THE RUINS OF HOUGOUMONT

Volume II: Observations & Guidebooks

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But before we enter upon this terrible subject, let us for a moment attend more minutely to the positions chosen by the contending armies. Nothing that concerns Waterloo should be lost. Every spot should be dear to Britain, because even clod of earth is wet with the blood of her bravest sons. Every footstep attests her prowess, every object recalls to the memory of the beholder her glory– her security and their fame.

James McQueen's published *Narative*[1]

I wish it might be allowed to remain untouched, that the ruins themselves might remain as the best monument of the brave men who are buried underneath them.

Robert Southey, on his second visit to the field of battle, 21 October 1815 [2]

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July 3 Lieutenant Colonel The Honourable James Hamilton Stanhope writing from Le Bourget, in front of Montmartre writes to Lady Spencer.

Oct 25 Liutenant General Perponcher, reports of the 2nd Netherland Division, 15 to 19 June written from Headquarters at St Leu [la Foret] Taverny.

1824 Nov 9 A extract from Lieutenant-Colonel Frederich von der Schulenberg's report from Verden on the activity of the Landwehr Battalion Bremervörde of the 3rd Hanoverian Brigade of Colonel Halkett, part of General Clinton's Division.

Nov 23 An extract from Lieutenant Colonel G. von Muller report, written from Munden, on the activity of the 2nd Line Battalion, King's German Legion.

Nov 25 Captain Andrew Cleeves, Lieutenant Colonel and Commander writes from Wunstorf on the activity of the Hanoverian Horse Artillery.

Dec 1 The activity of Major A Sympher's 2nd Troop is reported from Stade by Lieutenant Colonel H. J. Kuhlmann.

Dec 4 An extract from Captain C. Von Scriba's report, written from Stade, recording the activity of the Bremen Light or Field Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel von Langrehr.

1825 Jan 3 Major L. Von Dreves report on the Osnabrück Landwehr, part of the 2nd Battalion, Duke of York Regiment.

[1834] Mar 10 Ensign Henry Gooch writes from Bureton of his duty at Hougoumont.

	Nov	9	Captain Douglas Mercer writes from Stoke by Nayland, Colchester.
	Nov	14	Lord Saltoun writes from Dunne, describing the role of the 2st Foot Guards, 2nd & 3rd Battalions
	Dec	10	Lieutentant William Lovelace Walton Captain of the Coldstream Guards
	Dec	27	Major Thomas Dalmer, to First Lieutenant John Enoch
1835	Feb	14	Major Philip Mejer Lauenburg, 4th Line Battalion King's German Legion
	Feb	15	Lieutentant and Adjutant Adolphus Hess, Hanover
	2 Mar		Captain Albertus Cordemann Hanover
	Mar	12	Ensign Thomas Wedgwood writes from Mar Hall
	Mar	12	Capt Baron Frederick Geoben, King's German Legion
	Mar	25	Lieutenant Charles Parker Ellis.
	Mar	4	March Captain Frederick Purgold, Luneburg
1836	Jan		Major General August von Kruse reporting to the Honourable L Benne
1836	Aug	6	Lietenant Edward B. Fairfield writes from Mount Eagal, Castle Island, Ireland.
1838	Jan	4	Captain William Siborne writes from Dublin to Lord Saltoun to discuss the detail of the battle at Hougomont, informing the making of his model.
	Jan	19	Lord Saltoun writes from London to Captain William Siborne.
[1840]			George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle recalls the evening after the battle.
[1843]	Mar	16	Ensign Henry Montagu, later Colonel-in-Chief of the Scots Guards.
1846			Ludwig von Wissel *Glorious Feats* (Hanover, 1846): 4th Line Battalion, KGL, an account of Rifleman Henry Rohlfs.
1847	Feb		The Duke of Wellington's recollections recorded at Walmer Castle.
[1855, before]			*A Nassau Soldier's Remembrances of the Waterloo Campaign,* fragments from memoirs of Private Johann Peter Leonhard.
[undated]			General Hugh Halkett's account of the Hanoverian troops.
			'Report on the Corps of Troops of his Serene Highness the Duke of Brunswick fro m the 15th to and including the 18th June of 1815 with two plans'
			Pflung-Harttung's letter describing the activity of the Hanoverians.
			Pflung-Harttung's letter describing the activity of part of the Royal Hanoverian Troops and the King's German Legion.
			Colonel Sattler reports for the 1st Battalion, 2nd Nassau Regiment.

Captain Moritz Büsgen reports for the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Ducal Regiment.

Pflugk-Harttung's letter to Colonel Hugh Halkett to Major von Hammerstien

Early Publications

1816 James McQueen's *A narrative of the political and military events, of 1815*.

John Booth publishes an early account of the battle with a description of the monuments of the battlefield.

1859 2st King's German Legion Brigade of Colonel du Plat 3rd Line Battalion, KGL: Lieutanant Henry Dehnel, *A retrospective of my Military Career in the years from 1805 to 1849*, (Hanover 1859).

1864 Ensign Ferdinand von Uslar-Gleichen, part of *Reminiscences of German Officers in British Service from the Wars 1805 to 1816* (Hanover, 1864).

1870 General Cavalié Mercer, the commander of the 9th Brigade Royal Artillery publishes his *History*.

Observations & Guidebooks

1815 June 16+ Thomas Creevey writes form Brussels.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ord, stepdaughter to Thomas Creevey, writes in her diary.

June Lady Caroline Lamb reports to Lady Melbourne soon after the battle.

July 2 Charles Percy writes to his sister Susan from Peronne.

July 15 Charles Pascoe Grenfell writing to his father, Pascoe Grenfell.

July 27 John Wilson Croker, tours the field with the Duke of Wellington.

Aug Sir David Wilkie visits the battlefied and in December writes to Sir George Beaumont:

Aug 6 Henry Crabb Robinson begins a tour and includes the field at Waterloo. In 1850 he revisits and edits his journal.

Aug 9 John Scott, accompanying Sir Walter Scott surveys the battlefield.

John Scott publishes his first account of visiting the battlefield with his brother Sir Walter, *Paris Revisited in 1815, by way of Brussels* (1816).

Aug 10 Sir Walter Scott writes to the Duke of Baccleugh of his journey and tour of the battlefield.

mid-Aug Nearly seven weeks after to battle the Misses Capel were taken to view the Field of Waterloo.

Oct 3 Robert Southey visits the battlefield for the first time.

Oct 21 Robert Southey with [Joseph] Nash revisit the battlefield

[Autum] James Simpson writes his account of the battle as part of a tour.

Aug 20 Sir Samuel Romney passes the battlefield en route to Liege and notes the devastation.

Sept 18 Lady Francis Shelley

Oct 20 Charles Cuthbert Southey writes to John May from Brussels.

1816 James MITCHELL. *Tour Through Belgium, Holland, Along the Rhine, and through the North of France, in the summer of 1816*

Guidebook: Edinburgh Horticultural Society made a tour of Northern Europe and visits the battleground. *A Horticultural Tour* is published.

April Sir John Burgoyne returns to the battlefield and writes his impressions.

May 1+ Lord Byron arrives at Brussels, tours the field of battle and later writes to John Cam Hobhouse.

May 5 Dr John William Polidori, physician and travelling companion of Lord Byron writes in his diary.

	May	9	Sir Walter Scott writes to Robert Southey of his physical response to seeing the battlefield.
	May	25	Fox Talbot visits the battlefield in May, six months later, writes to W. G. Trevelyan of his botanical observations.
1816	June	17+	Edward Stanley visits Waterloo as part of continental tour, producing a sketchbook and recording Hougoumont.
	July	9	Samuel Butler visit Brussels and tours the Waterloo battleground.
	July	13	Hugh William Williams with George Basevi walk the field of Waterloo, recording their visit by sketches. Willis writes to William Douglas of their visit.
	July	25	Charlotte Malkin's journal of a tour of the continent including Belgium and the site of the Battle of Waterloo, Cologne, Frankfurt, the Rhine, and the Netherlands; July – Aug. 1816.
	[Summer]		Pryse Lockhart Gordon publishes his *Personal Memoirs*.
1817			Charlotte Anne Waldie, Mrs. Eaton, publishes as 'An Englishwoman' her personal experiance of travelling on the continent as: *Narrative of a Residence in Belgium During the Campaign of 1815* (London: John Murry, 1817).
			A friend of Sir Harry Smith visits Hougoumont and reports.
	May	22	Mrs Calvert visits and is shown the chapel at Hougoumont.
	Aug	6	Sylvester Douglas, Lord Genbervie visits the field of battle.
1818	Oct	29	Lord Palmerston visits the Russian troops stationed in Brussels and is given a ball, the next day he visits the battleground, collecting and purchasing mementos.
	Nov		*The Gentleman's Magazing, reprinted in The Atheneum, or Spirit of the English Magazines*.
1819	June	18	Frederica Louisa Murray records her reflections of a visit to Waterloo in her diary.
1820	July	17	Dorothy Wordsworth records her visit with her husband William as part of a continental tour.
1822			Christopher Kelly: *History of the French Revolution* (1822). The description seems to be derived from Charlotte Eaton's *Narative*.
1828	[Jan	27]	William Wordsworth travels through the north of Europe with and returns to visit the *field of battle* with Thomas Coleridge.
	Aug	13	Mortimer & Lucy Thoyrs keep a diary of their tour across Europe which includes the field of battle at Waterloo.
1829			The United Services Magazine publishes a Novelette, presented as an eyewitness's account, *Waterloo, the Day after the Battle.*
1830	July	2	Fanny Anne Burney, great-niece of the novelist, visits the field of battle.
1832			Matthew O'Conor publishes his *Picturesque and Historical Recollections: During a Tour Through Belgium.*
			Thomas Dyke publishes his tour of the battleground in *Travelling mems, during a tour through Belgium, Rhenish Prussian German*.
1833			Mrs Frances Trollope's *Belgium and Western Germany in 1833*.

1834 July Robert MacNish & David Macbeth Moir visit and publish in 1838 their *The modern Pythagorean; tales, essays, and sketches*.

Sept 28 James Forbes's visits and in 1837 publishes *Horticultural Tour Through Germany, Belgium, and Part of France* (1837).

1836 Heman Humphrey tours the continent and publishes his *Short Tour in 1836* (1838).

1836 John Murray's first edition of a *A hand-book for travellers on the continent*.

1838 Charles James Lever (1806-1872) leaves Ireland for Brussels His observations of tourists and the local guides inform many works including *The Dodd family abraod*, a novel based on a middle-class family taking a continental tour

1839 Anna Maria Wilhelmina Pickering, the daughter of an English diplomat visits the battlefield

1840 *A hand-book for travellers on the continent*. [1st ed.] John Murray, London. Routes 23 and 24 address the battlefield.

Sept 15 Elizabeth J. Knox visits the battlefield,

1843 John Brown writes for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.*

May 2 T. E. Knox records his visit to the battlefield.

