



*Erasmus*

*Engraved by G. J. Stoddart from a picture by Edwin Williams.*

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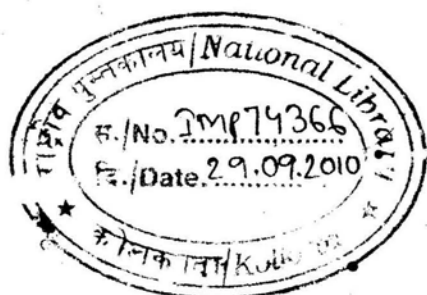
LIFE OF  
GENERAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER

G. C. B.

BY  
WILLIAM NAPIER BRUCE

WITH PORTRAIT AND MAPS

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## PREFACE

IN 1857 Sir William Napier published his *Life of Sir Charles Napier* in four volumes. It was composed in the midst of great bodily and mental suffering, and in the expectation that death would interfere and prevent its completion. In spite of certain defects of taste and arrangement, due mainly to these circumstances, the book is remarkable, like all the author's writings, for the force and grandeur of its language and for the spirit of passionate hero-worship which animates it throughout; but it was far too long to obtain the durable popularity which the reputation of the writer and the interest of the subject deserved.

There are few men in the world's history about whom four volumes are read by a generation that has not known them. Least of all can such assiduous devotion be expected where, as in the present case, the man has been limited to a field confessedly too narrow for the full exercise of his powers. And yet, if Sir Charles Napier's career does not possess any great historical interest, a brief record of his life and opinions may still be well worth the attention of his countrymen.



"Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,  
Fortunam ex aliis."

The man to whose military genius Wellington appealed to save India—whose capacity for government excited the admiration of Sir Robert Peel—of whom Lord Hardinge, with all his experience, military and civil, said, "he had the rarest combination of great qualities of any of our contemporaries,"—should not be allowed without a protest to sink into oblivion, or be remembered merely as an eccentric and unmanageable officer.

His character was essentially of the heroic type. He exercised a fascination over the popular mind which was, perhaps, out of proportion to anything which Fortune allowed him to accomplish. He occupied a place apart, and would have seemed in some respects hardly to belong to the age in which he lived, had it not been that he inspired the people wherever he went with the belief that, whatever his differences with men in power, he was moved by the most intense devotion to themselves and to the cause of every one who was poor or oppressed.

Sir William Napier's four volumes were constructed almost entirely out of his brother's journals and letters, and in consequence his book contains the bulk of the materials for the present volume. But the general arrangement and treatment of the subject differ in many respects from Sir William Napier's work; and he is not responsible for any opinions expressed in the course of the narrative, except such as are actually

attributed to him. In addition to the copious writings of Sir Charles and Sir William Napier, the admirable articles in the *Quarterly Review* (January 1857 and October 1858), attributed to Mr. Elwin, and such incidental notices of Sir Charles Napier as have appeared in later works connected with India, I have had the advantage of conversations with General Sir M. M'Murdo, who was Sir Charles Napier's son-in-law, and served on his staff during nearly the whole of his Indian career, and with the late Sir Bartle Frere who ruled Scinde for seven years and had special opportunities of estimating Sir Charles Napier's work. In the account of the transactions which led up to the conquest of Scinde I have relied upon the letters and despatches of the various actors published in the *Correspondence Relative to Scinde* presented to Parliament in 1843 and 1844.

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## APPENDIX.

Minute in the Assistant Quartermaster-General's Office, and General Order of Sir Charles Napier relative to the Scinde Camel Baggage Corps.



## MAPS AND PLANS.

PORTRAIT OF SIR CHARLES NAPIER: from the

Picture by Edwin Williams . . . *Frontispiece.*

MAP OF SCINDE . . . . .	} <i>End of the book.</i>
MAP OF THE CUTCHEE HILLS . . . . .	

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TRUKKEE.

*To face page 1.*

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# XL.M.5



## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY YEARS.

FEW men of action have left such a full contemporaneous record of their deeds, motives, and character as Sir Charles Napier. From beginning to end of his stirring career he used his pen with a vigour and assiduity that would have done credit to one who had never drawn a sword or left home except for a holiday. It was his custom, after the day's work of twelve to fifteen hours, to compose his mind by pouring out on paper his hopes, fears, and plans for the morrow, reflections on current events, the most exhaustive examination of military tactics in time of war, varied or mingled with self-searchings, religious opinions, personal reminiscences, and not infrequent explosions of wrath at the conduct of some one or other of the official world: and all expressed in language clear, forcible, and faithfully reflecting his constant and rapid transitions from public cares to home affections, from lofty aspirations to grotesque humour. Manifestly such a man unconsciously sets forth his own self, with his peculiar strength and weakness, better than any other can do for him. So he has been left in this volume to speak for himself throughout, the present writer merely supplying a general view of each period, or explanatory links where they are required. "A wayward life of adventure," he himself calls it; "a good romance it would make, full of accidents by flood and field, stories of love and war and shipwreck, and escapes of all kinds."

Romance and genius hold conspicuous places in Charles Napier's lineage. On his father's side he was descended from John Napier of Merchiston, the inventor of logarithms, and from the brilliant Montrose. On his mother's side he was sixth in descent from Henry the Fourth of France. "Hence," says Sir W. Napier, "the blood of the white-plumed Béarnois commingled with that of the heroic Highlander in his veins, and his arm was not less strong than theirs in battle." His maternal grandfather, the second Duke of Richmond, was called from college to marry Lady Sarah Cadogan, daughter of Marlborough's favourite general—a match arranged between the parents to cancel a gambling debt. The bride was still in the nursery, and when Lord March caught sight of her he exclaimed, "Surely you are not going to marry me to that dowdy?" Married he was, however, and sent off at once for a tour on the Continent with his tutor. After three years of travel he returned, and, not feeling any ardent desire to renew his acquaintance with the "dowdy," he went to the theatre. There he was so much struck by the beauty of a young lady that he asked who she was. "The reigning toast, the beautiful Lady March," was the reply. Their married life was singularly beautiful and happy, and her death, which occurred within a year of his, was said to have been due to her inconsolable grief for his loss. They left many children, all remarkable for their beauty and talents, three of whom became the mothers of distinguished men: Lady Caroline, who married the first Lord Holland, and was the mother of Charles James Fox; Lady Emily, wife of the Duke of Leinster, and mother of the unhappy Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and Lady Sarah, who had refused a king,<sup>1</sup> married

<sup>1</sup> The best account of this transaction is to be found in the *Early History of Charles James Fox*, by Mr. Trevelyan, pp. 53, 55.

to the Hon. George Napier, and mother of eight children,<sup>1</sup> the eldest of whom is the subject of this biography. • All lovers of Sir Joshua Reynolds are familiar with Lady Sarah Napier's beauty. "Lady Sarah," writes Walpole, "was more beautiful than you can conceive;" she shone besides, according to the same writer, "with all the graces of unaffected but animate nature." To the end of her long life she inspired the deepest love and veneration in her children. Her correspondence with her warlike sons was on both sides regular and frequent up to her death; and in the affections of Charles, her first-born, she filled perhaps a larger space than his deeply affectionate nature gave to any other.

Colonel the Hon. George Napier was a father worthy of such sons. Strong and beautiful in body, powerful in mind, he seemed to his sons superior to any man they ever knew. "He was six feet three inches," says his son Charles, "and the handsomest man I ever laid eyes on. I do not think there was a perceptible fault in his figure. Sir Joshua Reynolds said the only failing was that his neck was too short. I have known him take a pewter quart and squeeze it flat in his hand like a bit of paper." Of his mental capacity he says, "Why fate cast his lot so differently from some men of ordinary abilities is to me not easily conceivable, but it may, in a great measure, be from his want of subserviency; men in power feared him."

