

THE EVE OF BATTLE.

All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there.

—LARA.

There is no situation, perhaps, in which man is more susceptible of the kinder feelings of his nature than when he is about to risk his existence in the tide of mortal conflict. The ties of love—of friendship—and of kindred, seem in that hour to be woven more closely round the heart, and dearer than they ever were before; and the probability, which will intrude itself on the mind, of our soon being insensible to them all gives life a thousand charms.

Agitated by such feelings as these on the night preceding a desperate engagement; and unable to take the repose which was to fit me for encountering the fatigues and dangers of the approaching combat, I strolled some distance from my tent, hoping the freshness of the night air might, in some degree, tend to calm the feverish ferment of my spirits.

It was a delicious night in the earlier part of June; and the full moon shone with—as I thought at the time—unrivalled splendor. The camp of our army was situated along a height which gently sloped down to a small river, scarcely a musket shot in breadth; and on the opposite side of which, on a corresponding range of hills, was formed that of the enemy.—All was silent as the