THE STORM OF BADAJOZ

W.H. Maxwell

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From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;
But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
And all but the after−carnage done.

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

Men, like wild beasts, when once they have tasted blood, acquire an appetite for it.

SOUTHEY.

And he had learned to love — I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood —
The helpless looks of blooming infancy
Even in its earliest nature.

CHILDE HAROLD.

"BADAJOZ!" exclaimed O'Connor, with enthusiasm, "many a gallant deed — many a bitter recollection are associated with thee. Thousands of the best troops that England and France ever sent into the field are mouldering before thy bastions — and many a widowed wife and fatherless child will curse the name that recalls the loss of their protectors!

Never shall I forget the morning of the 9th of March, when the light, third, and fourth divisions crossed the Tagus by a bridge of boats, and concentrating at Elvas, pushed on to Merida and Lerena. Never was an army in higher spirit — and all were anxious to come in contact with the enemy. On the 16th Badajoz was to be invested. The pontoon bridge was thrown across the Guadiana; and, though fiercely opposed by the French cavalry, the river was crossed, and we sat down before this celebrated fortress.

Badajoz is easily described. Round one portion of the town the rivulets Calamon and Rivellas sweep, and unite with the Guadiana, which flows in the face of the works, and in front of the heights of Saint Christoval. The castle stands nearly above the union of these rivers. The fortifications are exceedingly strong — the bastions and curtains regular — while formidable outworks — the forts of Pardelaras, Picarina, and Saint Christoval — completed the exterior defences of a city that had already stood two sieges, and had since been strengthened with jealous attention and scientific skill.

The 17th was a day of peculiar interest; and the anniversary of our patron saint was employed in reconnoitring the place, and determining the point which our opening assault should be directed. The outwork of Picarina was selected for the first essay; and in a tempest of wind and rain and favoured by the darkness, we broke ground within a hundred and forty paces of the fort. Three thousand men laboured throughout the night without a moment's cessation — and at dawn the garrison were astounded to see the first parallel completed.

All the next day, under a lively cannonade from the fort and town, we laboured vigorously. At night the rain came down in torrents, but we worked on, knee−deep in water. On the 19th the trenches were advancing rapidly, and some guns were already in battery — when Phillipon, alarmed for the safety of his best outwork, determined to sally, and attempt the destruction of our labours.

During the morning an unusual bustle was apparent in the city and fort; but the soldiers, up to the waist in

water, continued pushing on the works. At noon, profiting by a dense fog, the sallyports of the fortress were thrown open, and eighteen hundred of the enemy rushed on us with fixed bayonets. A short and sanguinary struggle ensued. On the left the French were driven back to their own gates; and though they surprised the workmen on the right, and injured a part of the trenches, the sortie was on the whole disastrous to the garrison, and cost them above four hundred killed or prisoners. We lost a number of officers and men; but the French gained nothing by the affair but a few intrenching tools. They carried off a number of spades and shovels, for which Phillipon gave a dollar each.

The weather was dreadful: nothing but a torrent of rain. The water in the trenches, in some places, took the men above the middle, while the earth crumbled away, and prevented us from making any progress in forwarding the breaching batteries. The river rose — the flood swept off our pontoon bridge — we were cut off from our supplies — insulated from the covering force — and as badly off for food and shelter as might be. But we laboured on — the weather changed — the 24th was fine. The French attempted to check our efforts to place guns in battery and establish magazines, by an increased storm of artillery. Our men fell in dozens — the engineers, who directed the works, and exposed themselves in reckless devotion, were momently shot down — shells dropped frequently into the trenches — powder casks were repeatedly exploded while being conveyed to the magazine. Under all these discouraging circumstances, the works were completed; and, on the dawning of the 25th, two batteries were unmasked, and opened with a tremendous fire on the outwork of Picurina at the short distance of one hundred and forty paces. Of course the town and fort turned every gun within range upon ours; but so terrible and effective was the point−blank service of our two−and−thirties, that at evening a breach was declared practicable, and Lord Wellington, no admirer of the Fabian system of delay, determined, when it became dark, to carry Picurina by storm.

Well, the storming−party was selected from a part of Picton's division, and we of the light were allowed to volunteer. On we went with scaling ladders; but the ditch was so immensely deep that it was impossible to cross it. At last we broke down the gate — on rushed our fellows with the bayonet — the French grenadiers as sturdily resisted them — a regular steel affair ensued; and though a strong support moved from the town to assist the defenders of the fort, in a short time all opposition ceased — and Picurina was ours.

