

mighty events which were passing, was torture to a mind like his:—

'A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed its tenement of clay.'

The glorious battle-ground from which he was kept back rendered doubly irksome the dull daily round of drill, and he wrote to his mother, 'My broken jaw did not give me half the pain the life we lead here does. A wet climate, nothing to eat, no fruit, no vegetables, no wine, no good company; for the people, after cheating you in their shops all day, have the impudence to think they are to be your companions in the evening.' In the poverty of agreeable occupation he took to gardening, and it became so absorbing, that he was forced to abandon it, lest it should interfere with his business. 'It is hard,' he said, when he heard of the battle of Salamanca, and contrasted it with his own obscure existence, 'to rouse myself to duty: yet duty must be done.' 'This,' adds Sir William, 'was as much his motto as the Duke of Wellington's, but it was not peculiar to either; how many times did that phrase burst from the lips of poor soldiers in the Peninsula, when called to face danger, endure fatigue, and suffer privations from which nature shrunk! Duty must be done, was their war-cry, and the noblest ever raised.' A fine and generous tribute to the humble comrades of these illustrious leaders. Acting on this maxim, Colonel Napier's hatred of Bermuda, his bodily lassitude, the depression of his spirits, and his freedom from supervision, did not hinder him from labouring to perfect his men. He was a master of drill, as well as of manœuvring; and he asked nothing of his soldiers which he did not himself perform in their presence. His regiment thrived; but its officers of consummate bravery and skill: of any service in war, a better post might have been found for such a man at such a time.

The yellow fever broke out, and spread dismay among the troops. "Terror," he said, "is visible with the most determined fellows, terror even to ridicule." He could only resist the general apprehension by the most resolute efforts, and his conduct on the occasion supplies one more illustration of the characteristic which predominated in him from childhood to the grave. Fear was greatest when a death had just occurred. They buried an ensign one night, and the gloomy influence of the hour produced more than the usual insupportable depression. The whole of the attendants except himself hastened from the formidable ceremony to a party to keep up their spirits. Charles Napier retired to sit in solitude in his own apartment. 'I put out one candle,' he says, 'and let the snuff of the other grow as long as my own nose, and at midnight my lowliness was overcome: then quoth I, lo! I am master; let me sleep.' His brother officers had endeavoured to elude the spectre and drown thought in merriment; Colonel Napier resolved to face and subdue it. This was ever his way. Where victory was possible to mortal man he scorned to succumb.

In June, 1813, he was once more summoned to active service, but it was of a kind which he detested. A floating expedition with Sir John Warren as naval, and Sir Sidney Beckwith as military commander, was sent to ravage the coasts of America. Colonel Napier was Beckwith's second, and, besides his own regiment, had under him a brigade of marines, and some French volunteers from the prisoners taken in war. "Much," said he, "I dislike sacking and burning of towns. This authorized, per-

haps needless, plundering, this sacking of towns is then the very object of the expedition." Beckwith was not more exacting of the employment, being by nature, as Sir William states, even "morally humane," for he would not punish to save. "Though a man of genius, nothing prospered." His movements were at the mercy of the Admiral, and the prominent conclusion which Colonel Napier derived from the whole expedition was the absolute folly of a divided command. "A republic of commanders," he says, "means defeat." The Frenchmen proved villains. "Fight they shall," Napier wrote, mistrusting them from the outset; "all men will fight when they begin, but delay enables rogues to evaporate." When they came to be tried he pronounced them "the greatest rascals existing." They had intended to desert in a body, and he frustrated the design by sending them off—it is to be hoped to the prisons from whence they came—but not before they had given fearful evidence that they did not belong to the race of Gutherbs:—

'They really murdered without an object but the pleasure of murdering. One robbed a poor Yankee and pretended all sorts of anxiety for him. It was the custom of war, he said, to rob a prisoner, but he was sorry for him. When he had thus coaxed the man into confidence, he told him to walk on before, as he was to go to the General, the poor wretch, of a sudden, when his back was turned the musket was fired into his brain. I would rather see ten of them shot than one American. It is quite shocking to see men who speak our own language, brought in wounded, one feels as if they were English peasants, and that we are killing our own people.'