1848 The Duke of Wellington recalls the action of the Hougoumont.

1849 *Holidays Aborad: or Europe from the west.* A guide for American tourists abroad

1860 Matthew Arnold, an American, travels on the Continent, visiting Brussels and goes to Hougoumont, where he has always wished to go.

1865 Sept 3 Sir John Stokes visits the field at Waterloo.

1866 Easter Sir Henry Wentworth Acland with his wife and family visited his wife's niece.

1867 Guidebook: George Augustus Sala publishes *From Waterloo to the Peninsula*.

1870 Prince Édouard De la Tour D'Auvergne reminiscences of the campaign are published on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war.

1872 Adeline Trafton visit to Waterloo and publishes a guide for the American Tourist.

1877 Thomas Tyler Alexander publishes his guidebook in America, *The Battle of Waterloo as viewd from the Battlefield in 1877* (1886).

1905 April 26 Sir Almeric Fitzroy on a tour of the Lowlands.

1906 Henry Charles Beeching publishes his *Provincial letters and other papers* with its imperialist quotation of Kipling and Hening.

Waterloo and the Hougoumont in London

1815	June	22	The news of the victory arrives in London
1819	Feb	25	The Emperor's travelling carriage is displayed in London
1822/23			Nathanel Weaton visits the tower of London.
1827	July	22	Prince Pückler Muskau visits Vauxhall Gardens to see Hougoumont burn.
1880			The location of the Dutchess of Richmond's Ball is identified.

Routes though the Ground

Charlotte Anne Waldie, Mrs Eaton
Road between Waterloo and Brussels
Church of Waterloo
Mont St. Jean
Braine la Leude
Mont St. Jean
La Haye Sainte – hedge
Chateau Hougoumont, sight [field of battle]
La Haye Sainte - farm house
behind La Haye Sainte
Hougoumont
– Woods
– Chateau
Observatory
The road to Genappe,
sight of La Haye Sainte,
sight of La Belle Alliance,
La Haye Sainte —
La Belle Alliance
Chateau Hougoumont
-- sight of
– Wood
– Chateau
– Wood
– Wall
– Chateau
– Garden
– farm house
– Chapel
– South Court
- general
- sight of wood
Return to La Belle Alliance
Hougoumont
– North court
– wood
La Belle Alliance
narrative of Baptiste la Coste,
La Belle Alliance
Wellington's tree
Hougoumont
Where Sir William Ponsonby fell
Field of battle
View back to the wood-crowned Hill of Hougoumont, (view)
La Haye Sainte
Mont St. Jean,
La Haye Sainte
Mont St. Jean,
Mont St. Jean,
At the inn
Ostend.

Charles Grenfell
Forest of Soignes
Village of Waterloo
La Haye Sainte
Hougoumont
-- small wood
-- buildings
-- south gate
-- walls
Road to Waterloo
La Belle Alliance

John Wilson Croker
Road to Waterloo
Waterloo village
The ridge
Hougoumont
Mt st jean
Waterloo village & church

John Scott's first description
Forest of Soinge
Road to Waterloo
Mont St. Jean
Highway
Wellington's tree
La Haye Sainte
La Belle Alliance
Hougoumont
– orchard
– chateau
– ruin
Wellington's tree
Waterloo Church

John Scott's second description
Waterloo
Mount St Jean
La Haye Sainte
La Belle Alliance
Sgt Major Cottons?
The field
Hougoumont
Field
La Haye Sainte

James Mitchell
The road from Brussels
Waterloo village and Church
Marquis of Anglesea's leg
Mont St Jean
Hougoumont
– chapel
La Belle Alliance
La Haye Sainte
Wellington's Tree
Mont St Jean and return

A Horticultural Tour
Forest of Soigné
Waterloo village
Mont St Jean
Field of Battle
Wellington's Tree
La Haye Sainte
Belle Alliance
Hougoumont
– wood
– orchard
– South Gate
– Chateau
– garden
– garden wall
Mont St John
Wellington Tree
Mont St John
Waterloo and church
Marquis of Anglesea's leg
Gates of Brussels

Samuel Butler
Forest of Soigné
Waterloo village
Wellington's tree
La Haye Sainte
Mont St Jean
The field of battle
Hougoumont
- sight of Small wood
- sight of
– Wood & garden wall
– South gate
– the chateau
– chapel
La Belle Alliance

Robert Southey's First Tour
Brussels
Waterloo Church
Mont St. Jean
La Haye Sainte
The Field of Battle
Hougoumont
– Courts & Garden
– Garden Wall
– Wood and the South Gate
– Garden & the Gardener
– Ruins
-- Chapel
– Pigeon house / Well head
– Chateau
– Orchard
Field of Battle
La Belle Alliance
Genappe

Robert Southey's Second Tour
Forest of Soigny
Waterloo Inn
Waterloo Church
Waterloo Lord Uxbridge's Leg
Mont St. Jean
Hougoumont
– Garden
– Wood
– Chateau
Papelote
Hougoumont Orchard
Field of Battle
Hougoumont Gardener & Dog

Sir Samuel Romney
Hougoumont
Genappe

Lady Frances Shelley
Notes on visit, route not recorded.

Sir John Burgoyne
Highway
Hollow Way
Terrain
La Haye Sainte

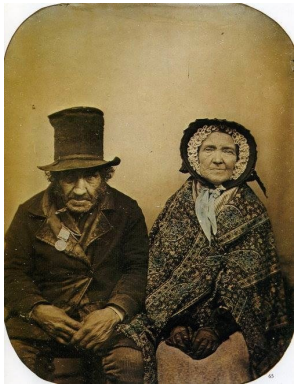
Elizabeth Stanley
Forest of Soigney
Waterloo Church
Nivelle Road
Mont. St Jean
Hougoumont
La Bell Alliance
La Haye Saint
Wellington's Tree
Brussels
[day 2]
Gennapes

Hugh William Williams & George Basevi
Forest of Soigne
Waterloo Church
Field of Battle
La Haye Sainte
Genappe
Quatre Bras

Mortimer & Lucy Thoyrs
Forest of Soigne
Waterloo Church
Waterloo - Lord Angelsea's Leg
Mont St Jean
Lion's Mount
Gordon Monument
PrussianMonument
Picton's tree
Hougoumont
– chapel
La Belle Alliance
La haye Sainte

Sir Henry Wentworth Acland
Lion's Mount
Hôtel du Musée
Waterloo Church
Gordon / Picton Monuments
Belle Alliance
Hougoumont

Adeline Trafton's *Guidebook*
Forêt de Soignes
Waterloo Church
Mont St. Jean
Lion's Mount
Hougoumont
- orchard
- courts & offices
- well
- chateau
- North gate
Lion's Mount
Cotton's Museum & Victor Hugo



Eyewitness

COST OF A WATERLOO MEDAL. A Frenchman meeting an English soldier with a Waterloo medal, began sneeringly to animadvert on our Government for bestowing such a trifle, which did not cost them three francs. "That is true, to be sure," replied the hero, "it did not cost the English Government three francs, but it cost the French a Napoleon."[3]

Throughout our many hard-fought and invariably successful Peninsular fields, it used to be a subject of deep mortification for us to see the breasts of our numerous captives adorned with the different badges of the Legion of Honour, and to think that our country should never have thought their captors deserving of some little [340] mark of distinction, not only to commemorate the action, but to distinguish the man who fought, from him who did not thereby leaving that strongest of all corps, the Belem Rangers, who had never seen a shot fired, to look as fierce and talk as big as the best. Many officers, I see, by the periodicals, continue still to fight for such a distinction, but the day has gone by. No correct line could now be drawn, and the seeing of such a medal on the breast of a man who had no claim, would deprive it of its chief value in the eyes of him who had. To shew the importance attached to such distinctions in our service, I may remark that, though the Waterloo medal is intrinsically worth two or three shillings, and a soldier will sometimes be tempted to part with almost any thing for drink, yet, during the fifteen years in which I remained with the rifles after Waterloo, I never knew a single instance of a medal being sold, and only one of its being pawned.

On that solitary occasion it was the property of a handsome, wild, rattling young fellow, [341] named Roger Black. He, one night, at Cambray, when his last copper had gone, found the last glass of wine so good, that he could not resist the temptation of one bottle more, for which he left his medal in pledge with the aubergiste, for the value of ten sous. Roger's credit was low a review day arrived, and he could not raise the wind to redeem the thing he gloried in, but, putting a bold face on it, he went to the holder, and telling him that he had come for the purpose of redemption, he got it in his hands, and politely wished the landlord good morning, telling him, as he was marching off, that he would call and pay the franc out of the first money he received; but the arrangement did not suit mine host, who opposed his exit with all the strength of his establishment, consisting of his wife, two daughters, a well-frizzled waiter, and a club-footed hostler. Roger, however, painted the whole family group, ladies and all, with a set of beautiful black eyes, and then marched off triumphantly.

Poor Roger, for that feat, was obliged to be [342] paid in kind, very much against the grain of his judges, for his defence was an honest one namely, that he had no intention of cheating the man, but he had no money, "and, by Jove, you know gentlemen, I could never think of going to a review without my medal!"[4]

18 June 1815 Lieutenant Colonel The Honourable James Hamilton Stanhope writes in his diary:

In the afternoon we heard a cannonade against the cavalry covering our retreat and found afterwards that the Life Guards has distinguished themselves against some of the heavy cavalry which had been too much for our hussars, some of whom came in upon us, rather in too quick time.