I was slightly wounded in the *melée* within the gate, and was *hors de combat* till the morning of the 5th of April. I was then quite recovered and able to rejoin my regiment, and fortunately in good time to witness the splendid night attack, which ended in the capture of this well−defended fortress.

On the 6th the breaches were reported practicable by the engineers, and the assault was fixed for eight o'clock that evening. The day was beautiful, and when the order was issued marking the positions the different brigades should occupy, the soldiers were in high spirits, and set merrily to work cleaning their arms and appointments, as if preparing for a dress parade. On individual officers the effect that note of preparation caused was very opposite. One, as brave a fellow as ever breathed, passed me apparently in deep abstraction. Suddenly he seemed to awake from an uneasy revery, recognised me, and shook me by the hand.

"God bless you, Edward," he said. "Farewell, old boy; before midnight I shall be in another world." I laughed at him. "Yes, O'Connor, it will be so. I would not own it to another; but you and I have fought side by side ere now, and you will acquit me of timidity. This, O'Connor, is my last fight! Will you oblige me in one matter? When you came up I was just thinking which of our fellows I should ask the favour of."

"Any thing, my dear Jack, that I can do, you may command."

"Come aside," he said — and he walked behind the huts. "Here," — and he put a parcel into my hand — "when I am gone, have that little packet conveyed to England, and delivered as it is addressed; and just add a line or two, to say that it never left my bosom until I confided it to you."

It was a leather case, and I fancy contained a miniature and some letters. The direction was to a young lady, who, if report was to be believed, was deeply attached to my gallant friend. I took the parcel. Once more Weyland and I shook hands. We parted, never to meet again — his foreboding was verified — he perished at the head of the storming party in front of the lesser breach.

I had scarcely deposited the case in the breast of my jacket, when Dillon, of the 2d, encountered me — his face beaming with delight — his spirits buoyant as the schoolboy's, when an unexpected holiday is announced by his master.

"Well met, O'Connor," he cried, as he took my hand. "Here we are a brace of subs to day, and to−morrow we

shall be captains. We're both at the head of the list, and surely some of the old fellows will get a quietus before morning. Egad, to−morrow you and I will drink to our further promotion, if there be a sound bottle of Sherry in Phillipon's cellar."

"Yes, my dear Dillon, but you must recollect that our skins are not more impervious than those of other men to steel and lead. There's work cut out for us, take my word for it, before we'll be made free of the Frenchman's wine−bin."

"Pshaw! — I would not give a dollar to insure my company; and auld Clooty will never leave in the lurch a steady servant like you, Ned. Hang it, I wish it were dark, and the work begun. I intend to sup in a convent to−night."

"Indeed! then 'would it were supper−time, and all were well'" — and we parted.

Twilight came, the sun set gloriously, and many a hundred eyes looked their last upon him that evening. Soon after eight the regiments were under arms, and the roll of each called over in an under voice. A death−like silence prevailed — the division (the light) formed behind the quarry in front of Santa Maria, and after a pause of half−an−hour, the forlorn hope passed quietly along, supported by a storming party, consisting of three hundred volunteers. I was attached to the former. We moved silently — not a man coughed or whispered — and in three minutes afterwards the division followed.

At that moment the deep bell of the cathedral of St. John struck ten* — the most perfect silence reigned around, and except the softened foot−fall of the storming parties as they struck the turf with military precision, not a movement was audible. A terrible suspense — a horrible stillness — darkness — a compression of the breathing — the dull and ill−defined outline of the town — the knowledge that similar and simultaneous movements were making on other points — the certainty that two or three minutes would probably involve the forlorn hope in ruin, or make it the beacon−light to victory — all these made the heart throb quicker, and long for the bursting of the storm, when wild success should crown our daring, or hope and life should end together.

*A rocket rose from the town, and some dozen blue−lights and fire−balls were flung from the parapets, and threw a lurid glare on the ground in front of the ramparts. Gradually the light died away — a deeper gloom succeeded — "Forward!" was only whispered.

On we went; one solitary musket was discharged beside the breach, but none answered it. The light division moved forward rapidly, closing up in columns at quarter distance. We reached the ditch — the ladders were lowered — on rushed the forlorn hope — on went the storming party. The division were now on the brink of the sheer descent, when a gun boomed from the parapet. The earth trembled — a mine was fired — an explosion — an infernal hissing from lighted fusees succeeded — and, like the raising of a curtain on the stage in the hellish glare, the French lining the ramparts in crowds, the English storming parties descending the ditch, were placed as distinctly visible to each other as if the hour was noontide!