In his youth he was the pupil and friend of David Hume, and, though better suited for war, showed great capacity for science and civil affairs. He served with distinction in the American War, but on the voyage home was attacked by fever, and his recovery was considered so hopeless that his commission was sold for him. Shortly after

<sup>1</sup> Charles; Emily (married to the late Gen. Sir Henry Bunbury); George (Gen. Sir G., Governor of Cape); William (Gen. Sir W., author of *History of Peninsular War*); Richard (Q.C.); Henry (Capt. R.N., author of *History of Florence*); Cecilia and Caroline died in youth.

he entered the Guards, and was appointed Comptroller of the Woolwich Laboratory, where he introduced some valuable improvements in the manufacture of gunpowder. After a short period of service under Lord Moira he lived in retirement in Ireland until Lord Cornwallis' appointment as Lord-Lieutenant.<sup>1</sup> That nobleman pressed on him the Comptrollership of Army Accounts, saying, "I want an honest man, and this is the only thing I have been able to wrest from the harpies around me." His work in that office is faithfully recorded on his monumental slab in Redland Chapel, near Clifton:—

"He restored the military accounts of Ireland to exact order, when years of neglect and corruption had plunged them into a confusion productive of great loss to the country and great injustice to individuals. He recovered several millions of money for the public treasury, and by his probity and disinterestedness made his office a model for patriotic public servants. His first act was to abolish all fees, thus voluntarily reducing his own salary from twenty thousand to six hundred pounds per annum."

His disinterested zeal in the public service, his hatred of oppression and meanness, and, it must be added, his "want of subserviency," were inherited by his children, as well as his personal beauty. He seems to have taken great pains with them all while they remained with him, and so long as he was spared to them; and the home circle of the Napier boys must have been as happy as it was remarkable. The neighbours called it "The Eagle's Nest."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two instances of the elder Napier's sagacity merit a grateful remembrance: (1) He was in the same regiment with Erskine, and had a great share in persuading him to leave the army for the bar. (2) When Ensign Arthur Wellesley was spoken of in Irish society as a "shallow saucy stripling," Napier thought otherwise, and said, "Those who think lightly of that lad are unwise in their generation: he has in him the makings of a great general."

Charles James Napier, the eldest child of these remarkable parents, was born at Whitehall, London, on the 10th of August 1782. When he was only three years old the family moved to Celbridge, a small town on the Liffey, ten miles from Dublin, and close to Castletown, the seat of Mr. Conolly, who had married Lady Louisa Lennox. But fine houses and aristocratic society had less share in moulding the character of the young Napiers than the wild life and legends of the Irish peasantry among whom they lived. Their English nurse, Susan Frost, was a woman, says Sir William Napier, "of wonderful spirit and strong natural sense, full of noble sentiments, compassionate and charitable, but passionate and vehemently eloquent in a rough way; she was just fitted to fashion a child of high aspirations into a hero." The man-servant, Lauchlin Moore, seems to have been no less serviceable in the same line, for he knew "the ancient legends of Ireland, spoke of O'Shean and Fin Macoul, Ossian and Fingal, was a good horseman, a brave old fellow with a loving heart." Outside the house the chief object of their veneration was a wonderful dame, one hundred and thirty-five years old by her own reckoning. "She was indeed a woman of awful age and recollections," says Sir William.

"To sit in the sun at her porch was what Molly Dunne loved; and an awful weird-looking woman she was—a Michael Angelo model for the Witch of Endor. Tall, gaunt, and with high sharp lineaments, leaning on an antique staff, her head bending beneath a cowled Irish cloak of deep blue, her eyes fixed in their huge orbs, and her tongue discoursing of bloody times, she was wondrous for the young and fearful for the aged."

Through the misconduct of a nurse Charles Napier was sickly as a child, and for the same reason, perhaps, never attained the fine proportions for which his family were

remarkable ; but rigid temperance and an admirable constitution enabled him to endure bodily sufferings and mental labours such as few men have undergone. He was demure and thoughtful as a child, and the bent of his mind was shown at an early age. When ten years old he was deep in Plutarch's lives, and rejoiced to find he was short-sighted, because his chosen author said Philip, Sertorius, and Hannibal were one-eyed, and Alexander's eyes were of different colours. Love of fame and the most compassionate sensibility were his chief characteristics. His nature was too sensitive to make him indifferent to danger, though he often seemed to court it. Even when most reckless his courage was rather the result of the ascendancy of the spirit over the body than constitutional ignorance of what fear meant. This characteristic was very early shown, as the following story told by his brother testifies : "A wandering showman, a wild-looking creature, short of stature but huge of limb, with thick matted red hair and beard and a thundering voice, was displaying his powers on the esplanade at Castletown. After some minor displays, the man, balancing a ladder on his chin, invited or rather with menacing tones ordered a sweep to mount and sit on the top. The boy shrank in fear from the shouting, gesticulating ogre, and Charles Napier, then six years old, was asked by his father if he would venture. Silent for a moment, he seemed to fear, but suddenly looking up said 'Yes,' and was borne aloft amidst the cheers of the spectators."

Such education as he had for the first ten or twelve years of his life, besides the poetic or legendary outpourings of Lauchlin Moore and Molly Dunne, was due to his own passion for reading military history and biography, and to his being the constant companion of his father. His enjoyment of home-life was destined to be of the shortest duration, for in 1794, when just twelve years old, he



obtained a commission in the 33d Regiment. He was soon transferred to the 89th, and went with his father to Netley Camp, Colonel Napier being Assistant-Quarter-master-General to the force stationed there under the command of Lord Moira. Thus the poor little subaltern began an honourable and brilliant military career of sixty years under happy auspices. When the camp broke up for foreign service he exchanged into the 4th Regiment; but, instead of joining, was placed with his brother William as a day-scholar at a large grammar school in Celbridge. "At school he was noted for a gentle but grave demeanour," says his brother, "as if he felt that he was an officer, not a schoolboy; he never quarrelled or fought." But he soon displayed his commanding character by organising his schoolfellows as a volunteer corps. He persuaded the parents to equip their sons, and provided wooden fusils with well-hardened bayonets. That he should have conceived and executed the design of raising a corps from among boys whose parents were nearly all Roman Catholics, and at that time (1796) in no very loyal frame of mind, is remarkable as an early instance of the audacious originality which characterised the more serious actions of his public life. But to those who know from experience the rigidly aristocratic constitution of public-school life, the unquestioned authority that attaches to superior strength and skill in games, it will seem much more astonishing that a small and reserved boy of fourteen should be elected to command, and should, moreover, preserve the strictest discipline amongst boys, so many of whom were eighteen years of age and his superiors in learning and sports.

He was soon called away from his first command to face the stern and horrible realities of civil war.

"When the insurrection of 1798 broke out," says Sir W. Napier, "many families took refuge in Dublin." The elder

Napier would not do so. In that time of trouble and terror he fortified his house, armed his five sons, and offered an asylum to all who were willing to resist the insurgents. About a dozen came, and with them he long awaited an attack, which was often menaced, yet never made, although an insurgent camp too strong to be meddled with by any military force available at the time was but a few miles off. Finally he removed to Castletown, where a company of the Derry Militia, of which Mr. Conolly was colonel, soon arrived. The elder Napier was, from his kinship and knowledge of war, virtually accepted as the commander of all, and frequently scoured the country, Charles Napier being always at his side. One very dark night they came suddenly upon an armed body; both sides halted, and a fight seemed impending; but, suspecting the truth, Colonel Napier gave a loud military order as a test, and a cry of recognition was heard: the grenadiers of the Cork Militia were in front! At that moment the moon shone out, and Charles Napier, very diminutive for his age, was seen with his small fusil charging bayonets in opposition to Tim Sullivan, the biggest man of the Cork Militia. Tim looked down in astonishment an instant, and then, catching his small foe up in his arms, kissed him."

