

## OUR TABLE.

TRIFLES FROM MY PORT-FOLIO,—BY A STAFF SURGEON.

It is with no small degree of gratification, that we allude to these pleasant "Trifles," the first volume of which has been for some weeks upon "Our Table." The author is evidently pleased to "fight his battles o'er again," and to recount the "'scapes and accidents, by flood and field" which chequered his younger days, and we cannot doubt that the public will share his pleasure.

So much has been written upon the subject of the terrible struggle, which deluged Europe with blood, in the early part of the present century, that every reader is acquainted with the general character of these "stirring times." With this disadvantage, however, we are pleased to state, the author has manfully grappled, and though his subject may occasionally want the magic of novelty, his peculiarly fluent and original style invests it with a charm which we did not anticipate from the modest pretensions of his "Recollections."

If we except the opening chapters, several of which are devoted to the boyhood of the author, the volume before us is filled with matter of peculiar interest. Having entered the army at an early age, and at the time when Napoleon was at the acmé of his greatness, he was necessarily a witness of many gallant and chivalrous adventures; and although, precluded by the peaceful character of his duties, from engaging personally in the "war for fame," he has been an observant looker on at the deeds adorning round him.

We would not scruple to follow the author through the whole course of his career, from his arrival at Lisbon, till his departure from St. Helena, were we not confident that the book itself will find its way into general perusal, and it would be unfair to the author to mar its interest by any abridgement of its contents. We, therefore, give a few extracts from the volume, and add our recommendation to the many testimonials which have already been given in its favour. The following extracts from the chapter headed "Battle of Vittoria," will be perused with deep interest:—

"Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,  
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit  
To his full height"—————

*Shakespeare.*

It was early buzzed along the line of march that there would be hot work before night—the staff-officers, as they moved with orders, looked grave and somewhat excited, and there was a cessation of the usual chatting and joking in the ranks; which, though contrary to orders, was tolerated in those days, and with good reason, for it disguised and softened the tedium and fatigue of a march, and kept the men in good humour.

As we were crossing the clear stream of the Zadorra at Puebla, (it was of a far different colour before the day was over,) I glanced into the water and saw a number of lively dace playing about, apparently altogether careless of the great events taking place in their neighbourhood. Morillo's Spaniards had seized the bridge and crossed before the British, and we now heard a little firing beginning on the heights on our right; said to be the scene of a victory gained by our Black Prince, and hence called "*los montagnos Ingleses*." By and bye the firing thickened—we passed one or two dead bodies of French soldiers on the road, and the whole Column moved towards the table land above the river in compact order.

When we reached the top, a grand and spirit-stirring spectacle met our view. We saw the extensive line of the whole French army posted on a range of heights about two miles off, in order of battle, with Vittoria in the centre. The position appeared to be nearly four miles in length—the greater part of the troops were in column—some in line; and the Artillery was disposed in batteries on the most commanding points. Numbers of mounted officers were moving about slowly from one part of the field to another.

This was the first time I had seen a powerful army prepared for battle; and the sensation was exciting, exhilarating and intoxicating. I was young and ardent, and felt strong emotions in anticipating the approaching combat and the probable discomfiture of those imposing masses. I longed to join in the struggle, and "throw physic to the dogs."

When our Division had advanced along the high road to Vittoria, within long cannon-range of the enemy's position, we were ordered into a field to the right, and then halted. The word was then given, "With ball-cartridge prime and load!" In the meantime Sir Rowland Hill and a large staff, including the staff surgeon and myself, rode forward to a small height whence there was a better view; but the crowd of mounted officers having attracted a shot from one of the enemy's nearest batteries, the greater part of us were ordered away, and only Sir Rowland and two or three of the senior officers remained.

Soon after this the Brigade of Colonel O'Callaghan, consisting of the 28th, 34th and 39th regiments attacked the village of Subijana d'Aliva, and having there suffered a heavy loss, I was ordered to the assistance of their surgeons.

We collect the wounded in a little hollow, out of the direct line of fire, but within half musket-shot—unpacked our panniers and proceeded to our work. This Brigade had, I believe, between four and five hun-