

neglected to use the sponge-plug in time, the broken gastro blocked up one of the nostrils, and again they told him it would never be better. His lip was uneasy, and uneasy they said it would always remain. They were better prophets than surgeons. 'No one,' he wrote in 1816, on the anniversary of the battle, 'who has not been hurt in some part which affects the sight, smell, hearing, or passage of food, can tell what small but constant suffering is undergone: for thirty-six years I have not known what it is to breathe freely.' Another evil, more capable of alleviation, clung to him through life—an extreme sensitiveness to cold produced by the loss of blood from his wounds, and the after-bleedings of doctors, who then supposed a process to be remedial which is now known to be extremely the reverse. Many a gallant fellow, who would have survived, was hurried out of the world from the lanceet completing what bullet, sword, and bayonet had begun.

The fate which seemed always to await Charles Napier in battle, and the awful agonies he had endured and was enduring, must be kept fall before the mind to appreciate the heroism of the next action in the life of this glorious soldier. Massena, toiled by the lines of Torres Vedras, and having eaten up all the resources of the country around him, was compelled to retreat in the beginning of March, 1811. The news came to Lisbon that Lord Wellington had issued from his entrenchments, and was hard in pursuit of the retiring enemy. With his wound still bandaged Charles Napier got on horseback and rode ninety-two miles upon the same horse in twenty-two hours, three of which were spent in a halt, the only pause he made in his wonderful journey. How many suffering men in the world would have performed this feat for the sake of anticipating by a few days the same dangers which had always proved so fatal to him, and which hardly anybody else in his condition would have braved at all! He feared his favorite horse would be killed by the exertion, but this, he said, would be better than being too late for the action expected at Condeixa. The horse, however, was worthy of his rider. He did not even tire. The regiment of Napier was now in the Peninsula with the main body of the army, and through the hot haste he had made he came up with it on the morning of the 13th of March. On the 14th he met a litter covered with a blanket brought from the light division in front, which was in incessant conflict with the rear-guard of the enemy. 'What officer,' he said, 'is that?' 'Captain Napier of the 52nd, with a broken limb.' 'And that?' he added, pointing to a second litter which followed. 'Captain Napier of the 13rd, mortally wounded.' Without speaking a word to either of these brothers, both of whom happily survived to perform many more feats of arms and add fresh lustre to the name of Napier, the gallant Charles, not daunted by the omen, hastened forwards into the fight. On this occasion he escaped, but his progress was one of excessive hardship. The French had wasted the country with fire and sword. For two entire days and the larger part of a third he did not taste a morsel of food. What little he got to eat at other times was chiefly maggoty biscuit, and 'though,' says he, 'not a bad soldier, hang me if I can relish maggots!' The extent of the evil is pleasantly indicated by the addition he makes to his letter, when on looking from his paper, after writing on a few sentences, he subjoins, 'There! my biscuit has run away on maggots' legs.' So gaily did he express himself while exposed to every misery most abhorrent to ordinary

flesh and blood. But this was his notion of a worthy soldier. 'The essence of war,' he wrote in India in 1815, 'is endurance, and not only that but a pride and glory in privation, and a contempt for comfort as effeminate and disgraceful.' There were many spirits in the army who were made of the same immortal stuff, unbinding as the gum-stem of the oak to misfortune, and stirred as readily as its leaves by the distresses of a comrade. During the scarcity which prevailed in the pursuit of Massena, William Light, a young cavalry officer, had the luck to obtain a loaf of bread, and, though nearly starving himself, he rode twenty miles across the mountains to Condeixa, on the imminent peril of his life, to convey his prize to the wounded Napier. Throwing them his loaf, he rushed from the ruined house where they lay without speaking a syllable, and hurried back to his regiment. Thus it is that one noble heart answers to another; this is the way that heroes behave to heroes. To this example Sir William Napier adds another, which we give in his words, and not least for the question which forms the moral to his tale:—

'A temporary bridge near the Murella had to be destroyed by powder during Massena's advance; but the match failed, the enemy poured on, and the passage seemed lost: then a man of Charles Napier's old corps—would to God his name had been preserved for posterity!—exclaimed, "It shall not fail—they shall not pass!" So saying he deliberately walked along the structure, a floating one, to the mine, relighting the match, and bending his noble head over the spark, continued to watch its deadly progress until the explosion sent him from a world he was too heroic to live in! Why are young men told to look in ancient history for examples of heroism, when their own countrymen furnish such instances?'

