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THE PENINSULAR WAR.

SOME

OBSERVATIONS

ON

THE GENERAL ORDERS

OF

FIELD MARSHAL

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

IN

24

PORTUGAL, SPAIN, AND FRANCE.

FROM 1809 TO 1814.



SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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MDCCLXXXIV.

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WALKER
WALKER & WALKER
WALKER & WALKER

P R E F A C E.

THIS Critique was written last year, at the suggestion of the Editor of a most distinguished periodical review; but from being too long and too professional for the columns usually destined to literature and politics, it was not inserted.

The original manuscript having been seen by several service officers, and copies of it having been applied for by them, it has been revised and printed for public circulation.

25th Jan. 1834.

OBSERVATIONS.

The General Orders of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, K.G., &c., in Portugal, Spain, and France, from 1809 to 1814; and the Low Countries and France, in 1815. Compiled alphabetically from the several printed volumes, which were originally issued to the General and Staff Officers, and Officers commanding Regiments in the above Campaigns. 8vo. London. 1832.

THE Duke of Wellington has long been before the public as a warrior and a statesman. He now appears before it as an author; and if the same publicity should ever be given to all that he has written in his capacity of a commander of armies, he would, we have no doubt, prove to have been a very voluminous, and a very extraordinary one. Truth and simplicity appear always to have guided his pen; and whether in his General Orders, now published for the first time, or in his dispatches, neither has ever for a moment been sacrificed for the purpose of distorting a fact, or rounding a period. We trust that the present effort to publish his General Orders may be followed by his other writings; and that our national hero may as proudly vie with Cæsar in literature, as he has in war.

It appears by the Preface, that the whole of these General Orders were originally written in the Duke's own handwriting, and were copied and afterwards printed without any subsequent correction—a fact adding unspeakably to the interest of this publication. The seven volumes, from which the present one is now compiled, were never published. They were issued annually, as soon as printed, to the general, staff, and commanding officers only. At the conclusion of the war, the several volumes were recalled by order, and deposited at the Horse Guards. What has become of them it would be difficult to ascertain. We understand, however, that there are various

volumes, of different years, still left there; but the avidity, chiefly of officers we presume, to possess themselves of complete sets of the whole of the Orders, has been such, that, as we have heard whispered, recourse has sometimes been had to disreputable means to obtain them; and it is a matter of notoriety, that an officer high in authority at the Horse Guards, who had, with great difficulty and perseverance, completed a set of them, missed them from his room in a very unaccountable manner, and has never since been able to collect others. This compilation, therefore, of the Duke's General Orders, in these memorable campaigns, will not only be a public benefit to those who cannot procure any of the original volumes, but also to those who are so fortunate as to have them in their possession; for without this compilation they would find it difficult to refer to any particular order, not knowing the date; while now it may be immediately found; should any part of the subject be recollected. The alphabetical classification under their several heads may diminish their interest to those that assisted in these campaigns, and who probably would have preferred the chronological arrangement; but we presume Colonel Gurwood's object in their present form has been to have a more extended view to his profession and to posterity, as of more ready reference and authority. The necessity of such a work has long been felt in the army; to the soldier, we need not say, it will be an oracle, while to the diligent reader of the history of our military glory, it will be almost equally interesting.

The wording of these Orders is stamped with a style quite peculiar to his Grace, clear and not to be misunderstood. To appreciate fully their merit, reference must be made to the circumstances under which they were issued, and also to their consequences. For example, on referring to the celebrated, but much abused 'Circular Letter,' (see page 54,) written after the retreat from Burgos, which caused so many comments, and rendered, it is said, the Duke for a time unpopular with the superior officers of his army; it must be recollected that it was written after the retreat from Burgos and Madrid, when, in their commander's opinion, the officers had lost, or did not exert themselves to maintain and practically exercise, that proper authority over their men, which is necessary under any circum-

stances of an army in the field, particularly on a retreat ; for the most fearful disasters might have ensued, had that retreat lasted three days longer. On this occasion we have heard, and can easily believe, that every general or superior officer endeavoured to excuse himself from his portion of the censure cast upon the whole army. Every good officer, who felt that the censure, as far as he was concerned, did not apply, would be naturally relieved from all self-reproach ; and however much he might feel mortified at being classed indiscriminately with those who had flinched from their duty, his feelings and theirs would be very different, not only in degree, but in kind ; on both the effect would be salutary. At the same time, there were few officers who did not know that the animadversions were just on the army, as a body, whatever exceptions there might have been in the individual exertions of many, in endeavouring to support its character and discipline, under the circumstances of a retreat in bad weather. But what were the consequences of that ' Circular Letter ?' They are to be seen in the names of the towns from whence the General Orders are dated, subsequent to Freneda, 1813 ! in the matchless efficiency of the army, and its perfection in all the component parts of equipment, movement, and discipline, which, according to the opinions of those who saw it, would have enabled it to have marched from one end of Europe to the other ; and which, in fact, enabled it to march from the banks of the Mondego to those of the Garonne, defeating the veteran armies of France, commanded by her most distinguished Marshals, from Vittoria to Toulouse ! Indeed, it will not, therefore, be saying too much to assert, that this very ' Circular Letter' gave a firmness of purpose that upset Buonaparte, and established the prowess of the British army over the world.

On perusing the remarks of the Duke of Wellington on the General Courts Martial, (see pages 112 to 147,) we are struck with the fearless sense of justice, and the firm resolution to uphold the honour of the army ; and it is quite reviving to us who have not forgotten those stirring times to read his remarks, so illustrative of a period when the discipline of the army was supported with justice, unalloyed by any other feeling ; but in these halcyon days of reform and charlatanerie, every thing that is distinguished and respect-

able must now take its chance of being dragged through the mire, to flatter the levelling taste of this era of demagogues, and be immolated to popular excitement. We trust, however, there is now appearing a dawn of better days, and that as we have once heard the Duke of Wellington say, when speaking of the British soldier in action, 'The fellow may, for a moment, in the hour of hot battle, feel half disposed to go to the rear, yet there is still an innate or an educated feeling which excites him immediately to resume his sense of duty, not only to efface the transitory fault, which is really not in his nature, but to induce him, by increased energy, to regain his character with his comrades, and to make greater efforts to retrieve the errors of his imagination.' We trust that this character of the British soldier is that of the nation generally, and that a like sense of duty will induce the mass of the people, ere long, to return to that path from which the foolish intoxication of the moment has for a time led them astray.

How beautifully the point of honour is appealed to (pages 138, 141, and 146) in the cases of the unfortunate men of the 45th, 57th, 88th, and 1st hussars, who were condemned to death, but saved from the ignominious punishment that awaited them, on account of the good conduct of these corps in battles which had just occurred! It was strongly impressed on these men, who seldom experienced any other jibes from their comrades than, on the eve of the anniversaries of Busaco, Albuera, and Ciudad Rodrigo, to hear, 'D—— your eyes, Jem, we will all get —— drunk to-morrow, to keep your second birth-day.' Whenever the extreme punishment of the law could be stayed for such reasons, the opportunity was eagerly embraced. It must have been one of the most painful duties of the Duke, as he often expresses it, to direct the extreme punishment of the law to be carried into effect. We must quote a pretty and graceful touch of the great soldier:—

'4. The Commander of the Forces pardons private —— upon the recommendation of the General Court Martial. He likewise pardons private —— because that soldier told the truth to the General Court Martial, and thereby saved his comrades, who were, by mistake, charged with the offence of which he has been convicted.'—p. 143.

We are prevented making further extracts from the remarks

on the confirming the sentences of General Courts Martial, from the difficulty in selecting them among the many filled with wisdom and justice, so properly referred to by the compiler in the preface.

Under the head of 'Paris,' we find a copy of the Convention on the capitulation of that city to the allied army under Wellington and Blücher; as also, the following copy of an extract from the Duke of Wellington's dispatch, conveying it to Earl Bathurst, then Secretary of State, dated July 4, 1815. (See page 404).— 'This Convention decides all the military questions at this moment existing here, and touches nothing political.' This little extract is a sufficient reply to all the vituperating attacks in the case of the brave but unfortunate Ney, who was condemned to be shot for a political crime against the laws of his country. In what possible manner could the Duke of Wellington have interfered, and have declared to Louis XVIII. that Marshal Ney was included in article 12 of the capitulation? The three French Commissioners who signed that capitulation, and who were alone responsible to France and to Frenchmen, did not claim exemption for Marshal Ney; and the Marshal himself, who knew that his treason to his King, previous to the hundred days, could never be included in any military convention with an enemy, consequently fled under false passports. But the conduct of the Duke of Wellington as a soldier and as a statesman, upon this, as upon every other occasion, has always been governed by a sense of his duty, and needs nothing for its justification but strict scrutiny into the facts. Of this inflexible adherence to duty, he is a glorious example, and he has never swerved from it, either for the momentary attainment of popularity, or even in the indulgence of feelings of humanity incompatible with that duty. Yet the Duke of Wellington has those feelings which ennoble human nature. His expression after the battle of Waterloo to one of his nearest connexions, who congratulated him on the victory, marked strongly his sufferings on that occasion:—'Next to losing a battle, the greatest misfortune to the general is that of gaining a victory.' When the ties of blood, friendship, and respect, were continually and violently severed around him, although his victorious career was hourly distinguished by the applause of his country, still there was a pang, which in his

breast was felt most deeply, when Alexander Gordon, the Camerons, Cadogan, Cocks, Coghlan, De Lancy, Sturgeon, a whole alphabet of heroes!—names the limits of this critique will not permit to enumerate—fell, and left the conqueror with the feelings only of the man!