In 1799 he became aide-de-camp to Sir James Duff, an old family friend, commanding the Limerick district. His brother George, then a lieutenant in the 46th, was his constant companion, and things were going very pleasantly till one of the most serious, though not the first, of the innumerable accidents that befell him nearly brought his career to a sudden close. His own description of the accident is a good specimen of his graphic and humorous style:—

"When seventeen I broke my right leg. At the instant there was no pain, but, looking down, I saw my foot under my knee, and the bones protruding; that turned me sick, and the pain became violent. My gun, a gift from my dear father,

was in a ditch, leaping over which had caused the accident. I scrambled near enough to get it out, but this lacerated the flesh and produced much extravasated blood. George came to me; he was greatly alarmed, for I was very pale, and we were both young—he but fifteen. Then came Captain Crawford of the Irish Artillery, and I made him hold my foot while I pulled up my knee, and in that manner set my leg myself. The quantity of extravasated blood led the doctors to tell me that my leg must come off, but they gave me another day for a chance. Being young and vain of good legs, the idea of hop-and-go-one with a timber toe made me resolve to put myself to death rather than submit to amputation, and I sent the maid out for laudanum, which I hid under my pillow. Luckily the doctors found me better, and so saved me from a contemptible action. Perhaps if it had come to the point I might have had more sense and less courage than I gave myself credit for in the horror of my first thoughts; indeed, my agony was great, and strong doses of the laudanum were necessary to keep down the terrible spasms which fractures of large bones produce. The doctors set my leg crooked, and at the end of a month my feet would not go together; one leg went in pleasant harmony with the other halfway between knee and ankle, but then flew off in a huff at a tangent. This made me very unhappy, and the doctors said if I could bear the pain they would break it again or bend it straight. My answer was, ‘I will bear anything but a crooked leg.’ Here, then, was I, at seventeen, desperately in love with a Miss Massey, having a game leg in prospective, and in love with my leg also; so I said to the leg-carpenter, ‘Let me have one night for consideration.’ All that day and night were Miss Massey’s pretty eyes before mine, but not soft and tale-telling; not saying ‘Pig, will you marry me?’ but scornfully squinting at my game leg. There was Miss Massey, and there was I, unable to do anything but hop. The *per contra* were two ill-looking doctors torturing me, and the reflection that they might again make a crooked job after the second fracture, as they had done after the first! However, my dear Miss Massey’s eyes carried the day, and; just

as I had decided, she and her friend Miss Vandeleur came in the dusk, wrapped up in men's greatcoats, to call on me. This was just like the pluck of a pretty Irish girl, and quite repaid my courageous resolve. I would have broken all my bones for her. So, after letting me kiss their hands, off my fair incognitas went, leaving me the happiest of lame dogs. The night passed with many a queer feel about the doctors coming like devil-imps to torture me. 'Be quick,' quoth I, as they entered; 'make the most of my courage while it lasts.' It took all that day and part of next to bend the leg with bandages, which were tied to a wooden bar and tightened every hour day and night. I fainted several times, and when the two tormentors arrived next day struck my flag, saying, 'Take away your bandages, for I can bear no more.' They were taken off, and I felt in heaven; not the less so that the leg was straight! And it is now as straight a one, I flatter myself, as ever bore up the body of a gentleman or kicked a blackguard."

Temperate habits and a sound constitution effect speedy cures; and, very soon after he was on his legs again, Charles Napier rode from Limerick to Dublin, a hundred and ten miles, on one horse, between sunrise and sunset, and "neither horse nor horseman complained of fatigue." Though to the end a daring horseman, he was too fond of animals and of too sensitive a nature to be a sportsman.

"We are all," he wrote in 1843 of himself and his brothers, "a hot, violent crew—with the milk of human kindness, though. We were all fond of hunting, fishing, and shooting; yet all gave them up when young, because we had no pleasure in killing little animals. Lately in the camp a hare got up, the greyhounds pursued, and the men all shouted to aid the dogs. My sorrow was great and I rode away; yet at dinner I ate a poor fowl. It is not principle, therefore, on which we act, it is painful feeling. As to cat-hunting and dog-fighting, feeling and principle unite to condemn. A domestic animal confides in you and is at your mercy; a

wild animal has some fair play, a domestic one none. Cat-hunters and dog-hunters are therefore not only cruel but traitors; no polished gentleman does these things."

In the autumn of 1800 he was appointed to a lieutenancy in the 95th or Rifle Corps, then just formed at Blatchington by a selection of men and officers from the whole army. On joining he found himself under the command of Colonel Stewart, and learnt two lessons that he never forgot—that "the greatest secret of war is discipline," and that "to know soldiers requires experience, and is a most important part of war."

He now began a correspondence with his mother which continued to her death, and in which he pours out his inner thoughts and feelings with a combination of simplicity and fun, of light and dark shades, which is the best voucher for their truthfulness. In October 1801 he writes to confess that he has narrowly escaped a duel with a brother officer, but the other officers had intervened, and finally made them shake hands. "We were uneasy, thinking it might appear shyness, yet thinking likewise it would be foolish to oppose the opinions of all our brother officers, and still more foolish to knock one another over. This last, between you and I, was of weight, and we shook hands."

He was proud to the end of his life that he had never fought a duel, gambled, or been intoxicated. His economical difficulties gave him almost more trouble than his moral temptations. Like many a young subaltern, then and now, he found it hard to make both ends meet, and it was made harder to him by his high connections. For an agreeable young man who was fond of society his outfit was certainly not extravagant. He can't go to London because he has "no coloured clothes, and they are expensive to buy." And later on, when he has got to London, the "coloured

clothes" seem to have been obtained at the expense of the uniform, for "my pantaloons are green and I have only one pair; my jacket twice turned; a green waistcoat, useless; one pair of boots without soles or heels; a green feather, and a helmet not worth sixpence! This is the state of my *Rifling kit*." To avoid the temptations of the messroom he takes to books; but "reading all day long tires me. I quit the mess at five o'clock, and from thence to ten o'clock gives five more hours' reading. . . . There is a billiard-table, but feeling a growing fondness for it, and fearing to be drawn in to play for money, I have not touched a cue lately."

The negotiations for the Peace of Amiens made him despair of gaining promotion. "How the 'old lieutenant' sticks in my gizzard," he exclaims. "Sometimes my thought is to sell my commission and purchase one in Germany or elsewhere; but my secret wish cannot be fulfilled, which is to have high command with British soldiers." He had not even the resource of studying at the Staff College, where he so profitably employed his leisure a few years later; for the teaching at High Wycombe in 1801 "more than verged on the ridiculous," says Sir W. Napier. "One of the students, being invited by Sir J. Moore at Shorncliffe to move his brigade as a test of his acquirements, coolly answered that he had not been taught to direct less than 100,000 men!"

In 1803 he was placed on the staff of his cousin, General Fox, commanding the London district. He had, too, the satisfaction of seeing his brothers, George and William, gazetted to the 52d, and under the command and friendly notice of their hero, Sir John Moore. But his depression about himself only increased, partly owing to the expenses of London life, partly to a dislike of the army, which nothing but continuous employment and his natural thirst

for fame could subdue. The following extracts from his letters in December 1803 show his state of mind, and what relief he found in his inextinguishable sense of humour:—

“The expense of London is dreadful; it absorbs all my pay, and here I cannot go such a blackguard figure as in Dublin. This is exclusive of casual expenses and travelling, of which there will be a great deal; six months will destroy me; and to live in dread of tradesmen and abominate the sight of a bill is a life not to be borne. We are going to Guildford, where, there is, I hear, a fine new gaol. That is to me significant. Last night I sat up till two o’clock, writing on the old subject of grievances, and lashing myself into a fury with everything. Abusing the army, pulling off my breeches, cursing creditors, and, putting out the candle all in a minute, I jumped into bed and lay there, blaspheming, praying, and perspiring for two hours, when sleep came. What I wrote is not worth sending, however, being full of jokes, politics, and blue-devils. I live in fear of my creditors, but that shall not last; I will not be a tailor’s slave.