A tremendous fire from the guns of the place, which had been laid upon the approaches to the breach, followed the explosion; but undauntedly the storming party cheered, and bravely the French answered it. A murderous scene ensued, for the breach was utterly impassable. Notwithstanding the withering fire of musketry from the parapets — light artillery brought immediately to bear upon the breach — and the grape from every gun upon the works that could play upon the assailants or supporting columns, the British mounted. Hundreds were thrown back — and hundreds promptly succeeded them. Almost unharmed themselves, the French dealt death around; and secure within defences that even in daylight and to a force unopposed, would prove almost insurmountable, they ridiculed the made attempt; and while they viewed from the parapets a thousand victims in the ditch, they called in derision to the broken columns, and invited them to come on.

I, though unwounded, was hurled from the breach, and fell into the lunette, where for a few minutes, I had some difficulty to escape suffocation. The guns of the bastions swept the place where I was lying, and the

constant plash of grape upon the surface of the water was a sound any thing but agreeable. The cheers had ceased — the huzzas of the enemy at our repulse had died away — and from the ramparts they amused themselves with picking off any one they pleased. Fireballs occasionally lighted up the ditch, and showed a mass of wretched men lying in the mud and water, mobbed together, unable to offend, and, poor wretches! at the mercy of the enemy, for retreat was impracticable. As the French continued hurling cart−wheels, planks, and portions of the masonry of the parapet, which our own battering guns had destroyed, it was pitiable to see the feeble efforts of the wounded, as they vainly strove to crawl from beneath the rampart, and avoid the murderous missiles that were momently showered down. Now and again, the gurgling noise of some one drowning close beside was heard in the interval of the firing; while the groaning of those from whom life was ebbing — the cursing of others in their agonies — joined to the demon laugh which was frequent from the breach above, gave the passing scene an infernal colouring, that no time shall ever obliterate from the memory of him who witnessed it.

Yet never was the indomitable courage of Britain more signally displayed than during the continuance of this murderous attempt. Although at dusk, when the English batteries ceased their fire, the breaches were sufficiently shattered to be practicable, during the three hours that intervened before the assault commenced, Phillipon had exhausted his matchless ingenuity in rendering the entrance of a storming party by the ruined bastions utterly impossible. Harrows and planks, studded with spikes and bound firmly by iron chains, were suspended in front of the battered parapet like a curtain — a deep retrenchment cut off the breach from the interior, even had an enemy surmounted it — and a line of chevaux−de−frise, bristling with sword blades, protected the top. With these unsurmountable obstacles before them, and death rained upon them from every side, even in handfuls the light and fourth divisions continued their desperate attempts; and many of the bravest, after struggling to the summit of the bastion, were shot down in their vain attempts to tear defences away, which no living man could clamber over.

While the sanguinary struggle was proceeding in the bastions of Trinidad and Santa Maria, the castle was escaladed on the right, and the bastion of San Vincente afterwards, by the fifth division on the opposite quarter of the town. After a fierce contest of an hour, the third division mounted by their ladders, and driving all before them at the bayonet's point, fairly carried the place by storm, and remained in possession of the castle. Nothing could surpass the daring gallantry of the escalade; and the heap of dead men and broken ladders strewn next morning before the lofty walls, showed how vigorously the enemy had resisted it.

Leith's division were unfortunately delayed from their scaling ladders not arriving for an hour after the grand assault had been made upon the breaches. But they nobly redeemed lost time; and while the Portuguese Caçadores distracted the garrison by a false attack on Pardeleras, a brigade of the fifth overcame every opposition, and, supported by the rest of the division, drove all before them from the ramparts, and established themselves in the town.

It is astonishing, even in the spring−tide of success, how the most trivial circumstances will damp the courage of the bravest, and check the most desperate in [.....]reer. The storming−part of the fifth had escaladed a wall of thirty feet with wretched ladders — forced an uninjured palisade — descended a deep counterscarp — and crossed the lunette behind it — and this was effected under a converging fire from the bastions, and a well−sustained fusilade, while but a few of the assailants could force their way together, and form on the rampart when they got up. But the leading sections persevered until the brigade was completely lodged within the parapet; and now united, and supported by the division who followed fast, what could withstand their advance?