A third instance of the gallantry is worthy to be classed with those which have gone before. During the pursuit in which George Napier received his wound, one of his subalterns, Lieutenant Giffard, behaved with such conspicuous courage, that many of the French leaders kept exclaiming, 'Kill that officer.' He was shot as the English skirmishers were retiring, and George Napier chancing to look back, saw his friend on the ground and the enemy plundering him. He sprang forward and with his sword beat off the invaders. Two soldiers who followed him helped to raise the lifeless body on his shoulders. They stopped at a short distance, hollowed a grave with their bayonets, buried the brave Lieutenant under a tremendous fire, and then, giving three cheers, rushed forward upon their foes and avenged death by death.

All the Cornma Majors who commanded a regiment or a detachment in the action had been promoted before Charles Napier asked permission, in May, 1810, to join the light division as a volunteer. Unequal are the chances of war. He who was first in merit was the last to be rewarded, and the advancement which he considered his right was denied. 'But,' says Sir William, 'he easily obtained leave to risk his life again, that being a favor which gave him no claim, and might get rid of one.' His very gallantry had operated against him. He had gone so far in advance of everybody else, that half his deeds were unknown, and his presumed death put him out of the question while the battle was fresh in men's minds. Lord William Bentinck, indeed, who saw him fall, had testified that the immediate cause of the victory was due to his direction of the 50th regiment, which bore the brunt of the action, and that apart from this signal service he had reason to believe that Sir John Moore had intended to ask his promo-

tion for his conduct during the previous retreat; but the voice of Lord William was not sufficiently powerful to prevail, and at best would have been a poor compensation for the blow which was given to Major Napier's fortunes through the death of his General. Had Moore survived, the 50th would have been supported, South's army would have been destroyed, and the young soldier whose name was not so much as mentioned in the despatch, would have occupied the foremost place of honor. His subsequent services and wounds rendered it impossible to overlook him any longer, and in July, 1811, he was made Lieutenant-Colonel. Even this tardy act of justice was accompanied with an allusion to his new regiment, the 102nd, had returned from New South Wales completely disorganized, and he was ordered to leave the Peninsula and take charge of it immediately. He joined it at Guernsey in January, 1812, having first been detained by the Guadiana fever at Lisbon, and, while still broken in health, was ordered in July to Bermuda.

When Charles Napier first served 'under the great Captain whose transcendent genius,' in the words of Sir William, 'animated the war with a glory dazzling to contemplate,' Wellington was supposed to be a general of no capacity. Full of the fine qualities of Moore, influenced by the current opinion, and believing from his own judgment that Talavera was a mistake, the young Major could not be expected at the outset to take a just measure of the vast powers of his chief. But he was far too good a soldier himself not to recognise military greatness in others, and he speedily detected the combined sagacity and prudence of his commander. 'Errors,' he said, during the pursuit of Massena, 'may have been committed, all generals commit errors, but this successful campaign renders him one of the first of his time.' Napier was long enough in the Peninsula to learn the lessons of his master, but he strove, says Sir William, 'to adapt Wellington's system of war to his own peculiar turn of mind rather than to imitate it; for he knew their idiosyncracies were different, and felt the force of Michael Angelo's quaint apophthegm, that "he who follows will always be behind." The future conqueror of Sindh bestowed equal attention upon the tactics of the French; but here again to adapt what was good to his own system, and not servilely to copy them, "seeing early that war, though under great guiding principles, is so vast an art as always to admit the display of original knowledge; there is much that is beyond the reach of rules, and which the proficient himself is unable to explain, but in nothing more than in military science. "I have fought many battles," said the Duke of Wellington to Sir William Napier, "and have acquired an instinct about them which I cannot describe, but I know how to fight a battle." Every movement of the enemy, every accident of ground, every circumstance of situation, every blunder of subordinates or antagonists, every change in the feelings of the troops commanded or the troops opposed, will modify the measures to be taken; and so enormous is the sagacity required to learn and appreciate the infinite variety of particulars, and so sustained the energy of mind and body essential to keep moving, without derangement, the complicated wheels of the mighty machine, that no man entirely masters the difficulty. He is the greatest general that commits the fewest mistakes.

Colonel Napier arrived, weak and sickly, in Bermuda in September, 1812. His assignment to a distant island, while every pulse in Europe was beating quicker with the