on; but it was given not till the eastern sky had begun to redden, and though we obeyed it immediately, we arrived not within musket-shot of the works till the day had dawned. The consequences were exactly such as might have been expected. The Americans saw us, and then opened upon us from right to left, a fire of musketry, grape, round-shot, and canister, than which I have certainly never witnessed any more murderous.

Before I proceed to offer any description of this affair, it will be necessary to state, somewhat more minutely than I have yet done, the manner in which it was proposed that it should be conducted.

The main attack, on the present occasion, was directed against the left of the American position. It was led on by Major-General Gibbs, to whose prudence the regiments already named, with one black corps, were entrusted. To enable the troops to pass the ditch, a number of fascines, gabions, and scaling-ladders had been constructed, which were all deposited in a sort of rude redoubt, thrown up on the right of our bivouac. These the 44th regiment was appointed to carry; they

were desired to pack them up whilst in the act of advancing, and to form, thus armed, the head of the storming party. The 44th regiment disobeyed the orders given to them. They led us, indeed, into the field, but they left all their implements behind them, as if no such implements had been needed. On our left again, General Kean, with his column, was commanded not so much to attempt anything serious, as to divert the attention of the enemy by demonstrations. In case, indeed, any unlooked for opportunity should occur, he was expected to avail himself of it; but the great end which he was designed to serve, was that of distracting the enemy's councils, and diverting part of their attention from us.

I have said, that long before we arrived within musket-range, the day had begun to dawn upon us. The same light which exposed us to the view of the enemy, served to inform Sir Edward Pakenham that one of his most important directions had been disregarded, and he instantly dispatched an aid-de-camp with orders to Colonel Mullins to lose no time in remedying the evil. But before the aid-de-camp came up, the enemy had opened their fire, and the 44th, broken and dispersed, had become completely unmanageable. Nothing now remained but to press forward at once, with the regiments which still preserved their order. We advanced at double quick time, under a fire which mowed us down by whole sections, and were approaching the ditch, when suddenly a regular lane was cut from front to rear of the column. There was a thirty-two pounder gun exactly in our front. This the enemy filled up to
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the very muzzle with musket balls, and laid it with the nicest accuracy. One single discharge served to sweep the centre of the attacking force into eternity. In the whole course of my military career, I recollect no such instance of desperate and immediate slaughter as then. The 21st, which led the way, was broken at once; the corps which followed were not in much better order; but we still pushed forward, and at last, about two or three hundred of us gained the ditch. It was in vain that we did our best to mount the parapet. The works were not, indeed, very high, nor the ditch deep, and had we been more numerous, without a doubt we should have passed them; but the soft earth gave way with us, and as often as we succeeded in arriving near the summit, we regularly slid down again. Satisfied at last, that till further support should arrive nothing could be done, we sheltered ourselves as we were best able, and kept quiet.

Whilst thus resting, as it were comparatively safe, I was enabled, by looking back, to obtain a tolerably correct view of what was going on. Our column remained where it had at first been checked, and was now a mere mass of confusion. Between it and us, the ground was literally covered with dead; they were so numerous, that to count them seemed impossible; but what astonished me above all things, was to behold General Kean's brigade in full march across the plain, and hurrying to the support of that which had suffered so severely. General Kean is as brave an officer as any in the service; and beyond all doubt, his zeal and bravery tempted him to take this step; but never was any step

taken more imprudently, or with less judgment. The advance of his own corps, consisting of the light companies of the 7th and 93d, with one company of the 43d, had already stormed and taken a six-gun battery upon the road. Had General Kean supported them, instead of seeking to support us, there cannot be a doubt that the American lines would have been forced in that quarter. But he did not support them; and these brave men, after having maintained themselves in their conquest, till they had been almost cut to pieces, were compelled to retreat. His arrival, besides, in this part of the field, only added to the general confusion. A desperate attempt was, indeed, made to renew the charge—but Sir Edward Pakenham having fallen, General Gibbs being borne mortally wounded to the rear, and General Kean himself disabled, the attempt failed of success. Both columns wavered, retired, and at last fled.

In the meanwhile, our little corps, with a few straggling fires of the riflemen, continued to occupy the enemies ditch. Not willing to surrender at once, we endeavoured, in conjunction with the advance of the column, to force our way within the lines; and about 70 men succeeded, I believe, in the attempt; but of the circumstances which attended their capture, for captured they all were, I know nothing. I had clambered to the top of the parapet, and was preparing to spring among the enemy, when a shot struck me in the head; I fell back, and recollect nothing farther. How I was conveyed from the ditch, and escaped utter destruction, I cannot tell; for I became insensible on the instant; but

that my comrades did not desert me was sufficiently proved by the plight in which I found myself when my senses returned. I was lying on a mattress, in a small room, surrounded by half a dozen officers, all of whom were wounded, and a medical gentleman was in the act of removing a bandage from my brow. He was a stranger to me, and I looked at him with an expression of inquiry in my glance, which he did not misunderstand. But though the case was so, he refused to enter into any conversation with me, assuring me that my only chance of recovery lay in keeping quiet; and we departed not from that system till a full week had expired. At the end of that time, however, I learned that some of my men, hoping that there might still be life in me, had carried me off on the failure of the last attack, and that I had continued in a state of stupor during six-and-thirty hours after.

From that period, up to the moment of my removal, I knew nothing of the movements or operations of the army, except from heresay. That it suffered terribly in the late actions, the multitudes of maimed and mutilated creatures who filled the hospital, abundantly testified; and that it continued to suffer hardships and privations as severe as it has often fallen to the lot of men to endure, all agreed in stating. For myself, I regained my strength slowly and painfully, and did so, only to witness the agonies of those who surrounded me. Of the six individuals whom I had seen on first awaking from my trance, two died within the week; and a third, living by some extraordinary vigour of constitution one day beyond them, died also. Than

the condition of this last youth, none can be imagined mere shocking. A cannon ball having struck him in the hip, carried away the whole of the quarter, smashing his left hand which rested upon it; yet in this plight, with his bowels fallen or falling out, and the whole system in a state of putrefaction, the poor boy existed eight days. The remaining three, like myself, recovered; but with one, it was with the loss of both feet; whilst another retained, and probably still retains, a musket ball in his groin.

In this state I continued, being constantly visited by my friend Charlton, up to the morning of the 17th, when, in company with many others, I was carried down to the canal, and placed in a boat. A considerable flotilla, loaded with stores, light guns, and wounded men, accompanied us; and we set sail an hour or two before noon, for the fleet. It was a long tedious voyage, particularly to us, whose frames were so miserably shaken; but at last we reached the anchorage, and were taken on board. There, every possible attention was paid to us. Our food was of the lightest and best quality; our nursing was as gentle as if our mothers or sisters had attended on us, and our strength came again with surprising rapidity; but mine was never such during the remainder of the war, as that I could either join my comrades in their proceedings, or keep an accurate journal of my own.

Under these circumstances, I will not waste yours, or your readers' time, by attempting any narrative of events, which have been already recorded, and of which

I could speak only from the report of others. It is enough to remind you, that the army retreated on the 18th, that in the course of its retreat, it underwent innumerable hardships ; that it reembarked its last division on the 31st ; and once more put to sea on the 4th of March. Steering down the Lakes, the fleet made for the coast of Mobile, and on the 7th again landed the troops on Dauphin Island. In this landing I accompanied them, not as a combatant, for I was still too weak to think of that ; but that I might enjoy the blessings of a free atmosphere, and larger space than could be afforded me on board of ship. There, then, I continued, till the intelligence of the peace reached us ; and on the 27th, took shipping for old England.

THE END.