Under the heads of ‘Smuggling’ and ‘Contraband,’ the commercial laws of the country were strictly enforced and protected; and under the heads of ‘Inhabitants, Churches, and Free-Masonry,’ it will be seen that religious feelings, and even prejudices, were sedulously respected in a Catholic country by an army of heretics; although the Duke never debased himself or his army by the renegade cry of ‘Alla il Alla, and Mahomet is his prophet,’ the petty and profligate clap-trap of Buonaparte in Egypt. We cannot but exult in this national superiority in which these trifling allusions place us, as the character of the nation was identified with that of its army; and no act of the Chief or of his army lowered the reputation of either in the respect due to them from the ally and the conquered.

The head of ‘Thanks’ is one of very high interest, being almost a recapitulation of his victories, rather of his battles, for the one was always followed by the other. His own addresses to the army, on these occasions, have been thought cold, by those who knew neither the Duke nor his army. There is no ‘sun of Austerlitz,’ no excitement of recollections of days of former deeds, which have been said, by an eloquent historian, to be ‘the language of the soldier’—there was none of this—but there was a silent but firm reliance, arising from discipline, superior to all this palavering nonsense; and the expectation was always realized in victory. In his ‘Thanks,’ however, on taking leave of his armies, after the Peninsula and Waterloo, (see pp. 285 and 422,) there is something more than this; there is an expression of interest for his followers, which has been verified to an extent unknown to those who have not watched in civil life the acts of the minister. The expectations of many officers may probably have been disappointed, but to those who have dispassionately appreciated their services, it has been generally seen, that the Duke has sometimes recommended for honours and promotion those who, although doubtful before, now appear unworthy of such distinctions; but among the non-commissioned officers and

soldiers, no opportunity has ever been allowed to escape him in rewarding them for their gallantry and conduct. In the various charges held by the Duke since he quitted the active command of armies, the claim of the old and meritorious soldier has always been preferred; and there are many now whom Peace would have otherwise consigned to penury and want, who, by the Duke's protection, lie nightly down on their pillows in substantial comfort as well as in hard-earned glory. But whilst, as a minister, he was unsparingly, and to an unheard-of extent, diminishing the expenditure of his department, he was increasing the comfort of his followers: and the most striking benefit and example of his having kept his word with the army, in attending to their interests, was the change he made when Master-General, in directing the single-bedstead arrangement for the soldiers, who, before this, contrary to all propriety, slept two in a bed; and if the Duke had no other claim upon the gratitude of the army, this will be recollected, so long as the British soldier shall exist.

Under the heads of 'Cantonments' and 'Squads,' most of those service orders are applicable to that part of the army now serving in Ireland; and, indeed, must be useful everywhere, when troops are engaged in aiding the civil authorities in the preservation of the peace.

Under the heads of 'Bee-hives,' 'Discipline,' 'Plunder,' and 'Stragglers,' it will be seen what difficulties existed, arising from the non-obedience of orders; and however trifling the robbing a bee-hive may appear to a civilian, had it not been checked in the decisive manner shown in the orders under that head, it would have been succeeded by the state which the Duke describes under the head of 'Plunder,' 'that the army will very soon be no better than a banditti.' Soon after the first order on 'Bee-hives' (p. 29) was issued at Jaraicejo, Lord Wellington, in one of his rides, saw a man of the 88th, or Connaught Rangers, posting along as fast as legs could carry him, with a bee-hive on his head. Lord Wellington, furious at so flagrant a disobedience of orders, which sapped all discipline, called out to him, 'Hillo! Sir, where did you get that bee-hive?' Pat had enveloped his head and face in his great coat to prevent the bees stinging him, and thinking more of his prize than the tone of

voice addressed to him, answered in pure Milesian, 'Jist over the hill, there, and by Jasus, if ye don't make haste they'd all be gane.' The blind goodnature of Pat stayed the Duke's anger, and it was reported at dinner as a good joke; it was no joke afterwards, however, to the 4th division, as will be seen in the orders of the month following, when they got the name of the 'honeysuckers.' But they soon won for themselves another name in the field, and gained something sweeter than honey, in a reputation which would have buried their former name in oblivion, had not this book brought it again to memory. Various attempts were made for the purpose of preventing crime; some may have succeeded; but punishments generally ensued, and many of them ended disgracefully in the sentences of the General Courts-Martial, some equally so by the prerogative of the Commander of the Forces, and the authority of the provost marshal. The attention of the officers is so frequently called on these occasions, that one is surprised, with the power the Duke possessed, he did not make more early and frequent examples in reporting them to the Royal notice; it was not, however, until nearly the close of the war, in the year 1814, that he did make a representation of three who failed in the discharge of their duties; their cases will be seen under the head of 'Colonels dismissed the service' (see p. 59).

Under the head of 'Women,' we find some orders that we know not how to analyze; we must therefore leave this subject to the ladies, who, no doubt, will be shocked at the Duke's severity, and exclaim, 'What! not allow the poor women to buy bread, nor to quit the camp without a certificate of virtue, nor to repose their weary limbs on the clothing carts! and oh! the monster, like Æneas enjoining his faithless followers to abandon their French, Spanish, and Portuguese Didos on the banks of the Garonne, to seek other protectors! and assuming a despotic authority, without either Alexander, or Cæsar, or even Buona-partè as a precedent, presumes to interfere with the sacred rites of matrimony, the high attributes of the high priest of Gretna, and dictates to his Amazonian followers, how they shall marry, and be given in marriage!' But, adverting seriously to this class of appendages to an army, it requires no small nerve to enforce, in a campaign, all the necessary orders relative to them. The

most stern discipline must sometimes give way to humanity ; and to those who, in the retreat to Corunna, have seen the starving babe still striving at the breast of its frozen mother, and other similar horrors that accompany the various fortunes into which an army in the field is thrown, it cannot be a matter of indifference to the officer, to ascertain every defined precedent relating to the women of an army, to guide them, and those interested in their safety and comfort.

But it would be needless to follow through this extraordinary book the analysis of every order. There is no material circumstance incidental to an army in the field, which has not some apposite order for conduct, either in the officer or the man ; and with this compilation in his hand, the General may commence his career with the advantage of the condensed experience of seven years' campaigns and victories of the most successful warrior of whom our country can boast.

The soldier who knows how the chain of responsibility of an army is linked together in the squad, company, battalion, brigade, and division, will easily comprehend, from the preface, how an army is formed for field operations ; but there are many who will be at a loss to know how this complicated machine is actually put in motion. All this is admirably described in the orders of the late General Robert Craufurd, who commanded the light division of Lord Wellington's army in the Peninsula, and who received his death wound in the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo : without them, it is useless to attempt the description. These orders were the perfection of theory reduced to practice ; and Lord Hill, although the General of a division, and afterwards commanding a corps of the same army, with great good taste, soon after he became the General Commanding in Chief at the Horse Guards, strongly recommended, in a circular letter from the Adjutant General, that every officer should be provided with a copy.

As it will help the uninitiated reader to understand many parts of the Duke of Wellington's orders, we shall run hastily over the measures which were adopted on putting the English army in motion.

The orders for movement from the Commander of the Forces were communicated by the quarter master general to the general

officers commanding divisions, who detailed them through their assistant quarter master general to the generals of brigades, who gave them out immediately to the battalions of their brigades, through the brigade majors. The drum, the bugle, and the trumpet sounded the preparation for the march at a certain hour, generally one hour and a half before day-light, in order that the several battalions might be assembled on the brigade alarm posts so as to be ready to march off from the ground precisely at day-light. It must be observed, that the alarm post is the place of assembly in the event of alarm; it was generally, and should always be, the place of parade. It is singular to refer to these orders to see how a division of 6000 men, and so on in any proportion, rolled up in their blankets 'in the arms of Murphy,' were all dressed, with blankets rolled, packed, equipped, squadded, paraded in companies, told off in subdivisions, sections, and sections of threes, marched by companies to the regimental alarm posts, and finally to that of the brigades, formed in close columns, all by sounds as familiar to the soldier as the clock at the Horse Guards to a corporal of the Blues. Guns were paraded, baggage packed and loaded, commissariat mules with the reserve biscuit, the storekeeper with the spare ammunition, bullocks placed under charge, all assembled with the same precision and order, ready to march off under the direction of the assistant quarter master general attached to the division or corps, who had previously assembled his guides, which he attached to the column or columns directed to be marched to the points or towns named in the quarter master general's instructions. In the mean time, the formidable provost marshal attached to the division made his patrols. The report of 'All present' being made in succession by the brigade majors to the assistant adjutant general, and by him to the general commanding the column, the word 'By sections of threes, march,' was given, from the right or left as directed in the quarter master general's instructions, the whole being formed either right or left in front, according to the views of the General in command of the army. The advanced guard of the column was then formed under the superintendence of the brigade major of the brigade, right or left in front; this advanced guard consisted of one company of varying strength. The whole were marched off at sloped arms with the greatest precision and regu-

larity; and remained in that order until the word 'March at ease' was given to the leading battalion, which was successively taken up by the others in the rear. The women in detached parties either preceded the column or followed it—none were permitted to accompany it; they generally remained with the baggage, excepting when their finances enabled them to make little speculations in bread and *comfort* in the villages or towns in the neighbourhood of the line of march. The assistant provost-martial with his guard and delinquents brought up the rear of the column, followed by the rear guard under an officer who took up all stragglers, whom he lodged in the main guard on his arrival, where those who had received tickets of permission to fall out were directed to join their corps, non-commissioned officers being in waiting to receive them.