They were sweeping forward with the bayonet — the French were broken and dispersed — when, at this moment of brilliant success, a port−fire, which a retreating gunner had flung upon the rampart, was discovered. A vague alarm seized the leading files — they fancied some mischief was intended — and imagined the success, which their own desperate gallantry had achieved, was but a *ruse* of the enemy to lure them to destruction. "It is a mine — and they are springing it!" shouted a soldier. Instantly the leaders of the storming−party turned. It was impossible for their officers to undeceive them. The French perceived the panic — rallied and pursued — and friends and foes came rushing back tumultuously upon a supporting regiment, (the 38th) that was fortunately formed in reserve upon the ramparts. This momentary success of the besieged was dearly purchased — a volley was thrown closely in — a bayonet rush succeeded — and the French were scattered before the fresh assailants, never to form again. The fifth division poured in. Every thing gave way that opposed it. The cheering was heard above the fire — the bugles sounded an advance — the enemy became distracted and disheartened — and again the light and fourth divisions, or, alas! their skeletons, assisted by Hay's Brigade, advanced to the breaches.

Scarcely any opposition was made. They entered — and Badajoz was our own! Phillipon, finding all lost, retired across the river to Fort San Christoval, and early next day surrendered.

During this doubtful conflict, Wellington, with his staff, occupied a commanding position in front of the *tete−de−pont* that defends the great stone bridge across the Guadiana. Those who happened to be around him describe the scene, as witnessed from the heights above San Christoval, as grand and awfully imposing. The deep silence after the divisions moved to their respective positions — the chime of the town clock — the darkness of the night — the sudden blaze of rockets and blue−lights from the garrison, followed by an interval of deeper obscurity — the springing of the mine, succeeded by the roar of artillery, and bursting of shells — while musketry and grenades kept up an endless spattering — all this, added to the uncertainty of the assault, must have tried even the iron nerve of the conqueror of Napoleon's best commanders.

Presently an officer rode up at speed, to say that the attempt to force the breaches had failed, and the result had been most disastrous. Pale, but unmoved, the English general issued calmly his orders for a fresh brigade to support the light division; and the aide−de−camp galloped off to have it executed. An interval of harrowing suspense followed. Another of the staff came up in haste. "My lord, General Picton is in the castle." "Ha! are you certain?" "Yes, my lord. I entered it with the 88th." "'Tis well — let him keep it. Withdraw the divisions from the breach." An hour after, another horseman announced the fifth division to have completely succeeded in escalading San Vincent. "Bravely done! Badajoz is ours!" — was the cool half−muttered observation of the British commandant.

Well — I have been tedious — but these boys seem interested in the details of occurrences which marked that fearful night, and I shall now relate the strange adventure that consigned an orphan to my charge.

When our division entered the town all opposition was at an end; for the French, fearing that a dreadful retaliation would ensue, precipitately abandoned the city, and secured themselves in Fort Christoval until they effected a capitulation, and were permitted to retire to Elvas. In the morning I obtained a few hours repose, notwithstanding the deafening yells of the excited soldiery, and their incessant discharge of musketry, as they went firing through the streets, or blew open the doors of the wine−houses, and indeed of all other dwellings, which were vainly closed against them. I had seen the breaches in all their horrors — I had again crossed them in daylight — and I turned my steps towards the castle and bastion of San Vincent, to view the places where my more fortunate comrades had forced their way.

It was nearly dusk, and the few hours while I slept had made a frightful change in the condition and temper of the soldiery. In the morning they were obedient to their officers, and preserved the semblance of subordination; now they were in a state of furious intoxication — discipline was forgotten — and the splendid troops of yesterday had become a fierce and sanguinary rabble, dead to every touch of human feeling, and filled with every demonic passion that can brutalize the man. The town was in horrible confusion, and on every side frightful tokens of military license met the eye. One street, as I approached the castle, was almost choked up with broken furniture; for the houses had been gutted from the cellar to the garret, the partitions torn down, and even the bed ripped and scattered to the winds, in the hope that gold might be found concealed. A convent at the end of the strada of Saint John was in flames; and I saw more than one wretched nun in the arms of a drunken soldier.

Farther on the confusion seemed greater. Brandy and wine casks were rolled out before the stores; some were full, some half drunk, but more staved in mere wantonness, and the liquors running through the kennel. Many a harrowing scream saluted the ear of the passer by — many a female supplication was heard asking in vain for mercy. How could it be otherwise, when it is remembered that twenty thousand furious and licentious madmen were loosed upon an immense population, among which many of the loveliest women upon earth might be found! All within that devoted city was at the disposal of an infuriated army, over whom, for the time, control was lost, aided by an infamous collection of camp followers, who were, if possible, more sanguinary and pitiless even than those who survived the storm!

