

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF SPAIN.

DON DIEGO LEON,

OR, LIFE ON THE "KIBERA" OF NAVARRE.

(CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.)

The general and staff had proceeded with the caçadores, and had disappeared with them. Whilst the horses were feeding, and the men and officers quietly smoking, little relishing the dull work, and wishing the convoy down the Ebro: suddenly the sharp crack of a carbine came rattling on our astonished ears, and then another and another, till it was apparent that the caçadores were sharply engaged with the enemy; in an instant every man was upon his legs: "Stand to your horses, bridle up."—Done as quick as ordered. Another second saw us all mounted. By this time an aide-de-camp came galloping down the hill and, with breathless haste, ordered us to gallop up as quickly as possible. The lancers of the guard, who were in front, took the lead, followed by the grenadiers of the guard, whilst we acted as a reserve. On reaching the summit of the small hill, the view that met our gaze was indeed startling. We had the whole of the Carlist cavalry before us, and already engaged with the lancers of the guard. They came thundering down in close columns of fifteen or sixteen squadrons, making the earth tremble and producing a hollow sound like distant thunder. The caçadores had been annihilated, and already the lancers of the guard were sharing the same fate. The grenadiers now plunged into the advancing columns. "Well done! brave Azlor." He checks them for a second, his gallant squadron fight bravely, ay most bravely.—The best and noblest blood in Spain leads them on, but all in vain, the overwhelming odds tell, and the flanks of the heroic squadron yield, and it gives way! And now—hurrah! for St. George and Merry Old England! And thy sons, will they forget thee? No! Will they disgrace thee? Never! Hear that cheer! heard above the din of the action. Hurrah! hurrah! another and another!—'Tis the advance of the English squadron at full gallop to the melée! On, on they rush, one instant and they dash into the astonished foe, amidst a forest of lances and sabres. Ah! gallant band!—bravely, most gallantly done! They check them! Aye like a thunder bolt they charge through and through the dense, but now unsteady and shaken ranks. They form again in rear of the now broken squadrons! will they stand a second shock? No! The Carlists turn, and two thousand routed cavalry fly before this gallant, gallant little band. We followed the flying squadrons till they tumbled upon their own infantry, which lay hidden from us by a small hill, and consisting of some sixteen battalions, causing a great deal of confusion among them, prevented as they were from firing on us, from our being mixed with their own cavalry.

On that day, if the remainder of the cavalry had been up with us, even after the engagement, we might have even after the immense number of prisoners, and perhaps the greater part of their infantry, but as we were unsupported and at a great distance from our reserves, we were compelled to retire without the results that we should have reaped if Jimmy Lion had had his force a little more together. A it was he narrowly escaped having been driven into the Ebro, which would undoubtedly have been the case, if our gallant squadron had not proved itself worthy of the reputation the regiment had in Spain.

The Carlists upwards of three engaged, in this action cavalry alone advanced which, w/loss. Had, there certainty, and is a hero cautiservs, there is no doubt would have annihilated the whole as they

did the two first squadrons, but their own impetuosity disordered them, and after receiving a severe shock from the grenadiers of the guard, and then another consecutively from an unbroken body, the result in a similar instance, can never be questioned. Thus ended the action of Sesma. Sharp, quick and decisive, as all cavalry actions ever ought to be.

After the action, the general rode up to the grenadiers and eulogized their conduct in a very handsome manner, indeed as they richly merited, it was impossible for cavalry to have been better led, or to have behaved better!—Their commandanté, (major) Azlor, was a gallant fellow! and though hitherto a fashionable roué in Madrid, a sort of life, that does not always school one for conduct in the field—had, in this instance, proved what I believe has already been often attested, that a gentleman, though a dandy, can fight as well as his neighbors when called upon. He then rode up to us, and I shall never forget his countenance and voice. He commenced in the most impassioned and excited manner to thank us in the name of his illustrious sovereign, Her Majesty "La Reina Isabel," and for himself, to his comrades,—"Here his voice failed him, poor fellow! he could get no further! his good and noble heart was too full! he turned his horse sharply round and galloped off to another part of the field to give orders and collect his broken and shattered squadrons. 'It was the height of eloquence'—those few words, ending with "comrade,"—the link, the bond, that unites soldiers in a brotherhood more sacred than the ties of nature,—was here understood by all—and many a noble heart and gallant soul responded to this touching sympathy. In an instant every voice was raised,—"Viva Leon! Viva Nuestro General!" The infantry now caught up the enthusiastic cheer, and for a minute or two the cheering was actually deafening.