The first halt was generally made at the expiration of half an hour from the departure, and afterwards once an hour; each halt lasted at least five minutes after the men had piled their arms; this might vary a little, as the weather, distance, or other circumstances of the march might point out. The object of halting was for the purpose of allowing those who had fallen out to rejoin their companies, which, excepting in cases of sickness, rarely occurred; as a man wanting to fall out was obliged to obtain a ticket from the officer commanding his company so to do, and to leave his pack and his firelock to be carried by his comrades of his section of threes; he therefore lost no time to return to his rank, and give back his ticket. This first halt was generally passed in eating a piece of bread or meat set aside for the march—arranging the accoutrements, pack, havresac, and canteen, so as to sit well,—in jokes about the last night's quarters or bivouac, or in the anticipations of the next. At the expiration of the halt, the drum or bugle sounded the 'fall in,' and, by word of command, the leading battalion proceeded in the same order as in the beginning of the march; the other battalions following in succession, always with music, then 'march at ease' as before; but when the word 'Attention' was given, the whole sloped arms and marched in the same order as at a field-day; this was always done in formations previous to the halt.

When the army was not near the enemy, two officers preceded each battalion on its march, one of them twenty-four hours before

the battalion, and, on his arrival at the station pointed out, received the necessary information from the assistant quarter master general. The other officer marched the same day in charge of the camp color men of each company, so as to arrive early, and take over the quarters from the officer who went on the day before. The deputy assistant quarter master general always preceded these officers, to make arrangements with the magistrates as to quarters: and the town was parcelled out by him in proportion to the strength of the several battalions or corps to their respective officers; they divided according to their judgment to the ten orderlies, who chalked on the doors the letter of the company and number of men to occupy, as also the officers' quarters, which invariably were in the quarters of the company. The officer first marked off the quarters of the commanding officer, staff, orderly-room, guard-room, quarter master's stores, all in the most central position in the quarters of the regiment. The first officer then proceeded to the next station, the second officer and the ten orderlies proceeded to the road by which the troops were to arrive, and accompanied them to the alarm post fixed for them: which spot the assistant quarter master general, under the direction of the general in command, had pointed out, either in front or in rear of the town, where they halted in column, as also assembled the following morning, or at any other time that the alarm or assembly might be sounded; the brigades, the battalions, and the companies having their respective alarm posts or places of formation in the most central parts of their quarters. The officers commanding companies then put their men up, and made reports to the officer commanding as to the accommodation or the want of it, the officers commanding battalions to those commanding brigades, and the generals of brigades to the general of the division. The assistant quarter master general was always ready to be appealed to, in case of a battalion being crowded, to afford further accommodation, as there was generally some building or street reserved in a central position for this purpose, or in the event of detachments of other corps arriving.

When the column was to bivouac in huts, or, as afterwards, encamp in tents, there occurred less difficulty. On arrival on the position pointed out in the quarter master general's instruc-

tions, the general commanding chose what he considered the most favourable ground in accordance with them as to front, communications with his flanks and rear, reference to wood and water, and the health of the ground, avoiding proximity to marshes where the night damps might affect the troops. The assistant quarter master general disposed of this ground to the several officers sent on in advance by the battalions for that purpose, as before described in quarters. The general then proceeded to the front, and indicated where he wished his advanced piquets to be posted to be in communication with the outposts of the cavalry in front, or, if there were none, to cover all the approaches with detached posts and sentries, so that nothing should be able to arrive by any of them without being seen and stopped; or if patrols or other movements of the enemy should take place, either by night or day, that the same might be made known by the chain of sentries to the detached posts and outlying piquet, and communicated to the main body, if thought necessary, by the field-officer of the outlying piquets. Preconcerted signals of setting fire to beacons, or a certain number of musket shots fired, communicated the alarm more quickly, and allowed the troops more time to get under arms, until the precise cause of the alarm was ascertained. The division having arrived on its ground, the outlying piquets were immediately marched off to take the covering of the front just described. The temporary division hospital and the commissariat magazines being pointed out to the commanding officers, surgeons, and quarter-masters, the brigades and battalions proceeded to their respective alarm-posts and ground for the encampment or bivouac, accompanied by the officer and the camp colour men, as before stated. The quarter and rear guards were then mounted, to be relieved always in two hours afterwards by fresh troops. The sentries from the quarter guards watched the communications in the front, and of the detached posts between the camp and the outlying piquets to communicate alarm, if announced in any manner from the front. If the troops were to encamp, the tent mules, which always immediately followed the column, under charge of an officer, preceding all other baggage, were unloaded, and the company's tents pitched in column on the alignment given to the battalion, bri-

gade, and division. If there were no tents, then the bill-hooks came speedily into play: regular squads were formed for cutting branches, others for drawing them to the lines, and others as the architects for constructing the huts: this was an amusement more than a duty, and it was quite wonderful to see how speedily every one was under cover. It was the pride of the company, that the officers' hut should be the first and the best built. The soldier became quite reinvigorated by the mere act of piling arms, getting off his accoutrements, pack, havresack, and other incumbrances, which weigh generally about sixty pounds, and set to work in right earnest at the hut building. Although the huts were not quite so speedily erected or pitched with the same regularity as the tents, yet still the order and alignment were preserved when the ground permitted. This might not have been essential, yet, still, no opportunity should be allowed to escape in inculcating the habit of order and regularity in whatever is done by the soldier; and, however simple the act, it should be impressed on his mind, that what is ordered is the easiest, and that what is his duty is his interest.

The regular fatigue parties for bread, meat, and spirits were regularly told off, and warned before the companies were dismissed to pitch tents or build huts. These parties consisted generally of two or three men per company, under a corporal for each particular article of provisions, to be ready to turn out when that article was called at the quarter guard. A company's guard or watch of a corporal and four privates furnishing one sentry side arms only, always remained in the lines of the company to repeat communications and preserve order. The commanding officers made their reports through the majors of brigade, that their respective battalions had received bread, meat, spirits, and forage, specifying the number of days for each; that they had marched off one or more companies of such and such strength for the outlying piquets to the posts directed under the orders of the field officer of the outlying piquets; and that the orderlies who had accompanied them had returned, knowing where to find them. The outlying piquets were under the field officer of the day, who again received his instructions from the assistant adjutant general of the division. The commanding officers at the same time reported the force of the company or inlying piquet, who were ready to turn out to support the out-

lying piquet in the event of being required, and were under the field officer of the day of the inlying piquets, and kept on their accoutrements, although in other respects like the remaining companies not on duty, and in their tents or huts. The company on inlying piquet, as also the field officer of the day in charge of the whole of the companies of the brigade, were always first for the outlying piquet. All particular duties were taken by companies, under their own officers, instead of the old way of individual roster of so many men per company; such as the company for outlying piquet; the company for inlying piquet, which gave the quarter and rear guards within the lines; the first company for general fatigue, from which the quarter-master's fatigues were taken for ammunition, equipment, working parties, and all other fatigues, excepting rations: all these duties were taken by the roster of companies. The issue of rations was regulated by the quarter-master and commissariat, agreeably to the instructions of the general commanding the division or brigade, communicated in orders to the battalions, and was done regimentally by individuals from all the companies, and not by the company on general fatigue. On the issue of any article, such as bread, meat, wine, or forage, the fatigue parties from each company, as before described, were called out from the quarter guard by the quarter-master, and repeated by the watch in the lines of each company; those previously warned for each article turned out under their respective non-commissioned officers, and assembled under the officer of the inlying piquet named in the orders at the quarter guard. He then proceeded with the quarter-master or quarter-master serjeant to the place of issue; after the delivery, he returned to the quarter guard, reported to the captain of the day, who was the captain of the inlying piquet, the regularity or irregularity of the particular issue under his superintendence; and then dismissed the parties under their several non-commissioned officers to their respective companies, where the delivery was immediately made under the orderly officer of each company. The same routine took place when in quarters; and although the recapitulation may appear tedious, still the whole was performed with a celerity which leaves more time to the soldier when in camp than in any other situation.

At an appointed hour the sick reports were gathered from the

companies, and the men paraded for the inspection of the surgeon; he reported to the staff-surgeon, who, in his turn, reported to the General commanding the division, sending his own reports to the Inspector General of hospitals.

The General commanding the division made his reports to the Adjutant and Quarter-master Generals for the information of the Commander of the forces, according to the importance of the reports and the circumstances of the moment.