Towards the evening we saw the enemy's columns arriving on the opposite hill; they sent some troops forward as if with the intention of occupying the wood of Hougoumont and some cavalry trotted towards the hill to see what was behind it. This obliged us to show some guns (all the columns being concealed behind the hill). After a few shot the enemy desisted and both armies lay on their arms all night & such a night was hardly ever passed before; for the ground was of such a spongy nature that it soon became a bog & torrents of rain fell without intermission till the morning, the wind driving it along with prodigious force & peals of thunder filling up the intervals of the lightings. We would get no wood that would burn and we were all miserable enough, but the thoughts of the morrow superseded all others. As for myself I had been getting worse every day, could eat nothing, was in wretched spirits at the idea of being obliged to give it up, for my back was now so swelled [sic] could not button my coat & c this completely overcame me [. . .] [176]

When the enemy's column was considered within range our artillery crowned the rest of the hill. The 1st Shot, the signal of such slaughter was fired from our front, it fill short; the second plunged into the middle of the column and in an instant a blaze burst from the range fo the hill, which roared from 100 mouths. [. . .] The men were ordered to lie down, first being formed in echelon of squares, a field officer having the command of each face (had the right). We herd the action raging hotly at Hougoumont & soon after the roll of musketry from the left announced the main attack on our centre at La haye Sainte. A number of Staff officers were soon killed & wounded who were at first alone exposed to the cannonade.[5]

19 June 1815 Colonel Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar writes to his father:

On the morning of the 18th, the regiment was posted as part of the 2nd Division of the Netherlands army on the left wing of the army of the Duke of Wellington. At 9 o'clock, the 2st Battalion, was commanded by Captain Busen, was ordered to march towards the centre and occupy the Hougoumont farm, which was located in front of the army. This battalion and 200 men of the English Guards steadfastly head on to this post throughout the battle, repulsed the repeated attacks of a furious enemy, defied the fire of the burning buildings, of which many of tour wounded men became victims, and, while encircled by the advancing French army, proved German steadiness throughout eight hours.[6]

20 June 1815 — A report made by Lieutenant General K. Von Alten from Brussels on the action of the 3rd Division of Lieutenant General Baron Karl von Alten:

A company of the Hanoverian Jäger and two light companies of the British Guards were posted in the farmstead and wood in front of the right wing [Hougoumont].[7]

20 June 1815 — An extract of a report, written from Le Rouelx, on the activity of the 5th Division of Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Picton 5th Hanoverian Brigade of Colonel Vincke:

We were idle spectators for hours of the fighting that surged before us, particularly of the violent content around Hougoumont. But when after two o`clock a vigorous attack was launched against the farm of La Haye Saint[8]

The position is a good one and had been noticed by the Duke of Wellington in the excursion he had made last August I copied the remarks which he then briefly made. The enemy followed our cavalry & brought on a cannonade, which occasioned a sad panic in the baggage, a great part of which fled to Brussels. In the evening of the 17th the Duke of Wellington ordered some change to be made on the left [British right?], throwing it back towards the forest & leaving only a Dutch regiment for the protection of Braine l'Alleud, the Dutch division on my right was near the forest. About half a mile in front of our position & to the left of the Nivelles road is a large solidly built farm with extensive buildings & around it enclosure & some open wood, called Hougoumont. It was of the first importance for us to hold this post, & in the morning of the 18th some preparation for defending it were made, such as loop holes &c. Two battalions of Brunswickers were lodged in the enclosures & the building was occupied by the light companies of the Guard.

The Prussians were to march by their right so as to arrive about St Lambert at 11 o'clock. The enemy remained quiet all the morning of the 18th, about 11 however we observed him to be in motion, bring forward artillery & increasing his cavalry. At 12 a very strong column debouched from the enemy's left, from by the Genappe road, towards the post of Hougoumont. As soon as this was within reach of the guns of the 1st Corps the prince ordered 12 pieces to open upon him & in the course of a few rounds the column staggered & retired out of sight.

This occasioned a delay & give time to strengthen this point, the 2nd Division was brought near up & its right brought considerably forward beyond the line of Braine l'Alleud. The enemy now brought on a very powerful artillery & under the protection of that renewed his attack, though from a greater distance from our guns, on the post of Hougoumont. He was repulsed but renewed his attack repeatedly & got within the enclosures, but could never get into the house, though one of the buildings was set on fire & destroyed, they (the light companies) of the Guards, held the others. The enemy had from the first show a considerable body of cavalry upon our right which made it necessary to watch this point. Finding that he could not preface his general attack by obtaining possession of the farm, Bonaparte made war more to our left.[9]

23 June 1815 Lieutenant Colonel Sir John May, Royal Artillery, commanding the artillery at Waterloo responds to Mr Mudford:

Headquarters Cateau,

My dear colonel,
I have not written to you because my time has been and is so extremely taken up, that I can hardly call half an hour every my own. In the battles of the 16th and 18th instant the duke of Wellington has even exceeded [99]
[. . .]
This compelled the Duke to do the same, in order to put himself in more close communication with him, by which undoubtedly he mended greatly his position. The British Army therefore moved at 9 a.m. to the rear on the 17th; in its retreat it was greatly pressed by the enemy's cavalry. The position taken up in the afternoon was with the right on the Chateau de Hougoumont and the left in the rear of a wood (which we occupied) at Ohain.

On the 18th at about twelve o'clock at noon, the cannonade of the French commenced, which was tremendously heavy particularly always just before the attack of cavalry and infantry, and had not the ground had several small valleys running parallel to the point of the position, our loss must have been much more severe even than we experience; the cannonade thus continued for two hours, when a charge of cavalry was made with great bravery on the left and centre of the line; this was received by the infantry in squares, and by a reciprocal charge on the part of our cavalry, when the enemy without making any impression retreated with precipitation, pursued close to their infantry; a second charge of cavalry throughout the line was also made without success, supported by infantry and repulsed in the same manner. [10]

24 June 1815 Major and Commander Hammerstein writes from Bivouac, Le Cateau, an early account of the Hanoverian Landwehr Battalion Salzgitter. An extract:

It was now necessary to seize the wood and the Chateau [Hougoumont], for the possession of which a battalion of English Guards, the 2nd line Battalion [KGL], and two battalions of Brunswickers had fought all day in vain. Only small detachments of these battalions were still in the wood; as to the enemy, there were skirmishers of different corps in the wood, particularly of the [Imperial] Guards, whose strong solid columns to the left [of the wood] seemed to threaten our flank. My battalion was assigned this challenging task at around seven o`clock in the evening. The Osnabrück Battalion and the 95th English regiment faced the [French] columns, and we thus protected each other. Massed columns of enemy infantry and cavalry also stood to our right. The enemy held on most tenaciously. We moved forward by companies; my men had also run out of ammunition and begun using the enemy's cartridges. The small Brunswick detachments remained behind. Our advance was made extremely difficult by the enemy who had protective ditches on both of his flanks. Under these circumstances, and because dusk was setting in, nothing seemed to be more effective than an attack [71] with the bayonet. Shouting 'hurrah!', we were quick enough and fortunate to gain possession of the wood, certainly a most important position. The battalion rallied immediately upon leaving the wood and advanced up the elevation in closed column. It was night by this time. We were followed by the 2nd Line Battalion, and were later joined by a battery of horse artillery.

Hammerstein, Major and Commander of the Salzgitter Battalion[11]

June 1815

Mr Mudford writes to various participants in the battle to inform his *History*, published 1817. Lieutenant Colonel Francis Home, 2nd Battalion 3rd Foot Guards writes:

To Mr Mudford, 18 Sloane Terrace, Chelsea

Dear Sir
I have many apologies to make for delaying the enclosed so long. In fact the real one will be the least, *idleness* and an aversion to writing. I give all the facts I can speak to from my own knowledge; you will perhaps think them of little consequence, so they are, but remember he that vies what he can has some merit even if that be comparatively small. I am happy to find Sir George should have been of use to you. I know he can give a kind of information most desirable and important that in whatever relates to his own department. I remain dear sir most truly yours, F. Home.

The first shot that was fired on the 18th was by the English and from the guns in front of the right of our centre. It was exactly ½ past eleven, and it was directed against a large column of the enemy which had formed at the distance of about 1,200 yards and was advancing against [141] Hougoumont. There were 15 guns, 9 pounders on that spot and the effect from them even at that distance was tremendous. Large openings were instantly formed in the column into which almost every shot fell, and before the guns could be re-laid it had halted and retired under a rising ground for shelter, thus breaking the order of this first attack. Lord Wellington observed me say our guns [were] so well served, [replied] 'Very pretty practice indeed'. It was above a quarter of an hour after his before the French had reformed their columns and brought up above 30 pieces of artillery against ours. The effect from them was for a long time of no consequence against our guns and front line; they had not gotten [sic] our range and firing rather high, their shot flew over us and where they got pretty near our elevation and although our troops were well sheltered the cannonade dd considerable devastation. Among the officers killed by this was Lt Simpson of the 3rd Guards who a ball hit when lying on the ground with his company and dreadfully lacerated, he however remained perfectly sensible and aware of his situation. His only request then was to be put out of his pain but lived till the evening.

The troops had occupied Hougoumont on the evening of the 17th. In the night was an alarm, the light companies of the 2nd Guard Brigade under Colonel MacDonnell were sent down there, they were reinforced by the two companies of the 1st Brigade under Lord Saltoun who occupied the orchard. About eleven o'clock a battalion of the Nassau troops was sent down as a reinforcement to Colonel MacDonnell, these at first might be about 600 strong but after the first hour there was not one of them to be seen; they had all vanished. Other reinforcements were at intervals sent down from Sir J. Byng's Brigade until at last the whole of the 3rd Regiment and eight companies of the Coldstream were employed in or near to Hougoumont. The whole force employed there at any on time never exceeded 1,200 men. The French having reformed their troops came down to the attack forming what is called a double shield of sharp shooters. They got possession of the wood but were chased out by an attack & charge by the light companies under Colonel MacDonnell. In this many officers were wounded; then the Nassau troops gave way and were never seen afterwards excepting a few stragglers. The French at last compelled our light troop to return into the house, and they followed so close that some got into the courtyard and some killed there. Many were killed at the gate and about it. Nothing had been done by our engineers to put this point into a state of defence. It formed the most important point in that day's position and yet at eleven o'clock there was not a single loop hole made in the garden wall; at no time was half the advantage taken of it which might have been done. It possessed great capabilities but the defence of that point was no [142] ways indicated to our engineers; a few picks and irons of the pioneers formed all the tools. With these a few loop holes were made and the gate reinforced, and this formed all the additional defence of the place. The troops did the rest. It possessed some important advantages for defence, it could not easily be touched by cannon &c, the wood protected it in front and on its right flank they could not bring guns to

bear on it without coming close to the edge of the ridge and exposing themselves to our artillery. This in a great degree saved it. Many common shot and grape fell in my direction and perforated the walls in every part, but these reasons prevented it from being steady or effective. About half past one some shot or shells falling amid the stables of the chateau set them and the straw bales on fire, it burst out in an instant in every quarter with an amazing flame and smoke. The confusion at the time was great and many men burned to death or suffocated by the smoke. The Duke of Wellington was at this moment in considerable anxiety. He sent Lt. Colonel Hamilton then aide de camp to Sir E. Barnes to the chateau with orders to keep it to the last and if that could not be done from the fire as to occupy the strong ground on the right and rear and defend it to extremity. Colonel Hamilton delivered these orders to me and added these words 'Colonel Home the Duke considers the defence [of] this post of the last consequence to the success of the operations of the day; do you perfectly understand these orders?'

I said 'Perfectly, and you my assure the Duke from me that his orders shall be punctually obeyed.'

The fire was gradually extinguished and about half past two Colonel Hepburn arrived with some fresh troops, things got again into good order, and after that no very violent attack was made upon this post but only a sharp firing kept upon it by light troops until about 6 in the evening when an attack being made along our whole line the enemy turned the left of the orchard and [pushed?] the troops there back upon our right.