“26th Dec.—William has recovered from his fever, and is gazetted in the 52d; would I were in the same regiment; but no more of what you call my madness. What a curse to have a turn of mind similar to mine! Misery to oneself and teasing to others, unless disguised, which can only be with those not really loved. Great exertion or perfect tranquillity is necessary to me, who have not that superior intellect which can regulate itself; there is more of Cassius than Brutus in me.

“29th Dec.—Green has offered me a thousand guineas and his company in the 67th for mine in the Staff Corps. I could get a troop of light dragoons for that sum, but would sooner go into the militia than the cavalry, light or heavy. Getting this company is like receiving an obligation from a man one wishes hanged. I was before attached to the army by five shillings and eightpence; now by fourteen and sevenpence, and the felicity of being called Captain. It is not my meaning that General Fox should be hanged, but the army.

My comfort is the chance of peace, when I shall be Captain N. on half-pay, with £100 per annum, and a much happier man than Captain N. with £600 or £800 full pay. At one time my hope was that a company would cure me of my aversion to the army, though nothing could make me like it; but the first feeling is not to be conquered, or surely being a captain at twenty-one would create in a warm imagination ideas of future honours, of hopes, and wishes to rise to the head of my profession, and all the deuce knows what which such reveries lead to. But not one thought of pleasure or happiness from promotion could be forced up. No! not one would come at my call. How different are George's feelings. He will be in paradise, though up to his ears in mud at Hythe. How happy he is to be thus contented with present pleasures, and sanguine as to the future! To me military life is like dancing up a long room with a mirror at the end, against which we cut our faces, and so the deception ends. It is thus gaily that men follow their trade of blood, thinking it glitters, but to me it appears without brightness or reflection—a dirty red! And for the future! Ay! the future! what is it? Under a long feather and cocked hat, trembling though supported by stiff Hessian boots, gold-headed cane and long sword, I see the wizened face of a general grinning over the parapet of a fine frill, and telling extraordinary lies, while his claret, if he can afford claret, is going down the throats of his wondering or quizzing aides-de-camp. Such is the difference between a hero of the present time and the idea formed of one from reading Plutarch! Yet people wonder I don't like the army!"

While on the London staff he saw much of his cousin Charles Fox, and used to describe with vivid humour, says his brother, "the manifestations of the orator's natural and earnest disposition. How at cricket he would strike at the ball and recklessly run for a score, bat on shoulder, his Sancho Panza figure fully displayed, and his head thrown back, laughing in childish delight amidst reproachful cries, while his opponents struck down the wickets behind him."



The cheerful society at St. Anne's Hill was a pleasant interlude in the troubles that now came thick upon him. In April 1804 he lost the dearest friend of his youth, a Lieutenant Cameron; and in the following October his father died.<sup>1</sup> These heavy sorrows made the young soldier reflect deeply on religious topics; though his letters to his mother, full as they are of his own views of death, are as free from all morbid tendencies as from religious doubts.

"The idea of a future state never enters my head when danger is near; yet when in no danger, my wish is to know what that state is; not from doubt of its being a happy one, but to know what that happiness is. Does Cameron know what we are about, what I think of him? Is the little he saw of us here forgotten? Perhaps he has not a conception that there is for us a world that he has quitted. My nerves do not like the idea of dying, but my mind is delighted at the thought of being dead. It would please me to lose fifty years and take my chance at the end; yet were a man to come into my room to destroy me, fighting him would be my only thought, and eternity forgotten. How odd that we should be so attached to life. My feelings are incomprehensible. I cannot pity Cameron, being sure he is in regions of bliss far beyond what we can conceive; but my own dislike to die puzzles me. Run away in the beginning of an action I would not; the feeling within does not make me wish to do that; it is more the fear of being mangled that would affect me; dislike to being maimed is greater than to being killed, and my internal conviction is that I shall be wounded very slightly, but never killed or seriously hurt in action."

The next year, with the menace of invasion from Boulogne, brought greater activity, and Charles Napier, to his delight, found himself under Sir John Moore at Hythe.

<sup>1</sup> His last words were to his wife, "Sarah, take my watch; I have done with time."

"To awaken the faculties of those under him," says Sir W. Napier, "was one of Sir J. Moore's qualifications for command. At Shorncliffe Camp he devised such improvements in drill, discipline, dress, arms, formations, and movements, as would have placed him for military reforms beside the Athenian Iphicrates, if he had not the greater glory of dying like the Spartan Brasidas. His materials were the 43d, 52d, and Rifle regiments, and he so fashioned them, that afterwards, as the Light Division under Wellington, they were found to be soldiers unsurpassable, perhaps never equalled. The separate successful careers of the officers strikingly attest the merit of the school; so long a list of notable men could not be presented by three regiments of any service in the world. In it will be found above ninety who attained the rank of field officer, or higher grades, and amongst them four who commanded armies, three being celebrated as conquerors, two adjutant-generals of the British army, three military secretaries, sixteen governors of colonies, and two organisers of the Metropolitan and Irish Constabulary, many generals who have commanded districts, one who commanded a foreign army, several persons noted in science and literature, or by peculiar missions and organisations, also belong to the roll; and nearly all were of some fame in battle, though unequal in merit and reputation."

Among these distinguished men the three Napier brothers were not the least conspicuous, and soon attracted the special notice of Moore. George Napier was his aide-de-camp at the battle of Coruña; and to Charles Napier and Charles Stanhope was addressed the famous exclamation, "Well done, my majors!" during the same battle.

Under Moore's eye Charles Napier made rapid progress in the knowledge of his profession, giving up all his spare time to the study of military history and engineering, and kindred subjects lying outside the sphere of his regular duty, but the knowledge of which proved invaluable to him in later years in Cephalonia and Scinde.

Mr. Fox, on his accession to power in 1806, gave Charles Napier, then in his twenty-fourth year, a majority in a regiment destined for the Cape; but being delayed by contrary winds at Portsmouth, he made such friends with the officers of the 50th Regiment, that they proposed to him an exchange at a small cost. He refused to pay money, as contrary to the regulations; whereupon they contrived to get him gazetted—he never knew how. For the next year and a half he remained practically in command of a battalion of the 50th, and gnashing his teeth with vexation at seeing his brothers start without him on the Copenhagen expedition, and at not being able to accompany Moore to Sweden or Spain. He welcomed the latter expedition as a movement in combination with the fiery patriotism of a whole people taking the place of petty diversions now in one corner of Europe, now in another, and everywhere ineffectual. “Why should we attempt Italy?” he says to his mother. “If we succeed in Spain it will be the best diversion in favour of Italy; for Napoleon will draw troops from there and the north to restore his power; then will be the time for attacking him nearer home. If he leaves Brest defenceless, as he has often done, we could strike a blow, which you have often heard of, before he could help himself. In this mode we might help ourselves, but his arms will crush everything in Spain which they can reach. Nevertheless a hostile population is a powerful weapon, and no man can say what it will effect.”

These words were written in July 1808, and with them end Charles Napier's boyhood and inaction. He was now twenty-six years old, and had held his commission fourteen years. The trials of a soldier's life at home had been faced with a spirit that augured well for his conduct in a wider field. His boyish illusions as to the happiness of military life were broken, but there remained in undiminished force

the devotion to duty, the lofty aspirations after honest fame, the conviction that warfare is an art for which the most laborious study and unceasing preparation are required. Poverty and love of study had made him shun the society of the messroom; but that the attractive gentleness of his manners and his natural delight in society were not lost is testified by the affection of the officers of the 50th, and by many allusions in his letters to his mother and sisters to the alarming susceptibility of his heart. The young lady who so kindly encouraged him at the time of the terrible accident to his leg seems to have been supplanted, owing to the course of time and removal to England, by a beautiful Miss G——, who in turn is replaced by “a dear little Scotch thing, with a beautiful face and beautiful figure, a beautiful dancer and beautiful genius. My heart is a cinder, and as heat is said to cure heat, I stand by the fire all day to draw out my flame.” However, society, study, and regimental routine, all were brought suddenly to an end by a summons to take his part in the struggle with Napoleon.