When before the enemy, the issue of the provisions and the cooking were attended to with every consideration to the position of things, so that what was to be done should be done with speed as well as precaution; for it would be bad management to throw away the soup before it was well made, or swallow it boiling hot, in case of interruption, and still worse to leave it to the enemy. All this is sufficiently dwelt upon in the Duke's 'Circular Letter,' p. 54, and in the admirable orders of General R. Craufurd, from whence the greater part of the above details were learned and proved in the field.

The new tin camp kettle, carried alternately by the men of each squad, was a great improvement upon the old Flanders iron cauldron, which required a whole tree or the half of a church door to make it boil; and which being carried on the camp kettle mule (afterwards appropriated to carry the tents), only arrived with the baggage. This improvement, as the Duke says in his 'October Minute,' p. 202, in writing on another subject, 'left much valuable time disposable for other purposes.' It is to be hoped that in any future wars some improvement will also take place in the weight and temper of the old bill-hook, which, in the early part of the Peninsular war, was immoderately heavy, and had edges which, on attempting to cut any wood not absolutely green, bent like lead: many of the men threw these away, but the more prudent *exchanged* them for the lighter and better tempered bill-hook used by the Portuguese in their vineyards, exchange being no robbery with our fellows.

In the camp or bivouac, in fine weather, all went on merrily; but there came moments of which the mere remembrance even now recalls ancient twitches of rheumatism, which the iron frames of the most hardy could not always resist. On the night previous to General Craufurd's affair on the Coa, on those previous to the

· battle of Salamanca and the battle of Waterloo, and on many other less anxious nights, not hallowed by such recollections, deluges of rain not only drenched the earth, but unfortunately all that rested or tried to rest upon it; the draining through the hut from above by some ill-placed sticks in the roof, like lightning conductors, conveyed the subtle fluid where it was the least wanted; while the floods coursing under, drove away all possibility of sleep; repose was, of course, out of the question, when even the worms would come out of the earth, it being far too wet for them. 'In such a night as this,' it was weary work to await the lagging dawn with a craving stomach; and, worse still, to find nothing but a bellyful of bullets for breakfast. But, on the Pyrenees, in the more fortunate and healthy days of tents, it was not unusual when the mountain blast and torrents of rain drew up the pegs of the tents, which then fall, as nothing in nature falls, squash on the soldier who lies enveloped and floundering in the horrible wet folds of canvass, that nothing but the passing joke of 'Boat a hoy!' or the roars of laughter caused by some wag, who turns this acmé of misery into mirth, could re-animate to the exertion of scrambling out of these clammy winding-sheets. These are recollections, however, which, notwithstanding the suffering in the experience of them, and their legacies of rheumatism, still afford pleasurable feelings to the old soldier, now laid up by his Christmas fireside.

There are many duties required of a subaltern in the army, which, however they may contribute to form his character as an officer, become sometimes almost too great a trial. Of these, being detached to the rear is one of the most irksome, and he is fortunate who escapes without committing his responsibility or his temper. Some end in comedy, and some in tragedy. In the early part of the Peninsular campaigns it was usual for the commissary to press carts to go to the Douro to bring back pipes of wine for the troops. On these occasions, in a hilly country and very tedious work, the men would often contrive, in spite of the vigilance of the subaltern, to let the driver escape with his bullocks for a pecuniary consideration. This, however, could rarely be brought home to the soldiers in charge. Other carts were pressed on a representation to the *Juiz da fora*, or magistrate. On one of these occasions a detachment of the 88th regi-

ment was sent to Pesqueira for some wine. On their return, the commissary observed that the two fine white bullocks which he had sent with one cart had been exchanged for two very inferior blacks. He made his regular complaint, and the two men in charge were brought to a court-martial. On the trial everything was proved, save the act of receiving money from the driver to allow the white bullocks to escape; and the President, on summing up the evidence of the commissary, said to the prisoners, 'It is quite useless denying the fact; it is conclusive. You started from hence with a pair of fine white bullocks, and you brought back a pair of lean blacks. What can you have to say to that?' Patrick O'Reilly, one of them, noways abashed by this, which every one thought a poser, and ready with any excuse to save him from punishment, immediately exclaimed,—'Och! please your honour, and wasn't the white bastes lazy, and didn't we bate them until they were black?' The Court was not quite satisfied of the truth of this wonderful metamorphosis, and they were condemned to be punished (see *General Courts Martial, Privates*, p. 146), but were saved from it by the gallantry of their comrades.

Of all the unpleasant worrying duties, however, that of being on baggage guard, or going on detachment with sick and wounded to the rear, is the most inglorious. Reference must be again had to that invaluable work to the soldier, General R. Craufurd's Orders, for all the detail respecting baggage: but however perfect that system may be, a riotous mule deranges all; and there is no duty so vexatious, and that the subaltern undertakes with less satisfaction, excepting only the detachment of sick and wounded to the rear. The eternal screeching of the ungreased wheels of the Portuguese bullock cars, which too often irritates the sick man into a fever, if he has not one already; the breaking down of the cars, or the escape of the drivers with the bullocks belonging to others, the upsetting the 'waggon-train' waggons from the badness of the rocky roads, the assembly of the sick in the morning, the only novelty being some new misery, such as to become sexton and bury a man who died during the night, or on the road, are daily occurrences; and if, by chance, he has conducted the whole to the general hospital without having forfeited his commission, the only prospect before

him is, that he will be ordered to conduct back from the hospital to the army the recovered men of twenty different battalions, who, having been free for some time from regimental military restraint, give trouble that no one can describe; and it requires all the zeal and energy of the officer to subdue his feelings in not taking the administration of the law into his own hands. (See Detachments.) To get well on the right side of the *rosters* of baggage guard and sick detachment, is the greatest happiness to the sub, who to such duties greatly prefers the nervous moment of advancing in line just within the reach of fire, or the still more appalling service of four hours in trenches. At the same time it must not be denied that these very inglorious services, as they are called, often became the truest touchstones of an officer's character. All men, or most men, behave well under much observation; but it is only those who do their duty from principle that can be trusted on those services over which no mortal eye presides, and of which no superior may discover the merit. It is then, to use the expressive phrase of the turf, 'that blood tells,' and that the genuine spirit of a gentleman comes forth, and, in the cheerful exercise of the most subordinate duties, teaches an officer to feel that his highest source of honor is the performance of his duty.

One of the most important services of an army in the field is that of the outlying piquet, particularly when in the presence of the enemy. It is then interesting from its peculiar importance, as not only the repose and tranquillity, but the honour and even the safety of a whole army are dependent upon the manner in which it is performed. When the outlying piquet is first posted, it is done with a view that with small detached outposts from it, and double sentries, the whole of the front of the position of the division from which it is detached should be covered, and every possible approach so watched that nothing can attempt to pass the line of demarcation between two armies without its being seen and reported. There are certain theoretical rules laid down for posting piquets, both with regard to detached outposts as well as sentries, which may be learned at home; but the continual practice of them in the field, when not before the enemy, will shortly render the outpost officer competent; and soon, before the enemy, put him on a chess-board of defence to which his opera-

tions must be entirely confined. The active officer in charge of an outlying piquet must study all day what he will do all night ; for as then his division sleeps under his protection, he should exercise every combination of mind and body to that end. Surprise would be dishonour under any circumstances ; but the surprise of his division would be eternal shame. The disposition of the posts of an outlying piquet by day, as well as its sentries, in general vary from those of the night ;—these are either pushed forward or retired as the nature of the ground may favour, particularly as to the horizon of it ; for although, in the daytime, a vedette or sentry should be posted on an eminence for the purpose of seeing far, and all around him, at night he should be invariably posted under the eminence, as he can then, from the light and shade, even in the darkest night, more easily discover any one approaching his post. The sentries should be relieved every hour under such circumstances ;—in bad weather, which is the time chosen for surprise, more often ; and by patrols, either of the subalterns or serjeants, their attention and vigilance should be continually excited ;—not a word should escape,—a preconcerted sound of a ‘ hem ! ’ or a whistle suffices.

We well know an officer, then a youngster, who was on piquet after the battle of Vimieiro ; it was the first service-piquet he had ever seen, and he had the outpost. It was in the evening when, having studied his ground, he was waiting till night to post his sentries, having communicated with the outposts on his right and left. Whilst pondering over his Shorn-cliffe education, a thought struck him that he had no parole or countersign ; and he was about to dispatch the serjeant to the captain commanding the main body of the piquet for it, supposing it might have been forgotten, when a General officer rode from the front, and, on approaching, first asked, ‘ What regiment ? ’ then, ‘ What corps do you communicate with on your right and left ? ’ The replies were made by the Ensign, stating that he was waiting only, until sufficiently dark, to post his double sentries in communication with his flanks and to cover his front. The General seemed satisfied, but the young officer was not ; and when the General turned about to ride away, thinking it an opportunity not to be lost, he said, ‘ But, Sir, I have no parole or countersign.’— ‘ Never mind parole or countersign, keep a sharp look-out to

your front and flanks.' After doubting some time as to who this unknown authority could be who had upset part of his Shorncliffe instruction, he straightway applied to the captain of the piquet, from whom he learned that there was in fact no parole or countersign. On mentioning what had taken place, the captain said, 'Oh, that was Sir Arthur.' No time was lost in returning to the outpost, and the sentries were placed where the line was here and there marked by several dead bodies of those killed in the morning, the whiteness of whose skins among the heather formed marks to guide him in his patrols; and the anxious Sub passed his first service-piquet watching with strict obedience the orders of the great Chief, who was afterwards to be his star and his guide.

