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RECOLLECTIONS IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN DURING 1811 AND 1812.

By CORNET FRANCIS HALL, 14th Light Dragoons.

(Continued from October JOURNAL, page 1391).

CHAPTER III. THE SPANISH FRONTIER.

[April, 1811.]

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

—"Crudelis ubique

Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago."

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE OF FUENTES D'OÑOR.¹

[May 3rd-5th, 1811.]

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

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

¹ I believe this name is properly spelt "Fuente d'Onorio," but this properly destroys its happy application to the events of the day.—F.H.
[Fuentes de Oñoro is the correct form.—E. G. H.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER V. A MOVE TO THE ALEMTEJO.

[June-August, 1811.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

(To be continued.)

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