## CHAPTER II.

### PENINSULA—BERMUDA—AMERICA—STUDIES.

DIRECTLY after the battle of Vimiera, 21st August 1808, Charles Napier and his friend Major Stanhope, nephew of Mr. Pitt, were ordered to join the 1st battalion of the 50th at Lisbon. Owing to his colonel's absence Napier was in command, and Sir John Moore, who had previously determined not to take the regiment, now incorporated it in the army going to Spain. "It is well known," says Sir W. Napier, "how the truly great and ill-used Moore was sent into the heart of Spain by incapable ministers to find, not armies, nor enthusiasm, nor energetic government, nor military aid, all of which he had been promised, but in their stead the greatest military genius of the world before him, with troops so numerous that their cavalry alone doubled his whole force. It is known also with what a mastery of war he extricated himself from that raging storm; with what firmness he conducted his retreat; and how, turning at Coruña, he ended his glorious life amid the fires of victory."

The three Napier brothers all took part in the terrible retreat: George being aide-de-camp to Sir J. Moore, William with his company of the 43d, and Charles in command of the 50th, justifying his General's high opinion of him by bringing his regiment with full ranks to the decisive battle. "Puissant was the shock," says Sir William, "with which they met the greatest assailing French column

on that fatal field, driving it back with fire and steel beneath the eyes of the General, who with exultant applause gave instant orders to support the impetuous counter-stroke." But at that moment Moore fell, and the charge of the 50th was not supported. Charles Napier has left an account of his own adventures in and after the battle which is unsurpassed by anything of its kind. Mr. Elwin, in an admirable review of his life, has well remarked that he is not, like his brother Sir William, "a master of classic composition, but there is a native raciness in his language which bears the stamp of his character. . . . Above all, there is a vividness in his descriptions which brings the scenes with more than the reality of pictures before the mind, and this without the slightest effort, in the natural, easy, even careless style of a man who aspires only to truth and has not bestowed one thought upon effect."

The narrative is styled

"MY PART IN THE BATTLE OF CORUÑA, AND THAT OF  
JOHN HENNESSY.

"On the 16th of January 1809 the British army was opposed to the French at Coruña. The Imperial troops, being on higher ground, hung over us like threatening clouds, and about one o'clock the storm burst. Our line was under arms, silent, motionless, yet all were anxious for the appearance of Sir John Moore. There was a feeling that under him we could not be beaten, and this was so strong at all times as to be a great cause of discontent during the retreat wherever he was not. 'Where is the General?' was now heard along that part of the line where I was, for only of what my eyes saw and my ears heard do I speak. This agitation augmented as the cries of men stricken by cannon-shot arose. I stood in front of my left wing on a knoll, from whence the greatest part of the field could be seen, and my pickets were fifty yards below, disputing the ground with the French skir-

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mishers ; but a heavy French column, which had descended the mountain at a run, was coming on behind with great rapidity, and shouting '*En avant, tue, tue, en avant tue !*' their cannon at the same time, plunging from above, ploughed the ground and tore our ranks. Suddenly I heard the gallop of horses, and turning saw Moore. He came at speed, and pulled up so sharp and close he seemed to have alighted from the air ; man and horse looking at the approaching foe with an intenseness that seemed to concentrate all feeling in their eyes. The sudden stop of the animal, a cream-coloured one with black tail and mane, had cast the latter streaming forward, its ears were pushed out like horns, while its eyes flashed fire, and it snorted loudly with expanded nostrils, expressing terror, astonishment, and muscular exertion. My first thought was, it will be away like the wind ! but then I looked at the rider and the horse was forgotten. Thrown on its haunches, the animal came sliding and dashing the dirt up with its forefeet, thus bending the General forward almost to its neck, but his head was thrown back and his look more keenly piercing than I ever before saw it. He glanced to the right and left, and then fixed his eyes intently on the enemy's advancing column, at the same time grasping the reins with both his hands, and pressing the horse firmly with his knees ; his body thus seemed to deal with the animal while his mind was intent on the enemy, and his aspect was one of searching intenseness beyond the power of words to describe ; for a while he looked, and then galloped to the left without uttering a word.

" I walked to the right of my regiment, where the French fire from the village of Elvina was now very sharp and our pickets were being driven in by the attacking column ; but I soon returned to the left, for the enemy's guns were striking heavily there, and his musketry also swept down many men. Meeting Stanhope, I ordered him to the rear of the right wing, because the ground was lower ; it was his place, he was tall, the shot flew high, and I thought he would be safer. Moore now returned, and I asked him to let me throw our grenadiers, who were losing men fast, into the enclosures in

front. 'No,' he said, 'they will fire on our own pickets in the village.' 'Sir, our pickets and those of the 4th Regiment also were driven from thence when you went to the left.' 'Were they? then you are right; send out your grenadiers,' and again he galloped away. Turning round I saw Captain Clunes of the 50th just arrived from Coruña, and said to him, 'Clunes, take your grenadiers, and open the ball.' He stalked forward alone, like Goliath before the Philistines, for six feet five he was in height, and of proportionate bulk and strength; his grenadiers followed, and thus the battle began on our side.

"Again Sir John Moore returned, and was talking to me when a round shot struck the ground between his horse's feet and mine. The horse leaped round, and I also turned mechanically, but Moore forced the animal back and asked me if I was hurt. 'No, sir!' Meanwhile a second shot had torn off the leg of a 42d man, who screamed horribly, and rolled about so as to excite agitation and alarm with others. The General said, 'This is nothing, my lads, keep your ranks, take that man away; my good fellow, don't make such a noise, we must bear these things better.' He spoke sharply, but it had a good effect; for this man's cries had made an opening in the ranks, and the men shrank from the spot, although they had not done so when others had been hit who did not cry out. But again Moore went off, and I saw him no more. It was a little in front of this spot that he was killed. The French pointed out the place to me two months afterwards. There it was he refused to let them take off his sword when it hurt his wound! that dreadful wound! poor fellow! Yet why poor fellow? Is death to be regretted when accompanied by victory, glory, admiration? rather let those sigh who live and rot, doing nothing, and having nothing to do, until, poor miserable drivellers, they sink under a tombstone!

"Lord William Bentinck now came up on his quiet mule, and, though the fire was heavy, began talking to me as if we were going to breakfast; his manner was his ordinary one, with, perhaps, an increase of good-humour and placidity.



He conversed for some time, but no recollection of what he said remains, for the fire was sharp, and my eyes were more busy than my ears; I only remember saying to myself, 'This chap takes it coolly or the devil's in it!' Lord William and his mule, which seemed to care as little for the fire as its rider, sheltered me from shot, which I liked well enough; but, having heard officers and soldiers jeer at Colonel —— for thus sheltering himself behind General ——'s horse at Vimiera, I went to the exposed side; yet it gave me the most uncomfortable *feel* experienced that day. Lord William borrowed my spy-glass; it had been Lord Edward Fitzgerald's, and was a very fine one; I never saw it more. He went to the 4th Regiment and was not seen by me again during the fight; nor did I receive an order from him or anybody, unless Sir John Moore's permission to move my grenadiers forward may be called one; neither did I see a single staff officer during the battle, except Sir John and Lord William.