However great the responsibility of the outpost duty, as far as regards piquets, may be, it is still a generous warfare; for, in civilized armies, the attempt is rarely made to surprise a piquet, excepting with the ulterior view of surprising also the posts which it covers, and which could not be gained in any other manner; or in surprising a corps of the enemy, as at Arroyo Molinos, by Sir Rowland Hill. It is an understood thing, therefore, that the outpost of an army is not to be attacked with a view to the paltry advantage of destroying or taking fifty or a hundred men. Such practices can lead to no military results, excepting in exercising a vigilance to prevent reprisals; but even this forms a bad excuse for encouraging such petty warfare; and in the light division of the Peninsular army, when in presence of the enemy, it was never attempted on either side. On the contrary, there existed not a little cordiality. On one occasion, for example, a sentry of the 52d, being posted within a few yards of a French sentry, made his enemy understand, in a sort of Spanish gibberish, that he was very much in want of tobacco. The Frenchman, with national politeness, offered to supply his wants, if he would give him the money to buy some in the rear of his post; the five-franc piece was forked out, but, before given, it was necessary to have a guarantee for the fulfilment of this treaty, when the Frenchman was about to leave his firelock in pledge; but here another difficulty took place: the French sentry said, 'But who is to keep my post?' The Englishman to this immediately answered, 'Oh! never mind that; I am the only one opposed to you, and

I will keep your post until your return.' This assurance was perfectly satisfactory;—but an hour passed away and the Frenchman did not return: and it afterwards appeared that the *vivandière* who sold the tobacco also had a bottle of brandy, and the change of the five-franc piece offered too great a temptation to resist,—the honour of the Frenchman got drowned in *eau de vie*, and he was discovered dead drunk by his piquet. He was of course asked where his firelock was, or who had got it. His answer was thought hardly possible; but, on a communication between the officers commanding the opposing piquets, the preliminaries of the amicable treaty were duly exchanged and ratified by a present of the tobacco.

At Valle, in the winter of 1810 and 1811, when the headquarters of Marshal Massena were at Santarem, the English and French sentries were also posted within pistol shot of each other, separated only by the narrow stream, the Rio Mayor, and by an 'abbatis' placed on the bridge of the causeway over it. The greatest cordiality existed between the two armies during the day, but at nightfall all civilities ceased, and gave place to suspicion, vigilance, and caution. During the nights of four long months, not a word was heard but the shrill cry of the French 'Qui vive?' or the solemn under-tone of the English, 'Who goes there?' heard only by those whom it concerned; save, too, the watch-dog's bark, which even now in these nights of peace recalls to the soldier's ear those anxious scenes from which this honest sound is rarely absent, whatever measures may be taken to subdue every thing else to silence. The first hint of day in all this stillness of darkness, when every ear was on the stretch, was the music of the French regiments relieving their outpost. They generally struck up at two hours before the first dawn of light was visible on the horizon, and almost always remained until day-break, playing those stirring airs for which the French martial music is so justly celebrated; and although the causeway piquet was not sought after like an opera box, yet in fine weather it often became the favourite lounge for those officers of the Light Division who were fond of music, and even to others, the time and place giving to this matin concert an interest which will never be forgotten by those who heard it. It must be here explained, that when at the outposts, all the

troops, the main body of the division as well as the piquets, and in fact every man, are under arms at the time mentioned, two hours before day-break; the guns are horsed, and baggage packed and loaded, all prepared for the battle or the march. The out piquets are then relieved, so that the force may be double at all the outposts; the 'coming off' piquet does not leave the ground until the field-officer of the outlying piquet at the outpost reports 'All's well,'—then the weary troops are turned in.

The great end of all orders is discipline, so as to bring into the field an army which, according to the calculations of the general who commands it, shall be able to enter upon the operations in view with the greatest chance of success, whether in the attack of the position or the fortress. Patriotism, enthusiasm, and hope of plunder, may, singly and collectively, have their influence; but discipline is the only principle to be depended upon in the day of battle; and it was chiefly owing to the total want of it that the Spanish armies were destroyed one after the other. The habit, indeed, is one of slow growth, which it requires the constant solicitude from the general to the corporal to inculcate and support; and as the Duke of Wellington says, in his 'Circular Letter,' 'the discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degree relaxed, and requires the utmost attention on the part of the generals and other officers to bring it back to the state in which it ought to be for service.' But where does relaxation of discipline begin? Certainly it ought not with the soldier, if the vigilance of the officer is exercised; and certainly not with the officer, if the authority of the superior is properly enforced.

Discipline is, therefore, the strict obedience of orders; and in a well-disciplined army the General directs his columns with perfect confidence that they will arrive at certain points at certain times, that his instructions will be obeyed to a minute, and that the baggage, commissariat, and every other incumbrance will remain behind, or at places indicated, to be ready to proceed to the front when sent for, or to retire still farther in the event of a failure of attack, so that the retreat may be clear. As most armies in position have their fronts covered by rivers, it is necessary that these should be turned or passed by the attacking army. If to be passed, that part is generally chosen where the

passage may be covered by the fire of artillery, posted on some commanding situation for that purpose. The passage being effected at some ford or bridge, by a small body, it is afterwards thrown out as skirmishers to cover the advance of the column which follows. It was a principle in Lord Wellington's army, never to expose a column to the fire of artillery: the column, therefore, invariably deployed, or formed to the front in line, previously to getting under fire; and was supported by other lines formed in the same manner in the rear, at about half musket-shot distance, so as to afford support to the front lines, without being influenced by the breaking up of the first line from failure, if such an event should occur. This system of Lord Wellington was opposed to foreign theories, and particularly to French practice, who always attacked in column, and deployed on the crest of the position, if they ever arrived at it, when the men were generally blown, and, from being under fire, necessarily performed this nice operation under disadvantageous circumstances. The French attacks at Vimieiro, Talavera, Busaco, and Sorrauren, from acting on this principle, were defeated. The British, in their attacks at Salamanca, Vittoria, the Nive, Orthez, and Toulouse, having previously deployed into line, carried the enemy's positions. At Waterloo, also, the whole of the French attacks were in column, and they were signally defeated; the advance of the British infantry was in line, and the result we all know. The column, and all other shapes into which troops may be thrown in relation to the ground over which they may have to pass, are with us merely preparatory movements to the formation of the line, which offers the greatest front of fire, and which is always the English formation of battle, excepting only where there is a chance of an attack by cavalry.

The enemy's position being carried, which it is supposed must be in the successive attacks of well-conducted lines, no time was lost in getting the attacking lines into columns, always, however, taking care to keep them out of the fire of artillery. The commissariat and baggage were then sent for. The cavalry were sent in pursuit to take advantage of the enemy in disorder, and hustled them, that no decisive measure could be adopted by them; but if formed again in another position, they were attacked again by the infantry in the manner just pointed out. Those

who may follow the Duke of Wellington in the command of British armies in the field, will therefore do well to follow his system, which, in spite of Jomini and other theoretical writers, and the practical theorists of the wedge tactics, has always succeeded with us hitherto, both in attack and defence. The superiority of the line over the column is manifest: first, as the exposure of the troops to the effects of artillery and other fire is infinitely less; and, secondly, the fire from it is in a tenfold ratio greater than from the column. But it can be practised only by troops who have confidence in their leader, in one another, and in themselves. The attack of a column is the attack of a mere mob—the attack in line affords the truest test of discipline and bravery combined. Where these qualities are not indisputably established, it is useless to attempt the manœuvre. Like breaking the line at sea, it belongs only to the strongest and most valiant.

If discipline and obedience to orders are so essentially useful in operations in the field and in battle, how much more necessary do they become in the siege, where there is required a greater combination of all the requisites to ensure success! Confidence, patience, and perseverance, are indispensable every moment in this difficult operation; and nothing but the incessant vigilance exercised by the officers, both to inspire and to enforce these, will enable the general to calculate securely upon the result. The preparations for a siege may be carried on for months before they are known to an army that is to undertake it. The transport required for the ‘matériel’ is incredible. The battering train, platforms for the batteries, ammunition, shot, intrenching tools, and all the paraphernalia necessary with the engineer’s park, are arranged by the Commander of the forces with the commanding engineer, and the commanding officer of artillery, to be at certain points; and it is seldom until their arrival that the order is issued to the divisions of the army to commence making gabions and fascines. This order may, however, turn out to be only a pretext; and even the assembly of two or three divisions with intrenching tools, gabions, and fascines, near the fortress to be attacked, may often disguise a different operation; but when covering parties are ordered, and working parties of 500 or 1000 men are warned, each musket being replaced from the engineer’s park by pickaxe, spade, or shovel, there appears little doubt as

to the object; and when these working parties march out at dusk under the officers of engineers from the park where they are paraded, and spread themselves out under their directions, in a line parallel to the fortress, and the pickaxes, spades, and shovels are pegging away more quickly than imagination can figure, the little doubt that may have existed as to a siege vanishes, and the first parallel with its approaches before daylight begins to take a form. It is not to be supposed that this first operation is carried on unknown to the enemy within the fortress about to be besieged; as outlying piquets and scouts have, on the approach of the working parties, informed them that business has begun. Fireballs, carcasses, and stink-pots are immediately thrown to lighten the darkness on the spot reported, and prevent, by their explosions and their stench, the possibility of the men working. The whole ramparts are soon alive, and every gun and mortar pours forth such showers of grape, and such number of shells, which explode in all directions, that escape from death appears to be a miracle. Meanwhile the covering parties of the attacking force, composed of riflemen and the best shots, steal down as near to the glacis as possible, and endeavour to pick off the gunners through the embrasures, whilst others dig holes in which they may be covered from the returning fire of the ramparts.