It is useless to dwell upon a scene from which the heart revolts. I verily believe that few females in this beautiful town were saved that night from insult. The noblest and the beggar — the nun, and the wife and daughter of the artizan — youth and age — all were involved in general ruin. None were respected, and few consequently escaped. The madness of those desperate brigands was variously exhibited; some fired through doors and windows; others at the church bells; many, at the wretched inhabitants as they fled into the streets to escape the bayonets of the savages who were demolishing their property within doors; while some wretches, as if

blood had not flowed in sufficient torrents already, shot from the windows their own companions as they staggered below. What chances had the miserable inhabitants of escaping death, when more than one officer perished by the bullets and bayonets of the very men, whom a few hours before he had led to the assault!

As evening advanced, the streets became more dangerous, and after I had examined the spot from which the escalade of the castle had been effected, I determined to leave the fortress by the first sallyport, and return for the night to our half−deserted camp; for every one who could frame an excuse, had flocked into the luckless town for plunder, and the tents were in many places left without an occupant. Having been for a week quartered in the city after the last year's siege, I fancied that I could find my way to the flying bridge; but the attempt was not an easy one. A swarm of drunken rioters infested the road; at last I resolved to leave the more frequented streets, and endeavour to free myself from this infernal scene of tumult and villany, by a safer but more devious path.

I turned down an unfrequented lane. I remembered that a lamp before an image of the Virgin had formerly burned at the corner, but of course it had been unattended to during the horrors of the past night. Not fifty paces from the entrance, a dead man lay upon his face. I looked at the body carelessly — life was scarcely extinct, for the blood was oozing from an immense wound in the back; and as the jacket was still smoking, the musket of the assassin had probably been touching the wretched man, when the murderer discharged it. It was the corpse of a dragoon; he, of course, had stolen into the town for plunder, and the unhappy delinquent paid a deep penalty for his crime. He held a loaded pistol in his hand. I wrenched it from his grasp with difficulty; for even in death he clutched it. I was now better armed, and I hurried down the lane in the direction of the sallyport.

This unpretending quarter appeared to have partially escaped the ravages to which the better portion of the town had been exposed. Only a few of the outer doors were broken in, and momently as I proceeded, the yells and firing became more distant. Just at the bottom of the lane there was a large inn. Within all was quiet as the grave — business and bustle were over. No doubt the spoilers had been there, and, save in an upper window, not a light was to be seen. On coming up, the cause of its desolation was manifest. The outer door had been blown open, and a dozen casks, some split or staved, others lying untouched before the gate, showed too plainly that its remote situation had not screened it from the plunderers.

Two lanes branched off to the right and to the left. To choose between them puzzled me, and I halted to determine which I should trust myself to. I was still undetermined, when an uproar, in which several voices united, arose in the upper story of the deserted inn, and apparently in that room where I had observed the light burning. The report of a musket was followed by a shriek so loud, so horrible, so long sustained, that even yet it peals upon my ear. I forgot all personal consideration — and, as if directed by a fatality, rushed into the gate, and ascended the staircase. Cries and curses directed me onwards. The door of the chamber from which they issued was unclosed. I sprang forward, and the scene within was infinitely worse than even the outrages I had witnessed could have harbingered.

Near the door, a Spaniard, whose dress and appearance were those of a wealthy farmer, or a small proprietor of land, was extended on the floor quite dead; and a ruffian in the uniform of one of the regiments of the third division, was standing over the body, busily engaged, as well as drunkenness would admit, in reloading his musket. Beyond the victim and his murderer a more horrible sight met the eye. The woman, whose piercing scream had attracted me to the scene of slaughter, was writhing in the last agonies of death, while a Portuguese Caçadore cooly wiped the bayonet that had been reddened in her blood. What occurred on my entrance was the transaction of a few moments. Both ruffians turned their rage on me, and I endeavoured to anticipate them by commencing hostilities. With the pistol I had taken from the dragoon I shot the Irishman — I blush to say it — but he was my countryman — through the heart, and then attacked the Caçadore. In size and strength we were pretty fairly matched. He was armed with a fixed bayonet — I with a sabre, ground to the keenness of a knife; but his own crime gave me the advantage and sealed his fate. He was a cool and dangerous cut−throat, and collecting all his energies for a rush, he thought to transfix me against the door. We had light enough for a brief combat, as the drapery and curtains of the rooms were in a blaze. He gathered himself for the trial — I was ready — he made a full lunge with all his force, but his foot slipped in the blood of her whom he had just massacred, and a slight parry averting his push, the bayonet burst through the panel up to the socket, and the villain was at my mercy. As he vainly strove to disengage his weapon, I stepped back and struck him across the head. He fell forward. Thrice I repeated the cut — for the scoundrel was full of life — and I was not contented until his scull was fractured by reiterated blows, and the brain scattered against the wainscot. I see you shudder, Mortimer; you have yet to learn