"When Lord William went away I walked up and down before the regiment, and made the men shoulder and order arms twice, to occupy their attention, for they were falling fast and seemed uneasy at standing under fire. The colours also were lowered, because they were a mark for the enemy's great guns; this was by the advice of old John Montgomery, a brave soldier who had risen from the ranks. Soon the 42d advanced in line, but no orders came for me. 'Good God! Montgomery,' I said, 'are we not to advance?' 'I think we ought,' he answered. 'But,' said I, 'no orders have come.' 'I would not wait,' he said. The 4th did not move, the 42d seemed likely to want our aid, it was not a moment for hesitation, and John Montgomery, a Scotchman, said laughingly, 'You cannot be wrong to follow the 42d.' I gave the word, but forbade any firing, and to prevent it and occupy the men's attention made them slope and carry arms by word of command. Many of them cried out, 'Major, let us fire!' 'Not yet,' was my answer, for having advanced without orders, I thought to have them more under command if we were wrong, whereas, if firing once began we could not change. At that moment the 42d checked a short distance from a wall and

commenced firing, and though a loud cry arose of 'Forward! forward!' no man, as I afterwards heard, passed the wall. This check seemed to prove that my advance was right, and we passed the 42d. Then I said to my men, 'Do you see your enemies plain enough to hit them?' Many voices shouted, 'By Jasus, we do!' 'Then blaze away!' and such a rolling fire broke out as I have hardly ever heard since.

"After passing the 42d we came to the wall, which was breast high, and my line checked, but several officers, Stanhope one, leaped over, calling on the men to follow. At first about a hundred did at a low part, no more, and therefore, leaping back I took a halbert, and, holding it horizontally, pushed many over the low part; then, again, getting over myself, I ran along, followed by my orderly-sergeant, Keene, with his pike. As we passed four or five soldiers levelled together from the other side, but Keene threw up their muskets with a force and quickness which saved me from being blown to atoms; as it was my face was much burned. Soon all got over; yet it required the example of officers and the bravest men to get them over.

"Now the line was formed beyond the wall, and I, recollecting Voltaire's story of the Guards' officers laying their swords over the men's firelocks to keep their level low, did so with the halbert to show coolness and being cool, though the check at the wall had excited me and made me swear horribly. We soon got to marshy ground, close to a village, where the fire from the houses was terrible, the howitzers from the hills pelting us also. Still I led the men on, followed closely by Ensigns Moore and Stewart, with the colours, until both fell, and the colours were caught up by Sergeant Magee and another sergeant. My sword-belt was shot off, scabbard and all; but, not being hit, I pushed rapidly into the street, exactly at the spot where, soon after, I was taken prisoner. Many Frenchmen lay there, apparently dead, and the soldiers cried out, 'Bayonet them, they are pretending.' The idea was to me terrible, and made me call out, 'No, no! leave those cowards; there are plenty who bear arms to kill; come on!'

"At this place stood the church, and towards the enemy a

rocky mound, behind which, and on it, were the Grenadiers; yet no officer met my sight, except Captain Harrison, Lieutenant Patterson, and Lieutenant Turner, and my efforts were vain to form a strong body; the men would not leave the rocks, from which they kept up a heavy fire. No time was to be lost, we could not see what passed on our flanks, we had been broken in carrying the village of Elviña, and, as a lane went up straight towards the enemy, I ran forward, calling out to follow; about thirty privates and the above-named officers did so, but the fire was then terrible, many shells burst among us, and the crack of these things deafened me, making my ears ring. Halfway up the lane I fell, without knowing why, yet was much hurt, though at the moment unconscious of it; a soldier cried out 'The major is killed.' 'Not yet, come on.'

"We reached the end of this murderous lane, but a dozen of those who entered it with me fell ere we got through it. However, some shelter was found beyond the lane; for Brooks of the 4th had occupied the spot with his picket the day before, and had made a breastwork of loose stones, which was known to me, having been there and nearly killed the evening before, when visiting the picket as officer of the day. The heap remained, and about a dozen of us lodged ourselves behind this breastwork, and then it appeared to me that by a rush forward we could carry the battery above; and it was evident we must go on or go back, we could not last long where we were. Three or four men were killed at my side, for the breastwork was but a slender protection, and two were killed by the fire of our own men from the village behind. The poor fellows kept crying out as they died, 'O God, Major, our own men are killing us! O Christ God, I am shot in the back of the head!' The last man was so, for he fell against me, and the ball had entered just above the poll. Remembering then that my father had told me he saved a man's life at the siege of Charleston by pulling a ball out with his finger before inflammation swelled the parts, I thought to do the same, but could not find it, and feared to do harm by putting my finger far in. It made me feel sick,

and the poor fellow, being laid down, continued crying out that our men had killed him, and there he soon died.

"This misery shook us all a good deal, and made me so wild as to cry and stamp with rage, feeling a sort of despair at seeing the soldiers did not come on. I sent Turner, Harrison, and Patterson, the three officers with me, to bring them on, and they found Stanhope animating the men, but not knowing what to do, and calling out, 'Good God! where is Napier?' When Turner told him I was in front, and raging for them to come on for an attack on the battery, he gave a shout and called on the men to follow him, but on taking a dozen strides cried out, 'O my God!' and fell dead, shot through the heart. Turner and a sergeant, who had been also sent back, then returned to me, saying they could not get a man to follow them up the lane. Hearing this I got on the wall, waving my sword and my hat at the same time, and calling out to the men behind among the rocks; but the fire was so loud none heard me, though the lane was scarcely a hundred yards long. No fire was drawn upon me by this, for a French captain afterwards told me he and others prevented their men firing at me; he did not know, nor was he told by me, who it was; but he said, 'Instead of firing at him, I longed to run forward and embrace that brave officer.' My own companions called out to jump down or I should be killed; I thought so too, but was so mad as to care little what happened to me.

"Looking then along the field from the height of the wall, our smoke appeared to be everywhere retiring; but the French smoke was not advancing, which gave me comfort. However, it was useless to stay there, and, jumping down, I said to Harrison, 'Stay here as long as you can; I will go to the left and try to make out how the 42d get on.' No one was to be seen near our left from my standing-place near the wall; but there was some brushwood and a ridge with a hedge on the top which debarred further sight, and the thought came to me that, instead of being foremost, we might be in line with some of the 42d, and though the 4th had not advanced, if fifty men of the 42d and 50th could be gathered, we might still charge the battery above us; if we

failed, there was a house near into which we could force our way, and, as it was conspicuous from the English position, Moore would send me support.

"Telling this to Captain Harrison, I went off along a lane running at right angles from the one we were in, and parallel to our position; this exposed me to the English, not to the French fire, but being armed with only a short sabre, useless against a musket and bayonet, and being quite alone, short-sighted, and without spectacles, I felt very cowardly and anxious. Pursuing my course, however, for about a hundred yards, I came near a French officer lying on his back wounded, and being myself covered with blood and my face smeared, for two of the killed men had fallen in my arms, my look was no doubt fierce; and though I approached him out of pity, he thought it was to kill him; his feet were towards me, and as he raised his head he cried out to some comrades above him, pointing with a quick convulsive motion towards me. Those whom he addressed could not be seen, for the ridge was about six feet high, nearly perpendicular, with a thick hedge at top; but my danger was soon announced through the roots of the hedge by a blaze of fire, poured so close as to fill the lane with smoke. All went over my head, being evidently fired without seeing me, or my body must have been blown to pieces.

"Giving myself up for lost, the temptation to run back was great; but the thought that our own line might see me, made me walk leisurely, in more danger, indeed, yet less alarmed than when going forward without knowing what would happen. The whole excursion along the lane was the most nervous affair I ever experienced in battle; nor was my alarm lessened on getting back, for Harrison and the others were gone! They could not stand the fire. I felt very miserable then, thinking the 50th had behaved ill; that my not getting the battery had been a cause of the battle being lost, and that Moore would attribute all to me. The battle seemed nearly over; I thought myself the last man alive belonging to our side who had got so far in front, and felt certain of death, and that my General would think I had hidden myself, and would not believe me to have done my best. I

thought also my little party had been taken. Lord William Bentinck afterwards told me that he had ordered my regiment back, in direct contradiction of Moore's design, who had, he admitted, told him not to recall me, but send men to my assistance!