The working parties, being particularly and personally interested in throwing up earth towards the fortress, soon cover themselves with a celerity rivalling that of the expertest grave-digger; but too often, poor fellows! illustrating the identity of occupation in their own fate. This operation, which is called breaking ground, is very important; and particularly so that it should be done quickly; for when once the first parallel and approaches are well covered, the siege assumes its first mathematical form. The second parallel, the formation of the batteries, the zig-zags, magazines, and the sap, until the crest of the glacis is blown in, all follow agreeably to defined rules. These rules, however, are liable to a vast deal of interruption by the enemy, who lose no opportunity by fire and by *sortie* to derange these mathematical calculations. There is a continued concentrated fire on the batteries thrown up; and every opportunity is watched and seized,

when negligence warrants a *sortie*, to destroy the works of the besiegers, and, if possible, to penetrate into the engineer's park. If such an event should occur, the besieged engineers, who accompany the *sortie*, glance their eyes rapidly over the ground for data on which to rest plans for present and future derangement during the siege. Negligence and disobedience of orders can, however, be the only causes of such a disaster to a besieging army, and no excuse for not being prepared can ever cover such a disgrace. The besieged watch with anxiety the moment of relief in the trenches; for as at that time there are double the number of men in them, the chances of destruction are greater, and the fire is consequently increased. To avoid this, it is perhaps better that the different posts in the batteries and parallels should be relieved in detail, and not all at once. There are certain parts of the approaches to the parallels in every siege, where the concentrated fire from the place has a greater effect than elsewhere. This enviable spot is generally called 'Hell' by the soldiers; and the graver folks amongst the troops used to say, that if half as much care were taken to avoid the nether regions, as there was to avoid this particular nook, there would be fewer souls in danger.

The trenches and all the communications are made sufficiently wide to permit the battering guns being drawn through them, and being led into their respective embrasures in the batteries. This is also a quick operation, done during the dark, and generally performed with great zeal, as nothing gladdens the heart of the besieger so much as to hear the 8, 10 or 12 gun battery thundering away against the wall to be breached, or seeing the defences destroyed, the embrasures blown in, guns dismounted, and all the confusion consequent upon the first retaliating shots; and when a lump of wall topples down, and crumbles into clouds of dust, forming the first symptoms of the breach, he works at the sap which is to lead him to it, with increased energy. This is generally the day on which most work is done, as every shot seems to help home the pickaxe.

In the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, and Burgos, the troops were exposed to all the inclemencies of the seasons. That of Ciudad Rodrigo was undertaken in the depth of one of the coldest winters we experienced in Spain; and the besieging army, which was relieved daily in the trenches by divisions, while on

that duty, were entirely exposed to its severity. One often thinks of Corporal Trim in the trenches, for it was very poor fun for the working parties, and those that covered them, after being under showers of grape, shells, shot, and the devil knows what, without being yet able to return the fire. And after working till all are as tired as dogs, and each man expecting the passing moment to be his last; on being relieved, to contrive to get well out of the trenches, and retire to a berth on the cold ground, where the division is, by way of being encamped—but without a twig between them and the heavens! In the morning, the soldier, rolled up in his blanket, which, from the insensible perspiration, becomes stiff and frozen, awakes, covered with hoar frost, like a twelfthcake! Indeed, it was with some difficulty that the men could get out of this frozen cuirass of blanket; and then it was some time before circulation produced any feeling. However, when the division was relieved, a march of three leagues, with a cold bath in wading, up to their middles, through the frozen though rapid Agueda, was a cure like the actual cautery, and excited the blood to resume its wonted channels. At the siege of Badajos, a fortress of greater strength, with an increased proportion of fire, the torrents of rain that inundated the trenches and the camp, rendered even glory disgusting. At the siege of Burgos, as it will be seen by the orders under the head of ‘Sieges,’ of that date, the troops did not work *con amore*: whether this arose from doubts that the means were inadequate, or that those who did work and fight with zeal and energy were not supported, the weather, in a more favourable season, was not more propitious. At St. Sebastian, however, in the following year, the besieging divisions had the benefit of tents, a fine autumn, an abundant country, and a seaport close at hand, from whence supplies of all descriptions were readily procured.

But let us return to the detail of the siege in-general. The breaches having been made, and the engineers declared them practicable, that is, possible for men to get up them from the ditch to the top, the next thing to be done is to assault them. The governor and chief engineer of the fortress, if men of foresight, will, according to the instructions of Buonaparte to his generals, published by Carnot, as early as possible insulate the breaches; that is, by cutting deep trenches, and throwing up

traverses, completely separate the parts of the wall breached from the rest of the rampart, and from the body of the place. In these cases the forlorn hope and storming party would be pretty sure to pay the forfeit of their enterprise; and the success of the assault must depend upon other points of attack, which have become weakened by the attention of the enemy to the breaches.

The divisions named for the assault leave their knapsacks on the camp ground, under a guard, that they may be less encumbered in their formidable enterprise. The head of the column of attack is formed of the storming party, consisting of 300 men, with officers in proportion, from the different regiments of the division ordered for the assault. They are volunteers, and, as may be supposed, are fellows whom a small matter will not frighten or daunt, or set to the right about. From these 300, a party of twenty-five to thirty is to precede the advance of the remainder of this storming party. The subaltern officer, who has volunteered the command of it, generally selects these men from his own regiment, and attaches to it serjeants on whose zeal and support he can rely. This little band is called by the well known and rather melancholy name of 'Forlorn Hope.' They are prepared for the worst, but hope the best. As the instructions to the officer commanding this party are to lead the column to the breach, and to make a lodgment in it, he previously examines the ground well, so that the darkness of the night shall not lead him into error. The attack commences on a preconcerted signal of so many guns from a particular battery. He must be a stout-hearted fellow whose pulse does not rattle on at a gallop as these signal guns go off. The officer who leads gives the word 'Follow me!'—then leads straight to the glacis, to the point he had intended, where, from its being ploughed up from the fire from the batteries, there is no doubt where he is, when he gets there. No time is to be lost, and all jump into the ditch to avoid the fire of the place, which, from the assault being now discovered, deals out death in all shapes wholesale. Fire balls are thrown out, and the darkest night becomes light as day, presenting to the open view of the besieged the steady march of the column which follows the storming party, under cover of the riflemen and sharpshooters lying on the glacis, who keep up a

fire on the ramparts to those who show their heads above them, or in the embrasures. The column, however, presents too great a mass to escape without the concentrated fire upon it from the bastions making dreadful chasms in it; but the grand tug of war is in the breach, where parties posted on the sides of it keep an incessant fire on the top, whilst the poor forlorn hope, supported by the storming party, scramble up the rugged breach, where they are either knocked on the head, tumbled headlong down, or maintain their ticklish pre-eminence, till the main column forces them on the rampart.—

Some reflections here obtrude themselves. The officer who leads this party and survives is rewarded by promotion and the position which his success gives him in his profession. But in this country promotion cannot be the reward of his reckless and gallant followers, who live to perform again the same desperate service: they maintain, however, to the end of their lives the respect of their comrades, and when discharged with an honourable pension, they repeat to their admiring hearers their

‘Hair breadth ‘scapes in the imminent deadly breach.’

These are the enviable feelings which stamp their superiority over the radical vagabond, who never heard a shot fired, and having disgraced the name of a soldier, is dismissed the army, to receive a public subscription!

These reflections are addressed chiefly to those who inconsiderately pass over, in moments of peace and security, those services, which, in times of national danger, it is important to reward. But we should leave an unpleasant, and, in fact, an erroneous impression on the minds of our readers generally, and of our young military readers in particular, if we omitted to point out that the right-minded soldier is stimulated on such occasions, as those just described, by motives far higher in themselves, and far more generous, than any which can be called into exercise by the hopes of pecuniary reward, or even of professional advancement, distinction, or applause. We allude, of course, to that manly sense of duty, which prompts both officer and man to undertake such services, not from any ulterior views connected with himself, but from a consciousness that the sacrifice is a right one to make. It would be mere affectation to say, that a soldier is the better for being insensible at such moments to the renown

and other advantages which are to attend success; but we do say, that the soldier whose chief motive on such occasions rests on such selfish grounds, is not the person most likely to succeed; and assuredly, is not the man who merits those rewards due only to public spirit, and that thorough self-devotion, which is the least imitable of all the characteristics of true greatness of mind. To imagine to oneself, indeed, a party of men forming the 'forlorn hope,' calculating the amount of their future pensions, or to fancy the officer who was to lead it, settling in his own mind, as a stimulus, the exact steps he might take in promotion, are ideas too base and contemptible to dwell upon; and we venture to assert that such unworthy thoughts never enter such men's minds at such moments; or, if they do, that they are speedily driven out by the crowd of more gentlemanlike and manly reflections and motives which constitute the true principles of duty.