Colonel Napier displayed his usual courage, sagacity, and humanity, but he was unable to prevent the barbarities against which he protested, or to get permission to execute the design he proposed. The small successes obtained were insufficient to justify the misery inflicted. Horrors were committed in sacking Little Hampton which Napier considered equally disgraceful to the British name and to human nature. In the prospect of being sent the next year to command for himself, he considered how he should act, and the propriety of risking a desperate attack on strong works strongly defended. Among other reasons for adopting an adventurous course he sets down the following, more, we suppose, in satire than in earnest:—

'It is perhaps good also to indulge John Bull's taste for blood now and then. Had Moore sacrificed an army instead of saving one, he would have been perfect in the eyes of the country. Nothing but his unpardonable humanity, which made him fancy England cared as much for her soldiers as he did, caused him to act as he did. Had he saved his own life and contrived to have 20,000 men bayoneted, he would have done a job for which England would have made him anything he wished. Alas for himself! he thought of everything but himself.'

When Charles Napier wrote these words he did not know that the Duke had said that the English people liked a large butcher's bill, and it is humiliating to reflect that this should be the notorious characteristic of the non-fighting part of our countrymen. To do them justice, we believe that ignorance and not cruelty is the source of the passion. No civilians in the world are more unenlightened in military affairs,* and, instead of being tested by the

* As a specimen of the folly of which people are occasionally capable, it may be remembered that during the recent war it was gravely proposed that navies should be employed to make the advanced trenches at Sebastopol, and we be-

lieve that his movements, a leader as well as a soldier, by the body-batteries he wins. When we have been so long for victory, increased by the desperate valour and personal acts of troops who fought their general through his hands, which proved him unfit for command, Wellington was pronounced a poor, incompetent creature for seeking shelter behind the lines of Torres Vedras & Moore for dragging off his army in the most difficult of all operations—a retreat conducted in the presence of a superior force. It is common, and not his previous generalship, which has saved the fame of the latter. These are circumstances to be meditated in peace, that blind impatience may not again sacrifice the reputation of officers and the blood of soldiers in war. The presumption which has hitherto been shown on such subjects almost surprises itself. After the battle of Waterloo Sir William Napier went upon business to the Duke when he was at the opera in Paris. He was sitting alone in an upper dark corner of the box, the seats in front being filled with fashionable London men and women, who were with great volubility discussing the battle, and assigning all the honours to the cavalry. The Duke listened, laughed and in a low voice said, 'I have told them that the British infantry won the battle, and our batteries, but it has been estimated to me that I know nothing of the matter, and I expect soon to be told I was not there.' That those London men and women, who set at naught the authority of the Duke and contradicted him respecting the incidents of his own victories, were not an unfair sample of the public, was demonstrated by the reception given to his warning after the capture of Acre, that ships as a rule could not contend successfully with forts. The counter-assertions which were ventured by civilians who had never seen a shot fired nor bestowed a day upon the study of ships or forts, called forth from Charles Napier this amusing but instructive ironical comment:—

'The Duke is abused for his speech, illiberal speech about the navy. I at first thought it a wise and a fine one, but on reflection I find it was wrong: our feet can always take strong fortresses, and it was old Donnell's stupidity which caused the failure at Buzos; he ought to have had up the squadron from St. Ander. Don't trouble your head about the flying sap—a flying squadron is the thing for business. In my opinion, and with John's concurrence not even the Duke can interfere with impunity.'

Admiral Stewart has lately explained that Acre was taken because the Egyptians thought the buoys which were laid down to indicate the shoals were the intended positions of the ships; and as they lowered their guns to a false mark, and blocked up the embrasures with sand-bags for greater protection, the fleet was enabled to get under the walls without suffering from a shot. Unless a ship can approach within 30 yards, Admiral Stewart asserts that it must come off worst in the contest, and we believe we are right in affirming that every experienced soldier or sailor is of the same opinion, if the

I have that the Government passed on this absurd idea to the Commander-in-Chief, who had to write a despatch to instruct the War Minister of England that the best soldiers in the army were required in a position where the whole security of the works depended on the men being trained to fight as well as dig. A different but more astounding piece of ignorance was the inquiry addressed to Sir John Warren from the Admiralty, during the time that Charles Napier was serving in the West, as to whether it was not practicable to send a frigate of light draught to operate against North America from the lakes of Canada—oblivious that Niagara stopped the way.