"In this state of distraction, and still under a heavy fire, I turned down the lane to rejoin the regiment, and soon came on a wounded man, who shrieked out, 'Oh, praised be God, major! my dear major! God help you, my darling! one of your own 50th.' 'I cannot carry you,' was my reply; 'can you walk with my help?' 'Oh no, major, I am too badly wounded.' 'You must lie there then till help can be found.' 'O Christ God, my jewel, my own dear major, sure, you won't leave me!' The agony with which he screamed was great; it roused all my feelings and, strange to say, alarmed me about my own danger, which had been forgot in my misery at finding Harrison was gone from the corner, and thinking the battle lost. Stooping down I raised the poor fellow, but a musket ball just then broke the small bone of my leg some inches above the ankle; the pain was acute, and, though the flesh was not torn, the dent made in my flesh remains to this day, and is tender to the touch. Telling the man of my own wound my course was resumed; his piteous cries were then terrible, and fell bitterly as reproaches for my want of fortitude and courage. Yet what could be done by a man hardly able to walk, and in great pain, with other duties to perform? I felt it horrible to leave him; but selfishness and pain got the better, and with the help of my sword, limping, and with much suffering, I arrived at a spot where two other lanes met at the corner of a church; three privates of the 50th and one of the 42d, an Irishman, were there, who said we were cut off, and indeed Frenchmen were then coming up both lanes—one party from the position of the 50th, the other from that of the 4th. The last appeared the least numerous and the nearest, they were not thirty yards from us, and forgetting my leg then, though I had not pluck to do so for the poor wounded man left behind, I said to the four soldiers, 'Follow me, and we'll cut through them;' then with a shout I rushed forward.

“The Frenchmen had halted, but now ran on to us, and just as my spring and shout was made the wounded leg failed, and I felt a stab in the back ; it gave me no pain, but felt cold, and threw me on my face. Turning to rise I saw the man who had stabbed me making a second thrust ; whereupon, letting go my sabre, I caught his bayonet by the socket, turned the thrust, and raising myself by the exertion grasped his firelock with both hands, thus in mortal struggle regaining my feet. His companions had now come up, and I heard the dying cries of the four men with me, who were all bayoneted instantly. We had been attacked from behind by men not before seen, as we stood with our backs to a doorway, out of which must have rushed several men, for we were all stabbed in an instant, before the two parties coming up the road reached us ; they did so, however, just as my struggle with the man who had wounded me was begun. That was a contest for life, and being the strongest I forced him between myself and his comrades, who appeared to be the men whose lives I had saved when they pretended to be dead on our advance through the village. They struck me with their muskets clubbed, and bruised me much ; whereupon, seeing no help near, and being overpowered by numbers, and in great pain from my wounded leg, I called out, ‘*Je me rends,*’ remembering the expression correctly from an old story of a fat officer, whose name being James, called out, ‘*Jemmy Round,*’ Finding that they had no disposition to spare me I kept hold of the musket, vigorously defending myself with the body of the little Italian who had first wounded me, but soon grew faint, or rather tired. At that moment a tall dark man came up, seized the end of the musket with his left hand, whirled his brass-hilted sabre round, and struck me a powerful blow on the head, which was bare, for my cocked hat had fallen off. Expecting the blow would finish me, I had stooped my head, in hopes it might fall on my back, or at least on the thickest part of the head, and not on the left temple ; so far I succeeded, for it fell exactly on the top, cutting into the bone, but not through it. Fire sparkled from my eyes ; I fell on my knees blinded,

yet without quite losing my senses, and holding still on to the musket. Recovering in a moment I regained my legs, and saw a florid handsome young French drummer holding the arm of the dark Italian, who was in the act of repeating his blow. Quarter was then given, but they tore my pantaloons in tearing my watch and purse from my pocket, and a little locket of hair which hung round my neck; they snatched at everything; but while this went on two of them were wounded, and the drummer, Guibert, ordered the dark man who had sabred me to take me to the rear. When we began to move, I resting on him, because hardly able to walk, I saw him look back over his shoulder to see if Guibert was gone; and so did I, for his rascally face made me suspect him. Guibert's back was towards us, he was walking off, and the Italian again drew his sword, which he had before sheathed. I called out to the drummer, 'This rascal is going to kill me; brave Frenchmen don't kill prisoners!' Guibert ran back, swore furiously at the Italian, shoved him away, almost down, and putting his arms round my waist, supported me himself; thus this generous Frenchman saved me twice, for the Italian was bent upon slaying.

"We had not proceeded far up the old lane when we met a soldier of the 50th walking down at a rapid pace. He instantly halted, recovered his arms, and cocked his piece, looking fiercely at us to make out what it was. My recollection is that he levelled at Guibert, and I threw up his musket, calling out, 'For God's sake, don't fire, I am a prisoner, badly wounded, and can't help you; surrender.' 'For why would I surrender?' he cried aloud, with the deepest of Irish brogues. 'Because there are at least twenty men upon you.' There were five or six with us at the time. 'Well, if I must surrender, there,' said he, dashing down his firelock across their legs and making them jump; 'there's my firelock for yez.' Then coming close up he threw his arm round me, and giving Guibert a push that sent him and one or two more reeling against the wall, shouted out, 'Stand away, ye bloody spalpeens; I'll carry him myself, bad luck to the whole of yez!' My expectation was to see them fall upon him, but John Hennessy was a strong and fierce man, and,



moreover, looked bigger than he was, for he stood upon the higher ground. Apparently they thought him an awkward fellow to deal with; he seemed willing to go with me, and they let him have his own way. In this manner we proceeded about a hundred yards beyond the corner where Harrison and the rest had left me, and found a large force under General Renaud. He asked me my rank and how I was taken. My reply was, 'Taken because my regiment would not come on!' I was in great anger, and altogether ignorant of Lord William Bentinck having ordered them back; for the staff officer sent by him had not chosen to come up to me. My thought was that the regiment had given way, which made me very unjust in abuse of the glorious old 50th, for they had gone farther than any other corps in the army. Had Moore's orders for the 42d and 4th to support us been obeyed by Lord William, we should have carried the hill in a few minutes; that this was the cause of their going back is true, for Lord William afterwards told me so himself. General Renaud ordered a surgeon to dress me, and he put a plaster on my head; but my leg was so swollen he could not get off my boot without cutting, which I would not allow, hoping to escape, in which case the loss of a boot would be irreparable. They took me up the hill to where the Spanish magazine on the top had been exploded.

"Soon after leaving Renaud, being supported by one of his officers and Hennessy, with a guard, we passed a large gap in a wall, on which the English fire was still very heavy. The French soldiers cried out, 'Don't cross there except on your knees, or you will be shot,' whereupon the French officer desired Hennessy and me to do so, but we refused, and Hennessy said low, 'Be Jasus, they're afraid.' My desire was to be seen by our own people, and therefore my walk with Hennessy and the officer was erect and slow; but seeing the French guard crawl on their hands and knees I said to the captain, 'Crawl you too, or you will be hit; I can't run away.' This anxiety for an enemy greatly amused the Frenchmen, and it was afterwards told to the Marshals Soult and Ney; Renaud also mentioned it when a prisoner in

