

we ride forward to the battlefield. On we went, the loud shout of "Forward" still ringing in our ears. One broken, irregular discharge from the French guns shook the head of our advancing column, but stayed us not as we galloped madly on.

I remember no more: the din, the smoke, the crash,—the cry for quarter, with the shout of victory,—the flying enemy,—the agonizing shrieks of the wounded,—are all co-mingled in my mind, but leave no trace of clearness or connection between them; and it was only when the column wheeled to reform, behind the advancing squadrons, that I awoke from my trance of maddening excitement, and perceived that we had carried the position, and cut off the guns of the enemy.

"Well done, 14th!" said an old grey headed colonel, as he rode along our line; "gallantly done, lads!" The blood trickled from a sabre cut on his temple, along his cheek, as he spoke; but he either knew it not, or heeded it not.

"There go the Germans," said Power, pointing to the remainder of our brigade, as they charged furiously upon the French infantry, and rode them down in masses.

Our guns came up at this time, and a plunging fire was opened upon the thick and retreating ranks of the enemy; the carnage must have been terrific, for the long breaches in their lines showed where the squadrons of the cavalry had passed, or the most destructive of the artillery had swept through them. The speed of the flying columns grew momentarily more; the road became blocked up, too, by broken carriages and wounded: and, to add to their discomfiture, a damaging fire now opened from the town upon the retreating column, while the brigade of Guards and the 29th pressed hotly on their rear.

The scene was now beyond anything maddening in its interest. From the walls of Oporto the English infantry poured forth in pursuit; while the river was covered with boats, as they still continued to cross over. The artillery

thundered from the Sierra, to protect the landing, for it was even still contested in places; and the cavalry, charging in flank, swept the broken ranks, and bore down upon their squares.

It was now, when the full-tide of victory ran highest in our favour, that we were ordered to retire from the road.—Column after column passed before us, unmolested and unassailed; and not even a cannon-shot arrested their steps.

Some unaccountable timidity of our leader directed this movement: and while before our very eyes the gallant infantry were charging the retiring columns, we remained still and inactive.

How little did the sense of praise we had already won repay us for the shame and indignation we experienced at this moment, as with burning cheek and compressed lip we watched the retreating files. "What can he mean?" "Is there not some mistake?" "Are we never to charge?" were the muttered questions around, as a staff officer galloped up with the order to take ground still farther back, and nearer to the river.

The word was scarcely spoken, when a young officer, in the uniform of a general, dashed impetuously up; he held his plumed cap high above his head, as he called out, "14th, follow me! Left face—wheel—charge!"

So, with the word, we were upon them. The French rear-guard was at this moment at the narrowest part of the road, which opened by a bridge upon a large open space, so that, forming with a narrow front, and favoured by a declivity in the ground, we actually rode them down. Twice the French formed, and twice were they broken. Meanwhile, the carnage was dreadful on both sides; our fellows dashing madly forward where the ranks were thickest, the enemy resisting with the stubborn courage of men fighting men for their last spot of ground. So impetuous was the charge of our squadrons, that we stopped not, till piercing the dense columns of the retreating mass, we reached the open ground beyond. Here we wheeled, and prepared once more to meet them; when suddenly some squa-