how quickly war will brutalize us. At your years I could not have treated a rabid dog so savagely; but that scene withered every feeling of human pity, and I for the time was as truculent as the villains I had despatched.

The curtains blazed more fiercely, while I stood like a presiding demon over four bleeding corpses — the murderers and their victims. The blood of the dead Caçadore had spirted over me, and from hilt to point my sabre was crimsoned. On the floor a quantity of gold and silver coins were scattered, while the glare of the burning tapestry gave a wild and infernal light that fitted well that scene of slaughter. I could stay no longer — the woodwork was already in flames — and a few minutes would wrap the devoted house in a sheet of fire. I stopped and picked a cartridge from the cartouch−box of the dead Irishman, to reload my pistol. Something beneath a chair sparkled. Was it the eyes of a dog? I removed the antique and cumbrous piece of furniture — and there a child, some three years old, had cowered for shelter! To leave it to perish in the flames was impossible. I caught it up — it never cried — for terror I suppose had taken away the power of utterance, and rushing from the room, found myself again in the street.

I had escaped one peril only to rush upon another. Seven or eight men were drinking from a spirit cask, which lay before the door of the burning hostelry. They were loaded with plunder of divers kinds — and with the little reason left, were endeavouring to secure it by leaving the sacked city and hastening to the camp. That camp they were not likely to find, for every winebutt in their route was duly tasted as they passed along.

My appearance was instantly observed. "It's one of the foreigners," said he who seemed to be the leader, as he remarked my dark uniform — "Shoot him, Jim!"

Fortunately the command was given in Irish, and I replied promptly in the same language. In a few moments we understood each other perfectly. They wanted to secure their booty, and I volunteered to be their leader, and effect a retreat.

To prohibit drinking for the future, under a threat of abandoning them instantly, was my first order; and it was, though reluctantly, acceded to. I next examined their arms, and ordered the muskets that had been discharged to be reloaded. The booty was next secured; and forming them into something like military order, I gave the word to march, and proceeded towards the sallyport, the leader of a banditti, whom no consideration, but an avaricious anxiety to save the produce of the night's villany, could have induced to quit a scene of violence and blood, so congenial to their brutal fancies. I brought them and the hapless orphan safely from the town; although their own pugnacity, and the appearance of the rich booty they had obtained, involved us in several skirmishes with parties who were flocking into the city, on the same vile errand as that in which my "charge of foot" had been so successfully engaged.

"And did you discover who the murdered parents of the poor infant were?"

"Alas! — no. The orphan's parentage remains to this hour wrapped in obscurity. When, after two days and nights of violence and pillage, Lord Wellington with difficulty repressed those dreadful excesses, by marching in a Portuguese brigade, attended by the provost−marshal with the gallows and triangles, I hastened as soon as I could venture it safely, to the place where I had witnessed the slaughter of the unfortunate strangers. The inn was burned to the ground; but I made out the proprietors who had obtained a temporary shelter in one of the detached offices that had escaped the flames. They could give me no information, nor did they even know the names of their murdered inmates. They, poor victims! had arrived in Badajoz from a distant part of Andalusia only the day before we invested the town, and remained there during the siege. Having a large sum of money in their possession, they fancied themselves safer in the city than in attempting to remove homewards, as the roads in the vicinity were infested by guerillas and professed banditti. They stopped accordingly, till Badajoz fell; and, in common with many hundreds of unfortunates, their lives and property paid a sad penalty for the obstinacy of Phillipon's defence."

"And what became of the poor orphan, O'Connor?" asked O’Shaughnessy.

"I sent him to England, placed him at a school, and when he is old enough he shall be a soldier. Should I fall he is not forgotten. But come — to bed — to bed. — Sound be your slumbers, boys! — before the night of to−morrow many a stirring spirit will be quiet enough — and on the sward of a battle field, 'sleep the sleep that knows not breaking.'"