Things did not remain long in this situation and a general advance from our line won the day and freed the troops in Hougoumont from the fate which they would have met with from the enemy. During the day I saw no peasant in or near the house and do not believe that there was anyone near it much less in the house, this is all an invention. The only living things about were a few stored calves which were killed I suppose by the men in the afternoon they had disappeared and a flight of pigeons which in the evening returned to their house which stood in the middle of the court and which had escaped the fire and this in spite of the firing and the burning materials all around went quietly to roost.

These furnished an excellent supper roasted on ramrods over the burning [143] rafters to several of the officers this being the first food some of them had tasted for two days.

Early in the day the house itself by some means had been set on fire at the roof and the burning embers falling on the floors would soon have communicated to the whole building. In order to prevent this I ordered Major Drummond to place some men in the garret and others to supply them constantly with water which checked the flames until the day was won the object being attained the fire was allowed to take its course and by dark had burned out and furnished a splendid illumination for the victory. In the house we housed the ladies of several of the officers who had been killed there, which I had forbidden to have removed, thinking there could not be a nobler tomb for them than the walls which their courage had helped to defend.

Wellington did not say what Lord B. Said, about having reconnoitred the ground of Waterloo, only rode over it in a barouche.

Bonaparte was not in the observatory during the whole day. A general officer was stationed there with a glass &c to reconnoitre.

The first shot fired 20 mins past eleven. Battle began by us.

The French never had possession of the wood surrounding Hougoumont; it was an open wood, and none of the trees thicker than a man's body. Wellington attached the greatest importance to this post. He sent repeated messages to Colonel Home to maintain it, even if the house should not be tenable, by forming themselves anyway. Sent two messages, to know if Colonel Home understood former one.

Duke was taken by surprise at Quatre Bas, French marched 35 miles that day, did not expect this.

Wellington himself thus estimated the respective forces.

Napoleon on the 16th had 140,00 men. Lost 11,000 in the battles of the 16th. On the 18th 23,000 were detached under Grouchy after Blucher, 107,000 employed against the British.

The force under Wellington 62,00 including, to me his own expression, all those who as French say, *foutre le camp*. British troops about 32,000. Of the foreign levies the best soldiers in discipline as well as courage, those of Brunswick Oels.

Not more than 1400 of the Guards in Hougoumont, About 300 of the Nassau troops employed as sharp shooters. No loop holes made in the garden wall til 10 o'clock in the morning. From these the men fired securely

& the slaughter was immense. The Frenchmen repeatedly asked Colonel Home to order his men to fire upon them and put them out of their misery. [144] [. . .]

Wellington at commencement, when it range of French artillery, buckling his horse coat before him, maintained the most perfect coolness during whole battle.

Prince Jerome led on the attack against Hougoumont.

Wellington said he never had so bad an army since he fought the Battle of Talavera.[12]

June 1815 Colonel Sir George Wood, commanding the artillery responds to Mr Mudford:

7 George Place, Montague Square

[. . .]

6 About ½ past 10 or 1/4 to eleven (Sir Colin Home's). There had been skirmishing before that all the morning, a column was advancing against Hougoumont and the first gun that was fired was from our lines against that column. Sir G. Wood gave the order being so commanded by the Duke. The gun did immediate execution, killed six our eight, the column then retired and went round the wood.[13]

3 July 1815 Lieutenant Colonel The Honourable James Hamilton Stanhope writing from Le Bourget, in front of Montmartre writes to Lady Spencer:

The house [Hougoumont] was the key of the position as it was at the angel on which the potence rested and was defended by the 2nd Brigade of Guards. The whole hill was covered with a formidable artillery and the infantry were in columns ready to form squares: for this was the most singular feature of the battle, at least on the right and centre.[14]

As Napoleon was face with the Prussians appearance on his right flank, he had no choice left but to either retreat or venture everything on a desperate attack, he chose the latter. Several batteries were brought into action against Hougoumont, which went up in flames. Its garrison was forced to leave the farm.[1] The wounded perished in the flames, among them Lieutenant Hardt.[2]
15

At first light of 18 June, that forever memorable day, we Nassauers – the No. 1 and No. 3 Companies of the 2st Battalion and the entire 3rd Battalion – as well as a battalion of English Guards and a battalion of Brunswickers, moved to the right wing and then forward to the Chateau Hougoumont.[3] It was located in the middle between the two hostile armies, was surrounded by gardens and woods and everything had been prepared with loopholes for its defence. Everyone of us four sergeants were assigned his position by the officers. On my part, I was posted with 8 men at a gate that had 4 loopholes, so that the lower corners of the house was in the range of our fire. No. 3 Company occupied the garden which was enclosed on its east side by a high wall, and which also had many loopholes. We had hardly manned all of our posts when Jerome's Infantry Division made a very powerful attack upon us. They were resisted each time because many were felled before they came close to the house, and when they turned around they were struck from behind. The enemy eventually renewed his attack, nd even though every one of us shot down an enemy, the remainder stormed forward to the gate, quickly chopped down some trees and crashed the gate by force. As they stormed into the courtyard, we had to take refuge in the house, and fired at them from windows, doors and roof that they toppled over each other; the rest were chased outside with the bayonet. The gate **[NORTH GATE]** was blocked up again [115] and barricaded. A ferocious battle raged on all sides. Towards 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Bachelu and Foy Divisions also moved up against our little fortress. As we moved into the estate, we had our colours raised on the roof, but to avoid losing it in the fighting Lieutenant Colonel Hardt had it quickly taken down again. Since I and my men were still at our post at the gate, he turned the colours over to me. He hurriedly returned to the courtyard, and was hardly back there when he was shot in the head and was dead on the spot. We defended ourselves with the rage of desperation, and, with good luck, chased the rest of the enemies once more out of the yard that was covered with killed or wounded. **[WEST DOOR]**[4]

[1]Presume this means remove from the farm yard to the upper court.

[2]This is First Lieutenant Andres Harth of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Duchy of Nassau Regiment.

[3]Other sources record six companies of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Nassaus. The 3rd Battalion fought as part of the Nassau force at Papelotte at the eastern end of the Allied line. At 10 am on the 18th June, the British force consisted only of the two Light Companies of the 2nd Guards Brigade. The Brunswick battalions that Buchsieb assumed to be at Hougoumont was in fact a Hanoverian detachment, a company of Feldjäger and 100 men, each, of the rifle armed Lüneburg and Grubenhagen Battalions of the 2st Hanoverian Brigade. It was not uncommon at the time that the Hanoverians were still called Brunswickers, even though their Electorate, later a British affiliated Kingdom, had split off from Brunswick some 100 years earlier.

[4]The Nassau officer killed was First Lieuteant Andreas Harth.

When the enemy realised that he could not conquer our little fortress in this way, he threw some shells at it so that the house and farm went up in flames. We had to seek refuge in the garden, and had to return from there to our main body[1]. On our arrival with the colours,[2] the English dragoons had just cut down an enemy square and brought back as prisoners those that were still alive, although covered with severe wounds.[16]

[1] After this time, Hougoumont was reinforced by some 700 British Guards, the Nassau Grenadiers handed the defence of the house over to the British and joined their comrades in the garden.

[2] Buchsieb was the non-commissioned officer who, with his men, took the battalion Colours back to the protection of their man body.

9 November 1824

A extract from Lieutenant-Colonel Frederich von der Schulenberg's report from Verden on the activity of the Landwehr Battalion Bremervörde of the 3rd Hanoverian Brigade of Colonel Halkett, part of General Clinton's Division:

Towards 12 noon on 18 June the enemy began the battle with a vigorous attack at the right flank on the Hougoumont farm and its small wood. Around two o`clock our brigade was ordered to advance in deployment column, but after moving forward about 300 to 400 paces, it had to return to its previous position. Apparently a dangerous situation involving our forward lines had been brought under control [66] without our assistance. At about half past three o`clock, our cavalry posted on the left flank of the main line had been driven back, and our brigade was therefore forced to immediately form square. When soon thereafter our cavalry had reformed and taken up its former position, we stood again in line, the apparent danger having been averted.

At around five o`clock the vanguard of the Prussians arrived and, as it seemed, drove into the enemy's right flank. After six o`clock the Prussians received reinforcements, and now the entire line of the English army advanced in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. The brigadier, Major General Halkett, now took the Osnabrück and Salzgitter Battalions under his personal command, and put the remaining two battalions to the disposition of Lieutenant Colonel von der Schulenburg, (now deceased). The Bremervorde and Quackenbruck Battalions were then separated from the two already mentioned ones and advanced to the height of the Hougoumont farm without meeting an enemy. During the night from 18 to 19 June, they camped on the battlefield near the border of the small wood at Hougoumont. On the next morning they united again with the other two battalions.

Since we were part of the reserve, we did not become involved in a fire fight. But during 18 June our brigade was exposed to an almost continuous heavy cannonade, from which our battalion lost two officers and, I believe, sixteen men, most of whom from my own company, namely one officer and ten men.

Without doubt, the number of killed and wounded would have been much higher, had not the earlier rainy weather softened the soil, so that the canon balls etc. had lost much of their lethal force that these could have kept by bouncing off a hard soil surface.

F. Schuech, Captain[17]

23 November 1824

An extract from Lieutenant Colonel G. von Muller report, written from Munden, on the activity of the 2nd Line Battalion, King's German Legion:

A part of the enemy's infantry, which had taken the previously mentioned oak wood [at Hougoumont], caused the brigade severe losses with his fire, as he was now on our right flank due to the advance of our line, and less than a musket shot away. The 2nd Battalion received an order from one of General Clinton's ADCs to take and occupy this wood, and, after the battalion deployed from square, this was done without significant enemy resistance. The copse must have been one of the woods before us where the sound of vigorous musketry fire could be heard to come from the beginning of the battle, because among the dead we found, apart from a number of Frenchmen (they wore blue with red), several men of the light infantry of the English Guards and some Brunswickers. The other battalions of the brigade remained in squares.

After about half an hour, the enemy had turned round the wood, which apparently had had its rear section unoccupied, and attacked us in our right flank with several hundred men, if my estimate is correct. This he combined with an assault in open order on our front. The wood was then abandoned. Since the other battalions had held their position, our battalion immediately reformed outside the wood, renewed its attack, and was fortunate enough to be able to take it, and remain in its possession during the fighting later on. The battalion lost a number of [61] soldiers and officers during the second attack. Captain Thiele was killed; Captain Claus von der Decken was badly wounded in his chest; Captain Purgold suffered a minor wound on his side; Captain von Wenckstern similarly on one of his ears.

Between seven and eight o`clock, several battalions marched by the rear of, and through the wood; I noticed Major General Hugh Halkett among them. I believe they went to the area of La Belle Alliance, which appeared to be located a little more than a quarter of an hour to the left of us. The fighting soon ended in our area, and between eight and nine o`clock I was ordered to advance. The brigade had moved to the right; the battalion advanced without meeting an enemy straight ahead through cornfields, where there were a number of dead enemies. It was already quite dark when the battalion arrived at the N. N village and met a strong Prussian column. This was the site where the English Dragoon Guards fought their last action against the enemy cuirassiers. Since there was no way to pass through at this point, I was ordered by General Sir Henry Clinton to remain here during the night and join the division in the morning. The battalion's losses on that day were, I believe, 101 wounded or killed.