If these considerations be well grounded, it becomes men who have been engaged in public services of difficulty and danger to avoid adverting to those services as claims for reward, because it cannot but have the effect of mixing up motives altogether incongruous, to the injury of the applicant. If an officer undertakes a service from a selfish motive, he does not deserve more than the mere promotion or pecuniary reward for which he looked. But if his motives were of the generous stamp to which we have alluded, and that fame, the noblest of the soldier's rewards, has followed his success, he should obviously be cautious how he links the word claim to the word celebrity. It may be our duty, as spectators at a distance, to award the solid distinctions of money and promotion to the men who fearlessly and disinterestedly step forward to sacrifice their lives, if need be, in our cause; but it is sadly to hazard their renown if they lead us to infer that their motives partook of a selfish character from the first.

We have dwelt longer on this point than many people may think reasonable, but we feel exceedingly anxious that all officers, and especially young officers, should be familiarized with the idea that their chief chance of success, and their only solid claim to distinction, spring from acting under a thoroughly disinterested sense of duty.

But to the breach,—which being carried by the assault, or by

the escalade, every attention must be paid by the general commanding the attack to re-form the troops, to secure the garrison, to place guards upon the magazines, and to perform every duty connected with a fortified town. Not an instant is to be lost in placing guards at the breaches, getting the troops out of the town, opening the gates which are probably blocked up, and in immediately restoring the breaches. The lawlessness of the troops must be restrained to prevent the day finishing in licentiousness and cruelty; and although the capture of the three fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and St. Sebastian, may have been succeeded by some acts, which escaped the vigilance of the officers, still there are few assaults on record followed by less wantonness or vengeance. The assaults by night are more subject to this relaxation of proper discipline after success than those of the day; and if there was no other consideration, this probably might have been to the Duke a sufficient reason, after the experience of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, to have fixed upon day-light at St. Sebastian as the hour of assault; although, as it proved in the sequel, the result did not justify the reasonable expectation. The first two successful sieges in Spain, although honourable to the troops who crowned them with victory, were for a time followed by a temporary demoralization; an increased attention, however, restored authority, and reputation increased its power.

The description attempted to be given of all the different duties and proceedings of an army in the field has arisen from the recollection of them on reading these orders. The best proof of their excellence, and the result of obedience to them, are to be found in the career of victories which followed; and it will possibly not be uninteresting to lay before the reader a short analysis of these important operations.

When Sir Arthur Wellesley first landed in Portugal, he was in command of a disjointed army, consisting of a few sturdy regiments, well nigh in rags, the greater part having just returned from the expedition to Buenos Ayres,—two weak squadrons of cavalry indifferently mounted on foreign horses, and a small force of artillery without horses at all, excepting those which Sir Arthur had, by his local influence at Cork, as Secretary for Ireland, obtained from the Irish waggon train. This was the

more extraordinary, as at that moment every town, both in Great Britain and Ireland, was filled with the finest cavalry and artillery, in point of material, of which any country could boast. There was but little experience in the staff, either military or civil. However, with this force Sir Arthur gained the battle of Vimieiro, and would have been in Lisbon before his defeated enemy, had he been allowed to proceed in the career which he had so victoriously commenced. The occasion was lost and deplored, and by none more than by Sir Arthur Wellesley. The convention of Cintra was followed by the expedition into Castille, under the lamented Sir John Moore, whose glorious death at Corunna left Sir Arthur Wellesley as the genius under whom England was again to try her fortunes in the field.

No sooner had he assumed the command of the army than he planned and executed the most splendid and bold enterprise known in modern times; and did Sir Arthur Wellesley wear no other laurels but those won by the passage of the Douro and the battle of Oporto, he would have passed down to posterity as a general of the first order. From the north of the Douro he carried his army to the Tagus. He fought and won the battle of Talavera, under the most unfavourable circumstances, against a superior force, aided only, or rather impeded, by a helpless ally. Experience now taught him the lesson, which Sir John Moore had so fatally proved, that the general in the command of a British army in Spain or Portugal must depend upon his own resources, without the most distant reliance on any other military aid. He turned his eyes towards Lisbon, and recollecting the ground near the scene of his first victory, he planned the lines of Torres Vedras, which will ever immortalize his military genius and foresight. Massena, 'the cherished child of victory,' lost much of his reputation before them; and Portugal, after having suffered pillage, murder, famine, and all the horrors which the human mind can imagine, and which no pen could describe, was again freed from the curses of a French invasion. The capture of the two fortresses, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, on the frontier, within a few days march of superior armies of the enemy, were enterprises almost incomprehensible; but they were taken, and the army, animated by these successes, were prepared for

prouder achievements. Lord Wellington, however, was under other influence; and caution was always whispering in his ear that if the safety of his army should be compromised by any want of foresight on his part, England would not readily get up such another. He alone was acquainted with all the bearings of responsibility which attached to him in the command of the army embarked in this great struggle; and when, in the opinion of some of his most admiring followers, trifling advantages might have escaped him, they were all made subservient to the great principle laid down in his mind, until circumstances warranted a deviation from it. He then seized upon the occasion; and when, as at Salamanca, he detected in a moment the fault that Marmont had committed, he pounced upon his prey with a decision, a promptitude, and a vigor which carried terror and destruction into the ranks of his enemy. The blow may be said to have been felt on the Borodino, and in the extremities of Europe. The *prestige* of the invincibility of Frenchmen was destroyed, and the battle of Salamanca was followed by consequences unprecedented in modern history. It was the first action in which the British army had decidedly assumed the offensive, and Salamanca has the merit of commencing what Waterloo completed. The genius of war, however, was not the only attribute of Lord Wellington in this part of the career;—he had possessed himself of the confidence of the soldiers. The supernatural effects of the talisman in the fable were hardly more powerful than the presence of the Duke in battle, and in the hour of danger. He reanimated the infirm of purpose, and gave fresh vigor to the brave. Those only who have felt this influence can duly appreciate it;—the inspiring parallel to it in our times was the Victory bearing Nelson's flag, when heaving into sight off Trafalgar,—

‘It double-manned the fleet.’

When Colonel Gurwood, in his preface, called the attention of the reader to the General Order dated Castrojeriz, 11th June, 1813, No. 1, under the head of ‘Action with the Enemy,’ as superseding all other thanks, he might at the same time have called it to the following order, No. 4, of the same date and head, as containing a singular and extraordinary prepossession of the Duke's confidence in his army as to the result of any

battle; for in that order, dated ten days previous to the battle of Vittoria, he directs, that

4. The Commanding Officer of every regiment engaged with the enemy should, as soon after the engagement as possible, send an officer and twenty men on the ground over which the regiment may have marched, and on which it may have been engaged, in order to collect the arms, accoutrements, and necessaries, belonging to the regiment, which, when collected, must be taken care of.

But the feeling between the Duke and his army was nicely balanced, the confidence was mutual; for as anxiety arising from indecision was never depicted in his countenance, whoever turned to it, whatever might have been the circumstances of the moment, saw safety there; and felt that all would be right. Even in the retreat to the lines of Lisbon, when the British ministers were alarmed and almost harassed into despair, by the constant attacks of the opposition, and when even some of the superior officers at the head quarters had, it was said, caught the unworthy infection, there was an assurance to the soldier in every act of the Duke, that bespoke and imparted a confidence in the result: and it was on the heights of Arruda, that the writer of this article heard one of the bravest officers in the army, who too soon paid the debt of his gallantry, and did not live to verify his vision, exclaim, 'I see the Pyrenees!'—but it was realized to his surviving comrades; and the British army confidently carried its standard and its discipline into the heart of France.

To return to our story. The army, animated with the victory at Salamanca, followed its flying foe to Madrid and Burgos. The whole of the south of Spain being now relieved from the enemy's presence, the passage of the Ebro seemed to be possible, so that the army might derive its resources from Santander, Bilbao, Santona, and other ports in the north of Spain. The castle of Burgos and the heights of Pancorbo, however, presented obstacles to this desired object. Lord Wellington, therefore, decided on laying siege to Burgos. He failed, however, from two causes—the inadequacy of his means, and the gallant defence of the garrison. The winter was approaching, and as the French armies had rallied, nothing but retreat was the alternative. How

that retreat was made, is described in the 'Circular Letter' before mentioned. Although Lord Wellington was not able to maintain his army in the advanced positions of Madrid and Burgos during the winter, the important consequences of the battle of Salamanca continued to operate, and Andalusia, Valencia, and Grenada, remained free from the enemy's troops, which were withdrawn from them in order to force Lord Wellington back to Portugal. The more bright prospects of the victory of Salamanca were, however, clouded over, and the army passed the winter of 1812 and the spring of 1813 within the frontier of Portugal; having their head quarters at the wretched village of Freneda, which the Duke had previously dignified by the endearing name of 'home.' Never was a home more homely, or less comfortable. The Duke went to Seville and Lisbon, leaving his army to digest his 'Circular Letter,' to complete their equipment, and correct their discipline. Reinforcements arrived from England, and in May, 1813, the army was again put in motion. It was on the 22d of that month that the Duke left his 'home' at Freneda, never more to return to it; to the no small satisfaction of the whole of the head quarter staff, who, as may be supposed, were not better off than their General.