London ; however, the officer would only stoop, and none of us were hit. On the summit of the position my bodily agony was so great that Hennessy and the French captain, seeing some straw near a fire, laid me on it ; my leg and side were giving me excruciating pain ; it was dark, and Hennessy went away for a while with the captain ; then a French officer came and stood over me, a tall handsome man ; he looked at me for some time, and said, ' War ! war ! war ! My God, will this horrid work never cease ! Poor young man, I fear you are badly wounded.' He gave me some drink, and tears rolled down his cheeks ; but then he turned away, and several others sat down round the fire without noticing me. Soon, however, came the man whose straw I had been laid upon ; he gave me two kicks, and dragged me by the neck off his bundle, hurting me much. I said nothing except ' God damn you !' and two or three Frenchmen starting up took my part. Then the tall officer returned and was very angry, but the beast who kicked me would not let me be put back on the straw, which he claimed. The officer told them to take me into the ruin of a blown-up house or magazine, where some officers had had a fire in the remains of a room, the fireplace being indeed nearly all that existed of the building ; he left me, and then the men took me into another ruined room, and threw me into the filth with which it was filled, and began to laugh at me. I was very angry, wished myself dead at once, and said something violent, whereupon they seemed to consult about killing me, and my hopes of life fled ; indeed, my wish was not to live, but at that moment the officer came back with two or three more, and with two soldiers who had before left the place, I think to call them and save me. These officers were very angry, but my understanding was faint, and my desire was to be put out of misery, for I thought we had lost the battle, and my pain of body was past bearing. They, however, carried me to the other part of the building near the fireplace, and there was Hennessy. They offered me broth and wine ; I could touch nothing from the agony of my wounds, and groaned at times, for the pain was no longer supportable,

even before an enemy. Not being able to lie down, Hennessy held me in his arms in an upright posture. The French officers did all they could for me, as far as kind words went, and soon one of their own officers was brought in wounded; it was the captain who had been with me when first taken. General Renaud now sent an officer with my sword, desiring me to wear it, for I had used it well. I wrote my name and rank on a piece of paper, and requested the officer to give it and my sword to Marshal Soult, with a request to speak to him. That officer did not return.

"Hennessy, having occasion to go out of the ruin, set me in an angle of the fireplace, and never came back, being seized and marched off, as he afterwards told me. Before he left me he unbuckled my spurs and whispered, 'The spurs are silver, the spalpeens would murder you for them.' When he did not return my idea was that he had made his escape, and took the spurs with that intention; at least my hope was so, that he might tell my brother George where I was, for what fretted me most was that no flag of truce came in for me. I thought Moore was angry, that myself and the regiment had been disgraced, and therefore he would not send in, nor let George come; then the fancy came that George was killed, but my thoughts were all wild and sad that night. Very wretched in body and mind was I now, and in about two hours after Hennessy had gone the French officers went away, one after another. The fire was out, and it was dreadfully cold, yet pain kept me from feeling it so much, and all that long and horrible night and next day did I lie wishing for death, and expecting it if a stray soldier should see me. There was no roof, only a few feet of wall standing, and the following evening, about dusk, being in less pain, I crawled out, reckless of being killed or not. Outside there was a Frenchman cooking; he was a kind man, and gave me some broth, but I could not eat it. He went away, yet returned with another soldier, and they made up a little more fire, rolled themselves in their greatcoats and other warm things, and lay down. Pain kept me waking, and the fire went out soon, for there was no fuel. I had no waistcoat

or drawers, only a uniform coat and torn trousers, and the cold was dreadful, for it was January, and the hill high. An oilskin was on my hat, I pulled it off to cover my head and face; then, putting my hands on my mouth, warmed myself with my breath, but could not lie down. My feet and legs lost all feeling, and the wounded leg ceased to pain me, except when moved. About midnight the two Frenchmen went their way, and promised to tell their commandant of my state, yet the second dreadful night passed and no one came. Next day, about three o'clock, a musician came near me, and I persuaded him to take me to his regiment, but to walk was agony. I was, however, very kindly received by all the French officers, who were seated round a fire, and especially so by their commander, a man with a very red face, and perfectly white mustachios and hair; they treated me well, and finally forwarded me on to Marshal Soult's quarters. We passed through Elviña, amidst all the bodies of my poor 50th soldiers, scattered about; and many wounded were still alive in a house, and very clamorous for food; scarcely able to speak from weakness I was supported by two men, yet at last reached Soult's quarters, and being shown into the kitchen, sat down in much suffering. Monsieur de Chamont, aide-de-camp to Soult, came to me; he was all kindness and attention, and offered me money, which was declined, but I told him his men had been expert in robbing me; that every one who met me as I was borne to the rear had asked, '*Est-il pillé?*' And the reply always was, '*Oh pour ça oui, joliment.*'

"It was impossible to be kinder than De Chamont, and that kindness was continued by the Marshal and his staff, and again by Ney and his staff. On my telling Soult of the wounded starving English soldiers lying in the village, he promised to have them helped immediately, and sent me to his own quarters, where a bed was provided, and food; the latter was, in truth, much needed, for none had been taken since my breakfast on the 16th, and this was the 18th. The pain in my side gave me little rest, and next morning, being ordered to go into Coruña, I was put on a horse, attended

by a dragoon, and entered the town with the troops. At the gate there was a crowd, and a Spaniard hustled against my leg, which put me to such torture I cursed him aloud in English, and gave him a blow on the head with as great force as the pain left me strength to do. The stupid brute knew of my wound, for I had pushed him twice away before, and showed him how my leg was tied up. The delight of the French soldiers at my striking the Don was very great; he deserved it. I was now very well treated. My billet was on M. Barrière, a banker, who lived with his brother-in-law, Marchesa, an excellent kind fellow, with a pretty Spanish wife. There my state was as comfortable as kindness on the part of my host and the French officers, particularly Baron Clouet, Ney's aide-de-camp, could make it—but I was a prisoner.

“Such were my own adventures in the battle of Coruña, told without modesty or concealment; for I write not this for the public, but from old notes for my wife and children, with no desire to make them think more or less of my actions than the reality. I felt great fear for a few minutes at one period of the fight; yet it was not such as to influence my conduct, and at no other period did a thought of my own safety cross my mind. It was when alone in the lane, and expecting to meet numbers in personal combat that my nerves were most affected; for, as my short-sightedness disabled me from seeing what was going on, and what was to be met, I feared to fall unseen and unknown. Afterwards, when wearing spectacles, the nervous feeling was not so strong, but the disadvantage of bad sight is tremendous when alone, and gives a feeling of helplessness. With all this, alarm was not my feeling when the men told me we were cut off; nervousness then ceased, and only the thought of how to break through the enemy remained; had it not been for the stab in my back, and the sudden lameness, I should have done it, for my resolution was that no man should go before me that day, and no man did, unless Hennessy. Where he had been, or came from, is to me unknown, I could never make it out from him; he spoke but little English, and explained himself with difficulty.”

Such were his own adventures; but the story is incomplete without an account of those that still awaited John Hennessy and the pair of silver spurs. On leaving his major, as he thought, dying, he was at once marched off with other prisoners towards the Pyrenees. At Pampeluna he escaped and reached Oporto; being very hungry he sold one of the spurs on the way. He took part in the defence of Oporto against Soult, was again captured, but released soon after by the arrival of the British troops and the withdrawal of the French. He fought at Talavera, and having found George Napier there, showed the remaining spur, but would not give it up, for his major had said to him when he took it off, "When you escape, give that to my sister." The spurs had been given to Charles Napier by his sister, and were received with these words, "Now I am your knight." George Napier was, however, content to hear for the first time that his brother had survived the battle.

At the end of the campaign our friend John rejoined the 50th, and soon saw Charles Napier alive and at liberty again. Not a word passed as to the spur, but his major obtained for him the grade of corporal in recognition of his bravery. He soon got leave of absence to see his wife and child at Cork, taking with him a letter from Napier to the collector of customs. On reaching England he travelled about two hundred miles round to find Miss Napier, and delivered the spur to her. But, strangest of all, when at last he got to Cork, he delivered the letter to the collector before going to see his wife and children. The collector told him that Charles Napier had gone off to fight again in the Peninsula as a volunteer. "Ogh! murder! is he gone back and the regiment not with him? By my soul, they will never stop behind him; I must be off." "Well, Hennessy, you must do as you please, but go and see your wife and