G. von Muller Lieutenant Colonel,
formerly Commander, 2nd Line Battalion, KGL[18]

25 November 1824

Captain Andrew Cleeves, Lieutenant Colonel and Commander writes from Wunstorf on the activity of the Hanoverian Horse Artillery. An extract recording the activity at the Hougoumont:

The ridge rose slightly towards the plateau at the left centre. The[54] terrain in front of us was quite undulating and most suitable for veiling, and keeping out of sight, the position and movements of the enemy. Located to the right was the Hougoumont farm with gardens and a fairly extensive wood towards the enemy; in front, to our left was the La Haye Sainte farm; behind us a gentle slope towards the Nivelles highway, which joins the Brussels highway at the village of Mont St Jean.

[. . .]

At about eleven o`clock we espied a compact column of enemy infantry, certainly 3,000 to 4,000 men, which advanced through the meandering depressions and the fields of high corn towards the wood of Hougoumont. As soon as they approached to within 700 to 800 paces, I opened fire on them (the first cannon shots of the battle). The firing was joined with great effect by Majors Lloyd and Kuhlmann, and resulted in the total dispersion of the enemy column. Both the Prince of Orange and General Alten witnessed this opening cannonade. It was at least an ominously favourable overture which elicited much applause.

In the meantime, the enemy had come appreciably closer; his massed artillery opened up a vigorous and well directed fire at the wood of Hougoumont as well as at our own positions. My neighbour to the left became too noisy with his light 6-pounders, disregarding the Duke's injunction. Soon enough, he was to feel the effect of the enemy 12-and 8-pounders. Lloyd's and Kuhlmann's batteries also suffered considerably; Major Lloyd, a truly brave officer, was killed. From now on the battle raged on without interruption. Between twelve and one o`clock, the enemy made a forceful attack on our left wing which, however, was repulsed, and our cavalry made many prisoners.[55]

Repeated cavalry attacks by the enemy, mostly in column formation, were intended to break up the right centre, but were repulsed with losses. Our squares had suffered severe casualties and had been much reduced. My battery was about to run out of ammunition, and before five o`clock I was told that all ammunition wagons were empty; I ordered them to go to Brussels. (I procured a small keg of cognac from the reserve and had it distributed among the men, who badly needed this little refreshment). The Hougoumont farm had erupted in flames; the smoke billowed out before us in the valley. At about six to seven o`clock we observed about 800 to 1,000 paces away a strong column of enemy artillery moving to the enemy's right flank, and I believe that at this time the enemy was made to feel the arrival of the Prussians. Some enemy guns had also moved quite close to our left; we were entirely out of ammunition, which I duly reported. Lieutenant Manners had the left half battery limber up to be ready to retreat; he told me this had been at the orders of the Prince of Orange. I ordered him to halt behind the squares; but shortly afterwards he was fatally wounded.

Meanwhile, the enemy cavalry made a ferocious attack against our division; it was quite unexpected because its approach had been hidden by the depressions of the terrain, by gun smoke, and the smoke from the burning Hougoumont farm. This attack caused the gravest confusion among our artillery posted in front, part of which had suffered severe losses and had been shot to pieces. Major Sympher, commander of a 9-pounder horse battery of the legion which had been held in reserve, filled the gap.

[. . .]

Andrew Cleeves, Lieutenant Colonel,
Commander, Hanoverian Horse Artillery[19]

1 December 1824 — The activity of Major A Sympher's 2nd Troop is reported from Stade by Lieutenant Colonel H. J. Kuhlmann. The excerpt begins with the action of the 18th June 1815:

At around eight o`clock in the morning of 18 June, the Hereditary Prince of Orange, who commanded the army division to which we belonged, assigned positions to the English brigade and to the 2nd Horse Artillery Battery, into which we moved instantly. The 2nd Horse Artillery Battery was posted at the right flank of the English foot artillery brigade. The terrain, on which we stood, was slightly elevated, sloping downward both in front and in back, thus forming a kind of plateau. The ground consisted of clayey soil and had been softened by the rainfalls lasting throughout the night to the extent that the 9-pounded cannon and the 5 ½ inch howitzers could hardly be moved by the men. This plateau extended somewhat both to the right and the left, but in the latter direction it turned towards the enemy in an obtuse angle. The troops to our left were posted on and being this plateau. To the right of our emplacement, at a distance of about 600 paces, was Hougoumont. Behind us were the [Foot] Guards, who, however, were sent to Hougoumont as reinforcements during the enemy attack. Several cavalry regiments stood some 100 paces to our right rear, and, later, an English howitzer brigade moved up before the said cavalry. The Duke of Wellington visited us several times and gave us the distinct order never to fire at the enemy artillery.

Several hours later, a strong column of enemy infantry moved towards Hougoumont. As soon as it was within effective firing range, our artillery covered it with such a powerful fire of ball and shrapnel that it fell into disorder several times and retreated. But it always formed up again and finally moved to its left, behind Hougoumont, where it could no longer be observed by us. It then renewed its attack against Hougoumont and was able to seize the area outside the walls of [44] Hougoumont. This area was covered with trees which protected the enemy; to have any effect, we were limited to firing shrapnel in its direction. The Hereditary Prince of Orange complimented in a loud voice the two artillery brigades involved, that is, the 2nd Horse Artillery Battery under my command, and the English brigade, for the well-aimed and effective fire.

While this happened, an enemy heavy battery with guns of large calibre had taken up position opposite us at a distance of about 1,200 paces and opened fire on us, to which we could not respond due to the Duke of Wellington's previously mentioned order. Later in the afternoon we noticed that, at quite a distance to our left, the enemy made a strong attack against our line. We were unable to ascertain its effect to the distance and particularly due to the intervening bend of the plateau. . .

H. J. Kuhlmann, Lieutenant Colonel[20]

4 December 1824

An extract from Captain C. Von Scriba's report, written from Stade, recording the activity of the Bremen Light or Field Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel von Langrehr:

The Bremen Light or Field Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel von Langrehr in the brigade of Major General Count von Kielmansegge and in the division of His excellency Lieutenant General von Alten in the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815.

The battalion stood on a plateau formed by a series of hills, and about 900 paces to the right of the Mont St Jean farm, and slightly forward towards the enemy. At the same distance to the left forward from the battalion was the farm of La Haye Sainte. The plateau, about 350 paces wide, descended towards the enemy into a small valley. It was similarly sloping towards the rear, although less so as it neared beside the [Mont] St Jean village, from where the terrain ascended again towards Waterloo. The Hougoumont chateau or farm was situated a good quarter of an hour's distance; it was occupied by our army and prepared for defence as long as time would permit. The area was quite open over a wide expanse was very well suited for a set piece battle. This is the terrain which was held by the battalion during the battle.

[. . .]

Lieutenant Colonel von Langrehr assumed the command over both battalions without, however, yielding that over his own battalion. Around half past eleven o`clock, the artillery, which was emplaced about 150 paces before us, began to fire at the enemy who advanced towards the Hougoumont chateau or farm. There was no response from the enemy for about ten minutes. We often lost sight of the enemy for several minutes because of the powder smoke. According to prisoners, this strong column had been commanded by Jerome Napoleon himself. As confirmed by several reports, the Emperor had given him this command with the words: `This is the way to Cassel.` At a quarter to twelve o`clock, there began before us a heavy, almost uninterrupted skirmish fire. At half past twelve o`clock, the Duke of Wellington and his suite passed by the battalion. Immediately afterwards, the battalion advanced about 100 paces and deployed; at this position the men lay down while keeping their weapons in their arms. The Duke of Wellington returned a short time later and [21][105] slowly rode past our front.

The Prussian General von Muffling followed slowly a few paces behind our suite and shouted a few encouraging words at the battalions. Both the outward appearance of this highly respected troop commander, and the words, as they came from a well known allied general, made a visibly deep impression on our men. His Royal Highness, The Crown Prince of the Netherlands, was also often in our area.

[. . .]

Major von Schkopp (of the Verden Battalion) therefore induced (around two o`clock) Lieutenant Colonel von Langrehr to move us slightly to the right, which was done immediately. This movement no doubt saved us many men because shortly afterwards two powder wagons exploded, which had been standing 30 to 40 paces in front of us. Our battalion had no losses due to this, but the Verden Battalion lost a number of men. The Hougoumont farm and its outbuildings now were afire, and the muskery fire was very keen both at this end and at La Haye Sainte farm.[22]

3 January 1825 Major L. Von Dreves report on the Osnabrück Landwehr, part of the 2nd Battalion, Duke of York Regiment:

The 2nd Battalion, the Duke of York Regiment, commanded by the former major, now deceased, Lieutenant Colonel Count von Munster, was part of the 3rd Hanoverian [Landwehr] Brigade, commanded by the [67] former colonel, now Major General Halkett, in the 2nd Division under the command of the English Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton.

[. . .]

[on the evening of the 17th] The enemy's dispositions could not be determined from this location. The generally open terrain was, however, quite uneven, with elevations alternating with depressions. It was rising in our front up to the highway; after several hundred paces the ridge dropped off on its far side and then rose to another elevation in the direction of La Belle Alliance. Behind our line, the terrain became lower towards the village of Merbe Braine, to rise again to a plateau on its far side.

The battalion remained in this position with the brigade until about eleven o'clock at midday of the 18th. Around that time, a horse battery of King's German Legion, commanded by the former major, now Lieutenant Colonel Sympher, had taken up position before us on the elevation on this side of the highway. It was joined on the same ridge and at some distance to the right by several guns of the Brunswick artillery. The brigade then advanced serval hundred paces by battalion columns and took up a new position to the left of the previous one, near the highway.

The enemy began firing at our column. At about two o`clock in the afternoon a strong formation of enemy cuirassiers appeared some distance away and moved up from the area between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, whereupon the brigade formed square. The enemy cavalry retired, however, without carrying out an attack. Towards about four o`clock in the afternoon, the battalion advanced in column formation across the highway, with Hougoumont to its right, through the first depression formed by the terrain, and up to the opposite ridge, where it took position in the first line. (The brigade's other battalions apparently were assigned different destinations, because from then on the battalion was by itself. [68]

The Brunswick 3rd Light Battalion stood on the same plateau in square in front of the battalion at a distance of 60 paces. To the forward right, a very strong English battery had its position on the elevation; to the forward left were English infantry at a distance of several hundred paces. The battalion remained here until the French Guard attacked later on. Although protected by a ridge in front, it suffered considerably from the enemy artillery fire. To the left one could see English infantry advancing, although its further moves could not be observed from the battalion's position.