In one month from the breaking up in Portugal, the Douro was turned, the French army in full retreat, Burgos blown up and abandoned, and the British army placed on the north bank of the Ebro. This gigantic operation was executed in a manner worthy of the general who had planned it. The heads of the British columns were on the Zadorra, behind which, and in front of Vittoria, were posted the whole of the French army in order of battle. A general attack on the right by Sir Rowland Hill, on the left by Sir Thomas Graham, and on the centre by Lord Wellington in person, produced a general rout; position after position was carried, artillery abandoned, and the whole materiel and baggage of the French army became the spoil of the victors. Whether the recollection of Salamanca, or any, or many other causes, operated upon the fate of the French army at Vittoria, there never can have been, since the days of Hannibal and Cannæ, a more complete '*dérouté*.' The news of this victory actually made England drunk with joy; and Marshal Soult was sent by Napoleon, as his Lieutenant, to restore the honor of the French

arms in Spain. Oporto and Albuera must have been additional excitements. He issued a proclamation to the army on the 23d of July, calling upon them, 'in the language of the soldier,' to chase the enemy across the Ebro. He was totally defeated at Sorcauren on the 28th, and before the year 1813 had finished, it was his duty to inform his master of the surrender of Pamplona, of the assault and capture of St. Sebastian, and of the descent of the British army right into France !

The occupation of the country in front, and the partial blockade of Bayonne placed the British army in what is called a concentric position. The communications were difficult and the weather unfavorable to them. Marshal Soult seized the opportunity, and tried again his fortune and his skill. Being defeated on one flank by Sir John Hope, he carried his whole force and vigorously attacked the other. Sir Rowland Hill, without other aid, repulsed him and paralysed him—and thus ended 1813.

The orders under the head of 'France' in this compilation produced the best effects. The severest discipline was exercised, and there were some summary punishments to enforce it. The consequence was, that the several divisions of the British army found themselves in a friendly country in France, and its inhabitants actually hailing them as deliverers from the yoke of their countrymen.

The part of France called 'Le Pays Basque' in the neighbourhood of Bayonne, has a bad reputation as to weather—it rains one half the year, and it was during that half that the British army occupied it. The rivers and streams overflowed their beds, and the roads which were not absolutely *pavé* were in many places impassable. The head quarters of the British army lay at St. Jean de Luz, on the extreme left; the extreme right being at Vieu Mouguerre, occupied by Sir Rowland Hill; the whole position forming, as before stated, a concentric line, having its centre near to the village of Arcangues, occupied by the light division. Through this centre passed the communication to and from the head quarters. It was also the centre of every thing that was impassable; for between Arcangues and a house called 'Garat's house,' there was a space of boggy ground which required a *détour* of a league or two to avoid it, and then only by a doubtful track through a country of the same soil. From

November to February, the constant communications through the centre had well worked up this boggy ground into a hasty pudding mixture, that became the dismay of every one who had to pass it. The muleteer devoutly said his prayers before he attempted it; and the mules and horses, who, poor devils, lacked both corn and courage, smelt the passage at Garat's house, a mile off, and pricked their ears always in fright at the reasonable anticipation of leaving their bones there. This infernal spot, named 'Jackass Hole,' was well known to the right wing, the animals of which had to cross it to go to the head quarters for English hay and oats, when they could get them. In this deplorable turnpike of communication—the antipodes of M'Adam—the long-eared godfathers of it might be counted in hundreds in all states of decomposition. Accordingly, the first question to any arrival on the right, or from the anxious master to his bātman was, 'How the deuce did you get over Jackass Hole?' Those who saw no mule return, asked no questions, for, alas! the melancholy anticipations were too fatally solved the next time they had to cross. Even the Duke himself, who, in his rides, was seldom dismayed by difficulty, thought twice on going to the right, and rarely passed this Rubicon of dead asses, mules, and mud: and it was easy to judge how unpopular it was with the head quarter staff, as he was seldom accompanied by any other than he who was always by his side, poor Alexander Gordon*, who fell at this distinguished post at Waterloo.

Marshal Soult, the vaunted tactician, in the beginning of 1814, found himself at Bayonne, in a position somewhat similar to that in which he had been attacked at Oporto. It was necessary, therefore, speedily to decide whether he should await, within his intrenchments, the further operations of Lord Wellington, or leave a sufficient garrison in the fortress, and take towards Toulouse with his army, where the country, intersected with Gaves and rivers, might afford him other local advantages. He preferred moving off with his wonted celerity, and broke up in February. Lord Wellington, leaving the left wing of his army under Sir John Hope, to blockade Bayonne, followed the French army across the Gaves, which he defeated at Orthez. He then

* Lieut. Colonel the Hon. Alexander Gordon, Aide de Camp to the Duke of Wellington; brother of the present Earl of Aberdeen.

detached two divisions under Lord Dalhousie, to Bordeaux, and with the remainder followed Marshal Soult through Tarbes to a strongly fortified position at Toulouse, covered almost on all sides by the Garonne and the Ers Morte. Lord Wellington passed over the Garonne at Grenade, with four British divisions and one corps of the Spanish army, leaving Sir Rowland Hill with his corps to guard the bridge and 'tête-de-pont' on the left bank. And on the 10th of April, 1814, he attacked and carried the intrenchments, and drove the French army from them to within the walls of the town, from whence they retreated on the following day towards the army of Marshal Suchet in the east. To the astonishment of all who assisted at this battle, and even of the inhabitants of Toulouse, it is registered (by the authority we suppose of the great tactician) among 'Les fastes militaires' of France! but it must be otherwise registered in the memory of the marshal, now prime minister in re-revolutionised France, and the bugbear of Europe; who, with all his military fame, can have no recollection of having derived any part of it from his collision with the British army, having been always repulsed or defeated, from Corunna to Toulouse: though it is very probable that he might be able to demonstrate (on paper) that on every one of these occasions he ought to have gained the day, according to all the rules of war; excepting, indeed, that small corollary, by which the majority of mankind are apt to be guided in their rewards of renown—we mean the result. Toulouse was a battle of the first order: the British attack was marked by extraordinary and bold conception, and by the gallantry with which it was executed; and but for the great and overpowering political events of the moment would have been far more highly appreciated; as it was, however, it proved a victory followed by no very important results.

The operations of 1815 took place so near our own doors, and were wound up by a victory of such transcendent importance, ranking even higher than that of Trafalgar in its consequences, that the well known details need not be gone over again; though it must be owned the temptation to draw once more on this bewitching epoch is very great. It is, indeed, one that never becomes threadbare; but at the same time it is one that must be preserved in all its integrity, as far as it can be, by those who

'possess the means of putting history in its true state. There was nothing more disgusting, for example, than the 'phrase' got up on the boulevards of Paris to cover the fallen glories of the French army. '*La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas!*' It was considered so fine a phrase, and so flattering to the national vanity, that it was repeated, printed, engraved, lithographed, and circulated in every possible shape: even 'John Bull,' that most voracious of gulls, thought it wondrous fine; although in the scene portrayed, 'good master John' is not represented in the most flattering position. But the whole was a fabrication, absolutely an untruth, the absurdity of which will not bear scrutiny. In the first place, 'La Garde' were never asked to surrender; they were licked, and those who did not stay to be licked, ran away. Moreover, Cambrone, the general who commanded them, and into whose mouth this phrase is put, did not die, but very civilly surrendered himself a prisoner, and was marched into Bruxelles the following morning, with hundreds of 'La Garde,' who followed his prudent example. It is necessary that these facts should be known, and made perfectly clear, before history hallows this silly French tale into truth. The truly brave Ney, who led the last attack, never said a word about this fiction, when in his place in the French House of Peers, he stated that there was no army left, and that it was ridiculous to talk of making a stand. The Buonapartists never forgave him this. Even Soult, the tactician, never heard of the phrase. He knew well such questions were never asked by the British in battle. Buonaparte never sanctioned it; not even at St. Helena, where he was still endeavoring to bolster up this defeat, in appeals to the character of the French army.

But why this epitome of glory told a thousand times? Why blaze forth again these deeds? Why! say the admirers of the Duke, because the hero of them has lived to see them for a moment forgotten. He whose name is Victory, whose life is Honor, and whose breath is Truth, has been vituperated by the press, insulted by the people, and calumniated in parliament.

'O, judgment, thou hast fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason.'—JUL. CÆS.

Happily, however, for the nation, the delusion was only for a moment. It has passed away. Already in every part of the

country a feeling of gratitude and veneration is manifested towards that great man who saved it in the hour of danger; and we, his friends (a glorious title), ought to congratulate ourselves in having refrained from controversy, and from taking up those cudgels which his good sense and taste considered unfit for his own hands.

We shall, therefore, content ourselves, without any further allusion to the Duke of Wellington's merits, and fame, and refer our readers to the extraordinary work now before us, as an epitome of military excellence, which we congratulate the army in particular in bringing before their notice.

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