The column now moved off to Mendavin, a village near the Ebro. As the day was far advanced, and as "Los Arcoss" was still some hours march from us, Leon deemed it advisable not to proceed. And thus the alcalde's rations were saved.

The following morning we retired upon "Lodosa," a town on the banks of the Ebro, and within our own lines, where we were joined by the General in Chief, "Espartero," with forty battalions and eight or ten squadrons of cavalry. He held a levée that day, and ordered a review for the following one.

It was on a beautiful December morning, the sun shining with a brilliancy unusual, even in that ever unclouded clime, that we turned out to form on the beautiful plain near the banks of the classic Ebro, now glistening as she glided majestically downwards, with the rays of the rising sun. The battalions of the general-in-chief had already taken up their ground, in line, on our right, composed of the Luchana regiment (his own,) and the royal guards, and some other battalions of the line. The cavalry, consisting of the Prussian guards, were formed on the extreme right, and the artillery on the left. The cavalry of our division was formed on our right, then the infantry and our artillery on the left. We remained thus for some minutes before the general-in-chief made his appearance.

At last "Jimmy Lion" came galloping up at his usual pace to the front line. He was dressed as a Lieutenant General, covered with orders and a large gold key suspended by a cross (insignia of a gentleman of the bed-chamber of her Majesty), and mounted upon a large Andalusian white horse, covered with trappings and harness. He was the beau idéal of a gallant knight of by-gone days: as senior officer, he took the command of the parade. The line now stood at attention, and in another minute, the General-in-chief, ac-

companied by a brilliant staff and his escort of two or three hundred horse, came cantering across the plain. The whole now presented arms, whilst the several bands struck up the national air. The effect of the whole was indeed very exciting.

Espartero was simply dressed in the uniform of his rank, with his breast glittering with the diamonds of his Grand Crosses, —some six or seven. He galloped down the line and up by the rear rank, in the usual way, and then again by the front to the centre of the line, when assuming the command in person. Leon galloped up to the front of his own division. An aide-de-camp now advanced to the latter, and delivered an order, upon which Leon, and his staff, trotted up to the front of his cavalry, and ordering the grenadiers of the guard and the English squadron of Lancers to the front, they advanced in line to within a few paces of the General-in-Chief, when they halted.

Espartero now advanced to the grenadiers, and taking his hat off, harangued them! and in the name of the Queen, "Isabel Segunda" thanked them for their distinguished conduct in the late action, stating that Her Majesty should be made cognizant of it, for her consideration. They then retired to the main body.

The General now came up to us, and addressed us to the following effect:—"Ingleses, you have proved yourselves worthy of the great nation you hero represent. I have taken the earliest opportunity of tendering to you, the thanks of our nation of our illustrious Sovereign Isabel Segunda, and of myself, your General-in-Chief. I shall take the earliest occasion of making known to Her Majesty the distinguished services you have rendered her cause, as witnessed not alone by myself in person in the late action, but by the army. [The General-in-Chief witnessed the whole action of Sesma from the opposite side of the Ebro, on the heights of Alcanadra, about half a league distant.] I have thus addressed you and the grenadiers of Her Majesty's guard, in order that your brilliant example may infuse the same spirit into the whole Spanish army." At the conclusion of this harangue, the General-in-Chief retired a short distance, and giving the word of command in person, the whole line presented arms—and the proud and yellow banners of Espana lowered, whilst the several bands struck up the "Tragala," to do homage to that great nation, which has ever befriended her, her hours of adversity and need. After this, the General-in-Chief ordered "tres vivas por los Ingleses," cheering also, and the squad retired to the line, amidst the deafening "vivas" of about forty thousand of the best troops in the peninsula. I have felt joy! I have felt great, great emotions in my life before! but I had never felt as I did that day!

Reader, have you ever from joy, felt annihilation close at hand? a choking in the throat, that prevents respiration! what a relief is it to you, wretches! and oh, what a melancholy succeeds all this. I looked at my troop, and I saw that most of them: stout, rough-bearded and moustachioed fellows, that would have faced that whole line if they had been ordered, were like myself, endeavoring to hide their trickling faces! Ah! the heart, if not perverted, beats the same in every bosom! strike the same chord, and it will echo the same note.

The General-in-Chief and the troops with him, returned to the opposite side of the Ebro, and our division marched back on the Kibera to return to Pampeluna, where, on our arrival, we were received with all the kindness we usually met with from its inhabitants. The authorities giving us a "bal masquo," on the night of our arrival. Reader, this was the life usually led by the division of the Kibera, under Don Diego Leon, or Jimmy Lion.