[. . .]

L. Von Dreves, Major[23]

10 March [1834] Ensign Henry Gooch writes from Bureton of his duty at Hougoumont:

Sir
Having been absent from London, I only received your letter two days ago. I wish it was in my power to give you any useful information in answer to your questions but I fear it is not so. With the exception of two companies, the 7th and 8th, the whole of the 2nd Battalion of the Coldstream, were in the garden and courtyard of the Chateau of Hougoumont at the moment of the last attack by the French Guards. I have marked what I have heard was the position of those two companies with the colours. Having myself been in the light company and posted at Hougoumont from the night of the 17th till after the battle, I saw very little of what took place except immediately about me. I have marked where the light companies of the Coldstream and 3rd Guards were stationed to receive the 1st attack on Hougoumont and from whence we were driven into the Chateau by the gate facing our position. On another attack we charged and drove the French along the road leading to the wood. At the time of the attack of the French Guards, our attention was fully occupied by the enemy who were attacking us on all sides

I have the honour to be your humble servant
H E GOOCH[24]

9 November 1834 Captain Douglas Mercer writes from Stoke by Nayland, Colchester:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication dated Dublin November 3rd and in reply beg leave to state in regard to your first query that the 2nd Battalion 3rd Foot Guards (now the Scots Fusiliers Guard) about 7 pm on the 18th occupied the hedge in front of the orchard of Hougoumont, or rather the hedge which bounded the orchard on the side of Rossomme. The light infantry company was detached on the inside of the building. The battalion in the orchard was in extended order for the purpose of occupying an defending the whole length of the hedge, which owing to our great loss, was much more than we could occupy in close order.

Here it was that our chief loss in officers and men occurred. The hedge afforded but small protection, the earth bank being but little raised above the general level of the ground, while our flanks at *B & C* were opposed at the latter to the fire of light troops, who occasionally advanced through the wood at *C*, while on our left, at *B*, there were dense bodies of the enemy lying in the high grain which was only trodden completely down on the Grand Advance, which took place at the moment represented in your plan. These masses on our left were likewise covered by light infantry.

With regard to your second query, I have to observe that I believe that that part of the French force immediately in front of us, at the time more particularly referred to in your letter, was composed of light troops.

I relieved Lord Saltoun in command of the orchard, I should think between 2 & 3 o'clock. I took down with me the last detachment of my battalion consisting of 3 companies, the other companies in succession, have previously been sent to the orchard to reinforce the troops already there. These last were composed of detachments from the brigade *generally* and when I arrived at the extreme of the orchard with my party, I met Lord Saltoun, who told me he was about to return to his battalion on the heights we had just quitted, in consequence of his having lost almost all his men.

In effect, on looking over the party in the orchard, I found scarcely any other than those belonging to the Scots Fusilier Guards. The dead lay very thick on the whole length of the ground we occupied.

After a time the enemy drove us back as far as the hedge in our rear, which I have marked *D-E*. Here we remained for a short time when we made a rush and driving the enemy back we reoccupied the hedge in front from which we had been driven.

This position we maintained until the arrival of a staff officer who informed us that the French were in retreat, when we forced our way through the hedge and pursued the enemy as long as it was considered of use. Strong columns of the enemy were laying on the ground on our left and I think for a considerable time they were advanced as far as what I should consider a prolongation of the line *E-D.* I have made a pencil X at the spot where I conceived that they must have been in chief force.

Before moving down to the orchard, I strongly think the Battalion occupied the height I have marked with a *line & A* in pencil. With the exception of the orchard, the ground we occupied or passed over during the day as marked and generally with crops of high grain.

At the corner of the orchard which I have marked *C* there was a gate and at the opposite corner *B*, there was a considerable opening at the junction of the two hedges. These apparently trivial circumstances we found of great importance and very detrimental to our position. We could not remedy these defects on account of the proximity of the enemy. I should think that the pencil marks which you have made respecting the grain and such are correct, but I only recollect the fact of the ground being mostly covered with crops without being positive to which species of grain they might have been.

The field immediately in our front and which I have marked with two XX, I have already stated as probably occupied by light troops; I likewise *thought* that the French were in great force upon our right and beyond the building of Hougoumont and this I concluded from the fact of the fire which crossed us in almost all directions.

My letter has been extended beyond the limits to which I had at first wished to confine it, and I think that an apology is due to you for my having considered that the little information I could give upon this interesting subject was of value sufficient to entitle me to take up your time by its perusal, but the last paragraph in your letter must be my excuse.

I trust it will not be long, before I have an opportunity of viewing, with the rest of the public, the model, which I have understood to be so worthy of the event it represents.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

DOUGLAS MERCER[25]

14 November 1834 Lord Saltoun writes from Dunne, describing the role of the 2st Foot Guards, 2nd & 3rd Battalions, he writes:

Sir,

Your promised letter of the 7th November reached me yesterday at this place. In reply to your questions regarding the battle of Waterloo I have just to remark that the 1st Battalion of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards did not serve at Waterloo but at that period was doing duty in London. It was the 2nd Battalion and the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Regiment of the 1st Guards that formed the 1st Brigade of Guards of that army.

Near the time of the battle to which you refer the formation of the 1st Brigade of Guards was in line of four deep by the Duke of Wellington's express orders. Consequently it follows that the extent of front occupied by this Brigade would only be equal to that of one battalion in line of two deep.

The formation of that part of the enemy forces immediately in front of the 1st Brigade of Guards was in column.

I have received the plan you have sent me but I cannot find any remarks in pencil relative to the nature of the crop nor can I at this distance of time give you any information on that subject. I regained my battalion about three o'clock on that day having up to that period served in the orchard of Hougoumont and at that time the crop had been so trodden down that I can make no remarks upon it.

You are quite correct with respect to the hedge introduce on the plan by the ground at Hougoumont, no such hedge existed at that time nor was their any wood in that direction but mainly a earth bank as you describe it to be in your letter. The hedge which bounded the orchard on that side was of hawthorn or stunted beech and very strong.

I have marked as nearly as I can remember the ground occupied by the 1st Brigade of Guards at the period of the action you mention. It was on the crest of the hill having La Haye Sainte, which at that time had been taken by the enemy at some distance to our left the enemies columns about 5,l00 strong advanced as nearly as possible on the centre of our line.

In referring to the plan to mark the position of the brigade I found your remarks in pencil but from the reason above stated I can give no information on that head.

Your servant.

SALTOUN[26]

10 December 1834 Lieutentant William Lovelace Walton Captain of the Coldstream Guards:

Sir

In answer to your letter requesting me [to] state 'what was, the particular position of the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, at about 7 o'clock pm on the 18th June 1834 [*sic*]? I have the honour to remark that to the best of my recollection (aided by what I can ascertain from the few men we have now in the Battalion who were there, 31 only, and many of those wounded early in the day) there were two companies near the spot marked B. The reserve of two companies with the colours was some distance in the rear, near the first position taken up by the Battalion, before they were led by detachments of two companies at a time down to Hougoumont. With regard to the position of the enemy in the immediate front of the Battalion, I believe they occupied the wood, and lined the skirts of it, parallel to the fence which bounded the orchard of Hougoumont.

As to the crops on the ground, but all I can recollect is, that the field in which the Coldstream's bivouacked in the night of the 17th was, I think, fallow, and the field between the position the battalion front took, and the farm of Hougoumont, must I think have been brown with rye, and it was at that time a considerable height.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,
W L WALTON LIEUTENANT COLONEL
CAPTAIN COLDSTREAM GUARDS[27]

27 December 1834 Major Thomas Dalmer, Paris to First Lieutenant John Enoch.

[. . .]
The 3rd Battalion 14th Regiment, and the 57th Regiment were detached, as I believe, to support the light companies of the brigade which had been sent to the right of Hougoumont to oppose the enemy in that direction, so that the Welch Fusiliers was the only regiment of the brigade in the position that I have described.[28]

19 January 1835 Captain Lord Charles Fitzroy, 1st Foot Guards, Deputy Assistant Adjutant-general, Wakefield Lodge[29]

Dear Siborne,
If it lay in my power I should be delighted to assist you in your ingenious and arduous work. The moment of advance I think I never can forget. The brigated under General Sir F Adam was firs ordered to advance and bring its right shoulders forward. The guards advancing and bringing their right shoulders forward brought them on the left of Adam's Brigade with a wide interval. The whole advancing brought the Guards in immediate contact with the Imperial Guards; an honour which others (Adams brigade) claimed, but had no more right than a ship in sight when another ship engages and captures an enemy. While this conflict was going on Sir H Vivian's brigade came on to the field rather in rar of the left of Adams brigade; upon the *'sauve qui puet'* of the French, this (Vivian's) brigade moved by the right of Adams brigade and charged to the front.

I recollect one circumstance before the advance, which was, many of the Frnch Light cavalry after charging our squares in rear, attempted to return by the road to Nivelles leaving Hougoumont on the left, but were stopped by an abatis, and were all killed or wounded by the 51st Lt Infantry stationed on our rrright of the road.

Given me any occasion to assist your undertaking and I will willingly perform it.

Yours very faithfully

14 February 1835 Major Philip Mejer Lauenburg

At the beginning of the battle the brigade was in position *B*; I reach this conclusion, because on the chart marked 'ravine' behind us was where many wounded were treated. The ground in the bivouac area as well as in front of us had fruit but I believe that this open space was a village green or a lawn.

On our left we had Scots and on the same side at a distance from us Hanoverians. On the right in Hougoumont were the English Guards, the 95th Regiment and 2 or 3 cannons firing at the enemy. On the horizon the French cavalry of two kinds was forming on the road from Nivelles to Brussels, as I clearly saw from the white and light blue coats. We ourselves were shot at by the artillery, which appeared to be stationed to our right and forward. A number of English pieces were attacked and were disabled.

We advanced further had French light infantry in front of us and at the same time French cuirassiers formed on front of us on the height and the Battalion formed squares and were attacked by the cuirssiers 2- 3 times, however without any gain for them because the ground was partly tilled – softened through the rain to such an extent that the horses stopped out of range of the rifles in front of the square, stood still and could go no further. At the retreat of the French they were pursued every time by the Brunswick cavalry till finally an English light dragoon regiment took on the chase and they disappeared from view. We moved in line until the hollow road, stopped there and were again attacked by the light infantry, which caused a number of deaths and injuries. The light infantry retired, we stopped for about 3/4 hour. In front on our left was either a house - or La Belle Alliance – when suddenly, after hearing of the enemy withdrawal, we marched along the ditch on the left, crossed the chaussee and went into a very deep hallow road, well 20-30 feet, always moving straight on, crossed the chaussee from Genappe again and as it seems to me from the chart passed a wood or forest to the left.

[. . .][30]

[. . .]

We still had plenty of ammunition and produced an a mighty fire aimed at the cavalry, whereupon the same turned around. We advanced again but arriving at *h*, our cavalry fled back through our intervals and a line of enemy cavalry appeared suddenly at the crest of a small height about 60 paces from our front. Capt. Sympher who commanded a horse artillery troop at *m* rode with us we showed front and advanced and made a few lucky shots causing gaps so that the cavalry turned back.

This happened as I said at *h* and I think at this time, about 7 o'clock that this was the moment that the French Guards won the position at the crest. Now, the enemy infantry opened a strong fire from the gardens [Hougoumont] that we could not tolerate as we stood in a square. The Brigadier was already killed and each battalion had to help itself. We fell upon the garden, chased off the infantry from it and captured at I the hollow road that bordered the garden from the side. Which battalions that stood to our left and our right from the time when we stood at *h* till the moment when we arrived at *I*, I no longer remember as the smoke did not allow me to have a view and one was very busy in the battalion. But I remembered the 4 light companies of the brigade that stood at the 3 trees at *I* and who joined us in the attack on the garden. The enemy was repulsed from the garden and at 9 o'clock we met at La Belle Alliance.

ADOLPHUS HESSE
CAPT. HANOVERIAN RIFLE GUARDS
LT AND ADJ LATE 2ND LINE BATTALION KGL[31]

An artillery battery of the legion that we positioned in a gap on our left flank became engaged in a fierce fire, and answer the just-mentioned charge with case shot, nor did other squares and units spare their fire. Another column of cuisassiers immediately charged this artillery, which was supported by its subordinate infantry, and fired away until the enemy was between the cannon, whereupon th artillerymen with their side arms and their ammunition bags slung over their shoulders retreated in part into our square, in part some of them found protection among the trees.

Our people yelled loudly, 'We must retake the cannon!!' I was positioned on the right wing, which took up the front closer to the *hougoumont* woods, and when I looked around to see where the call was coming from, I noticed that the left was firing their weapons at the enemy, who had just taken the cannons, then charged them with their bayonets, whereupon the enemy abandoned the cannon and curried away. The artillerymen immediately made use of the cannon, discharging at the retreating enemy. In my opinion, this was an inspired, even outrageous maneuvre, and I cannot say whether the order was given for it. I believe that it perhaps resulted from the impulse of those good men, or that of the artillerymen who had retreated into our square! After that, the enemy attempted two more charges against our square, both of which were unsuccessful, and by then it may have about been 6.30pm.

On the plan you will find the approximate drawings with remarks, and I believe that I have fairly accurately marked the position of our squares because I remember quite clearly that we were positioned so close to the woods an bushes of Hougoumont that the enemy shells too often reached the ranks of the square and killed or wounded many. As a result, our Division General, Clinton finally felt the need to order a movement to the side far enough to be less exposed to this murderous skirmish fire. As a result I think they showed their loyalty, . . . fulfilled their formations, etc., etc.

I add the remark that as I know, the British Guards claimed that the house and buildings of Hougoumont were like a fortress, the surroundings of which were full of Frenchmen, and that the enemy had such a well-covered position in the woods, the garden and the bushes that it was impossible for our 4 rifle companies, which later joined with the 2nd Line Battalion, KGL, to dislodge them, in spite of all their efforts under the 3 trees that are drawn in the plan. Captain Tilee of the 2nd Line Battalion was killed; also shot was captain Diedel of the 3rd Battalion Rifle Company. Captain Heise of the 4th Battalion Rifle Company was wounded and died in Brussels. Captain Beurmann of the 2nd Battalion Rifle Company was slightly wounded.

With regard to the correctness of the terrain and of the fields that you drew in pencil on the plan, I must bemoan that I cannot give you even the slightest information. On the 17th [?19th], as we were returning from Quatre Bras, we passed by the region of the battlefield, and I do not recall having seen any thick vegetation there, as I saw everywhere else. Some of it had undoubtedly been taken into bivouac by friend and foe alike, and during the night of the 17th to the 18th, such a foggy rain fell that the heavy and clayed earth became very soft so that the low ground was somewhat inundated. As our Division was marching from the slope (plateau) of Waterloo through the plain and low land towards Hougoumont at about 2PM, we found everything to be so trodden down that there was nothing to be seen of the beautiful vegetation. I regret that I didn't take special notice of it because so many more important and weighty matters occupied my eyes and my mind. I must admit that I took such care for my person in my current position that I knew little about the enemy or condition and circumstances of the opposing armies. It is true that we had heard that the Prussians had taken part in a skirmish on the 16th at Ligny, but tof the result we learned only that Prince Blücher would join us during the battle on the 18th. We also learned that the French Army were marching from Quatre Bras, as we had a skirmish of the outposts on the 17th after we arrived at our bivouac late in the afternoon, which ended toward evening because of the rain and darkness.[32]

12 March 1835 Ensign Thomas Wedgwood writes from Mar Hall:

Sir,
In answer to your circular, which in consequence of my being absent from the regiment, I have only just received, I am sorry to state that I am unable to give you any information, that could be in the least useful to you. On the evening of the 18th of June, I was myself stationed almost entirely within the walls of the chateau and garden or else in the orchard and wood immediately outside and am quite ignorant of the nature of the crops growing n its vicinity, with the exception that they were chiefly standing corn.

To the best of my recollection, the 2nd Battalion 3rd Guards was, about 7 pm stationed within the walls of the Chateau, but were at that time not much pressed by the enemy. I remember, that I was myself completely ignorant of what was going on, or what the result of the action was likely to be until we saw parties of the French passing us in full retreat, with the Brunswickers in pursuit on both sides of the house.

I believe that there was a large gateway, to which the road through the wood, led, which is not marked in the plan sent.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

T WEDGWOOD
CAPTAIN AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL
1st FOOT GUARDS[33]

This position of battalion squares close to the Hougoumont hedge had caused us constant losses. After several hours, however, this position was broken by an oncoming enemy infantry column, made up of several battalions, which were supported by cuirassiers who followed at some distance. Thereupon, the battalion joined up with the 3rd Line Battalion, K G Legion, and formed a square close to the level of the squares of the brigade under Major General Adam, opposite the enemy, a short distance from the foot of th slope where we happened to be. A Fierce skirmish developed, which ended a short time later with the partial destruction and complete dissolution of the enemy infantry column, which was partly the result of the penetration of the column by a regiment of English light dragoons. The enemy cuirassairs, advancing in two columns, now attacked both of the above mentioned squares, but with complete lack of success. There was also a second attack by the body of cuirassiers on the square adjacent to us, which had been repulsed. The attack on the squares of the 1st and 2nd Battalions by the cuirassiers was repulsed with considerable losses, and hastened their retreat to *b*, which is where they had come from.
[in this instance, the hedge is that on the north boundary of the orchard. See map marked.][34]

4 March 1835 Captain Frederick Purgold, Luneburg

Sir

In answer to your letter of the 27th instant, respecting the position of the late 2nd Line Battalion KGL at the battle of Waterloo about seven pm. I have the honour to reply that the battalion stood in a square, having the orchard of the farm of Hougoumont, which was enclosed with hedges and ditches, close to its right; the orchard was in possession of the enemy's skirmishers and we suffered much by their fire. In our front was the French cavalry drawn up and a short time after our arrival we were charged by them. I suppose they were cuirassiers. After their being beaten off, they retired, formed again and a short time afterwards they renewed the charge with the same effect. As the fire out of the orchard annoyed us very much, we formed a line behind the hedge, attacked them and drove them behind the second hedge in the said orchard, taking a position, en debandade, behind the trees, behind the trees. Then the French attacked us and we were forced to give way. At this time we received an order to retake the orchard a tout prix and our attack was crowned with success.

As I at this time was wounded and carried off from the field, I do not know what further happened.

The battalion – about 400 rank and file strong had at the beginning of the battle occupied a line between Braine l'Allued and the high road from Brussels to Nivelles with its left close to the said road. At about five pm we marched off left in front, crossed the said road, passed over a deep trodden ground, which had been sown with wheat, but was now utterly devastated, formed in a square and halted at the orchard of Hougoumont, having the right wing of the brigade, although our post was the left.

I beg partond for having erroneously marked the momentary position behind the hedge of the orchard upon the plan.

If errors or mistakes should have crept into my statement you will please excuse them, after so long an elapse of time they are almost unavoidable.

I have the honour to be Sir your obedient humble servant
FREDERICK PURGOLD
CAPTAIN, LATE 2ND LINE BATT KGL.

On the morning of the 18 June at about half past nine, the regiment's 1st Battalion of 800 men, commanded by Captain Busgen, was ordered to occupy the Hougoumont farm in front of the centre of the right wing. A company of Brunswick Jägers had been posted at the edge of the wood of that farm, and a battalion of the 2nd English [Coldstream] Guards Regiment behind the orchards.

At 11 o'clock of the morning, the division of Jerome Napoleon attacked the wood and occupied the same.

At about 1 o'clock, the enemy renewed his attacks on the gardens and buildings, which, however, were repulsed.

Between 2 and 3 o'clock the buildings were set on fire by the enemy who made a third desperate attack. However, the farm was held until the end of the battle, although the musketry firing continued incessantly. The battalion bivouacked here during the night.

The story spread by the Spanish General Alava and repeated by several writers that the Nassau Battalion had abandoned the Hougoumont farm is not true. It apparently originated from the fact that the battalion had returned its colours at the beginning of the action because its commander felt that they could not be properly protected in the expected dispersed order of fighting.[35]

25 March 1835 Lieutenant Charles Parker Ellis writes:

Sir
I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of our letter of the 9th instant, and am sorry that it is not in my power to give you the information you require as to the formation of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Foot Guards on the evening of the 18th of June, as I was with the light company of the 3rd Battalion employed in the defence of Hougoumont, and left the field wounded at three o'clock.

I understand from Lord Saltoun that he has answered your letter fully, and you cannot have better authority than his. The map which you sent me appears to be, from my recollection of the field, a particularly correct one, and I should feel much obliged by your allowing me to retain it in my possession, if however you wish to have it returned, I will send it back by return of post.

The wood at Hougoumont, was an open grove, and not so thick a wood as appears in your plan.

I have the honour to be, Sir your obedient humble servant,
Charles Ellis
Lieutenant Colonel[36]

6 August 1836 Lietenant Edward B. Fairfield writes from Mount Eagal, Castle Island, Ireland:

Dear Sir,
Colonel Berkeley Drummond has been staying with me for some time – and told me that you were anxious to obtain some information as to the sort of 'Defence' which was executed inside the wall at Hougoumont.

I was for many years in the 3rd Regiment (since June 1815) and have heard many officers describe the action of the 18th of June.

In the year 1816 I made some drawings of the different objects of interest and now enclose you the only one I can at the moment put my hand on. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the drawings at this distance of time.

There is a fault in the perspective at the angle of the wall – this I think I made purposely in order to show that the wall stood someway in advance of he farm wing. I should say that I remember seeing a sort of rough platform inside the wall, made of stone. Taken I think from a cross wall which separated the homestead from the kitchen garden.

I will endeavour to show my recollection of the appearance of the platform by a rough drawing from the main house and grounds.

I think that there was a way in to this space from a window which had been broken away to make a passage.

The wall was higher perhaps than my sketch would represent.

Whether the platform was at the angle A or commence at B I cannot positively say – but as it must have been a great object to defend the curtain, I have little doubt but that it was at A. Captain Evelyn and the Light Company of the 3rd Regiment made the 'Defence'. Evelyn was a very ingenious man, and acquired great credit in the regiment for the manner in which he affected the duty allocated to him. Captain Elrington (Who has now left the regiment and is living in Wales) has I am quite sure a most accurate recollection of every particular of the French attack in this quarter – he was stationed I know at the gate – and used to describe the affair with great accuracy of detail.

Drummond left me without taking the drawing, and I now send it to you – and if it is of the slightest use – I shall be most happy to think that I have been able to afford you any information however trivial.

The work on which you are now employed as so apparently national that every person must feel an interest in hoping that your labours will soon be answered with success

Believe me, faithfully yours
CHARLES FAIRFIELD [37]

4 January 1838

Captain William Siborne writes from Dublin to Lord Saltoun to discuss the detail of the battle at Hougomont, informing the making of his model:

Dear Lord Saltoun,

— As rumour assigns to you the command of a Brigade of Guards for service in Canada, I am anxious to avail myself of the only opportunity which time may allow, to beg you will, with your usual kindness, favour me with your recollections of Quatre Bras, as also with a few particulars concerning the French attacks upon Hougomont during the earlier part of the day. I enclose a rough sketch of that portion of the former field upon which the Guards were principally engaged, as also a plan of Hougomont and its immediate vicinity. [79] It appears that during the interval between the commencement of the battle of Waterloo — half-past eleven — and the attack upon Picton's division about two o'clock, the action was, with the exception of a general cannonading along both lines, confined to Hougomont; but in drawing up my history of the battle, I find considerable difficulty in giving a clear and satisfactory view of the *progressive* course of the contest at the latter post during the above interval, and I should feel truly grateful for any hints with which your Lordship may be kind enough to favour me on that point, including the remainder of the period during which you remained at Hougomont. I am also anxious to learn whether any artillery were brought to bear against the orchard or the garden from the rising ground on our left of the long outward eastern hedge, which I have marked a, b, and of which the highest point was at c. I think I heard you mention your having at one time attempted to get possession of a French gun, which was worked *à la prolonge*.

I am rather doubtful as to an attack by the 1st Brigade of Guards upon French *Infantry previously* to that of the Imperial Guard. I am aware that a strong column of French infantry, flanked by Cuirassiers, advanced against a part of our line more to your right, sweeping by the outward north-east angle of the orchard of Hougomont, and that they were driven back,— perhaps another column made a simultaneous attack against the 1st Brigade of Guards; of the time and circumstances of the latter attack I know literally nothing.

Should I be warranted in stating that when your Lordship discovered the mistake caused by the passing of the word "form square" immediately after the defeat of the first column of the Imperial Guard, you gave the order, as well as your voice at such a moment would admit, for every man to retire to the original position, that the Brigade accordingly retired, though in considerable confusion, re-formed in line four deep, and brought up its left shoulder to meet the attack by the second column? Such a circumstance as their accidentally retiring in confusion, and then re-forming for another attack, redounds so highly to the centre of our Guards, that I should vrish particularly to notice it, if such actually occurred: for certainly none but British troops would have halted to re-form, aware as they must have been that a second immense column was rapidly moving against them; foreign troops would not have stopped until they had fairly crossed the main ridge of the position.

The model, I am happy to say, proceeds very satisfactorily though slowly, and [80] I am now fagging with all my might to bring it out in London on the l8th of June, as also my history of the whole campaign at the same time. — I remain, my dear Lord Saltoun, yours very faithfully,

W. SIBORNE.

P.S. — I have just this moment heard that you are to command the Light Division in Canada, upon which I take the liberty of congratulating both your Lordship and the service.

May I ask if it be true that the Duke of Wellington made use of the expression, so often attributed to him, of, "Up, Guards, and at them," at the attack of the first column of Imperial Guards? An officer belonging to the Battery on the immediate right of the Guards informs me that he heard the Duke say, "Look out, Guards, — ready;" perhaps these were the precise words — a point, however, of very little consequence. W. S.[38]

19 January 1838 Lord Saltoun writes from London to Captain William Siborne:

My dear Sir,

— Your letter of the 4th reached me on my way to town, but I have not had time to answer it sooner, and by this time you know that one of your Generals from Ireland goes instead of me with the Brigade of Guards to Canada.

I can give you little or no information regarding v. On that day I commanded the Light Companies of the First Brigade of Guards, and the post we occupied was in and about the wood [at Hougoumont] on the right of the field of battle; but from the circumstance of your plan of the ground not being shaded, I am unable at this distance of time to trace our operations upon it. When we debouched from the wood (which we had cleared of the French light troops), we had on our right a deep ravine, or perhaps I should rather call it a hollow, and about 150 yards to our left, and about half that distance to the rear, was a low scrubby hedge, behind which the 33d Regiment was posted. This point I cannot make out on your sketch of the ground, but as far as information goes it is not of much importance. That was the extreme point we advanced to, as did also the Brigade; and although we were driven back from it, we recovered it again, and held it till the firing ceased at dark. I perceive you have a small brook or [81] marshy bottom running through the wood. But as far as my recollection serves me, we met with an obstruction of that description much nearer the Nivelle road, from which we commenced our advance, than it appears to be in your plan, but I most likely am wrong in this; for hurried into action as we were into a large, and in some parts thick wood, without any instructions, and nothing to guide me in my advance but the fire of the enemy, it is not likely at this distance of time that I should retain a very clear recollection of distances.

Next with respect to Hougomont. From the first attack to the period mentioned in your letter (till about two o'clock), during the whole of which time I was at that post,[1] the whole was a succession of attacks against the front of that post, attended with more or less partial success for the moment, but in the end always repulsed. And it was in one of these attacks, when I had been driven from the front hedge of the orchard to the hollow way in the rear of it, that they, occupying the outward side of the front hedge with infantry, brought a gun along the line marked by you a, b, to a point I have marked d on the line. This gun I endeavoured to take, but failed. I however regained the front hedge of the orchard, from which I never was again driven. Whether the enemy had artillery at the point marked c, I am unable to state. We suffered very little from artillery on the post, but it is quite clear that the house and farm-yard of Hougomont was set on fire by that arm.

Your next point is the attack (as you call it) of the First Brigade of Guards against a body of infantry previous to the attack of the Imperial Guard, etc. You seem to have mistaken the advance not of that Brigade, but of one battalion of them, viz., the Third Battalion Grenadier Guards, and have concluded that this was an attack against a regular body of infantry, but that was not the case. The circumstances were as follows: —

During the cavalry attacks on the centre, a great number of the enemy's sharpshooters had crept up the slope of the hill, and galled the Third Battalion, who were in square, very severely. At that time the Second Battalion Grenadier Guards (the other Battalion of the Brigade) was likewise formed in square, about 100 yards in roar of the Third Battalion. The Third Battalion, who suffered severely from this fire, wheeled up into line, and drove them down the hill, and advanced to a point I have marked *E*, and there re-formed square. A small [82] body of Riffles were at a point I have marked with a X, and the 52d Regiment in line at *F G G*. In this position we received the last attack of cavalry I saw that day, who, refusing us, passed between us and the *inward rear angle of the orchard*, [and] receiving our fire, did not pass between us and the left of the 52d, where the Rifles were, but rode along the front of the 52d, with a view of turning their right flank, and were completely destroyed by the fire of that Regiment. After this, we, the Third Battalion, retired to our original position in square, as I conclude the 52d did also, as the next I saw of them was their attack, with the rest of General Adam's Brigade, on the second column of the Imperial Guards.

[1]He omits to mention that he had to retake the orchard first of all.

As to any attack made about that time by the outward angle of the orchard of Hougomont, I could not from my position see or know anything about it.

Your next point is with respect to what took place towards the close of the action, and during the momentary confusion that took place in the First Brigade.

It will not do, in an account such as yours, to put down any order that was not given, however scientific it might be, still less to make me give an order to retire, when that was the last thought that came into my head at that moment. The word of command passed was, — "Halt! Front, form up;" and it was the only thing that could be done — any other formation was impossible; and as soon as this order AA-as understood by the men it was obeyed, and ever}-thing was right again. To prove this, I must take you a little into the drill-book. The original formation of this Brigade at the commencement of the action was in contiguous column of Battalions, at quarter-distance, right in front. From that they formed squares on their respective leading companies. When they were ordered towards the end of the day to form line of four deep, instead of being deployed into line to either flank, they were wheeled up into line from square (in order that they might get the quicker back into square should that formation be required again). It followed from this that when in line the Grenadier Company and No. 1 formed the centre of each Battalion, and the right sections of tach Company formed the right wing, and the left sections formed the left, thus completely separating the Companies, and rendering any formation upon our principles of drill utterly impracticable, except the one before mentioned of wheeling back into square. From this you will at once, I should think, see that any such account as you suggest would, to any soldier acquainted with the circumstances [83] of the formation of that Brigade, prove its own inaccuracy, and do your account more harm than good. For such person would at once know that no fresh formation was practicable with those Battalions, until one of two things had been done.

Either they must have been re-formed into square, from that to column, and then deployed in the regular way; or they must have been ordered to fall out, and formed again as at the beginning of a parade to their respective covering Serjeants, when all the process of a fresh telling off would become necessary. You had better therefore, I think, have it as I have given it to you, viz., that as soon as the men were made to understand they were not to form square, but to *Halt, front, and form up,* they did it; the left shoulders were then brought forward, and we advanced against the second column of the Imperial Guards, but which body was defeated by General Adam's Brigade before we reached it, although we got near enough to fire if we had been ordered so to do; and, as far as I can recollect at this distance of time, we did fire into that column.

Your last point is, whether the Duke made use of the words, "Up, Guards, and at them!" I did not hear him, nor do I know any person, or ever heard of any person, that did. It is a matter of no sort of importance, has become current with the world as the cheering speech of a great man to his troops, and is certainly not worth a controversy; if you have got it I should let it stand. I have endeavoured to answer your queries to the best of my ability, and I hope I have made them intelligible to you, and as I am not going with this army, I hope to see your model on the 18th of June next, and that the result will be of use to you.

I remain, my dear Sir, yours very truy,

SALTOUN.[39]

[1840] George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle recalls the evening after the battle:

At sunset I found myself at Hougoumont, in the immediate neighbourhood of which I had been posted the greater part of [106] the day. I bivouacked that night under a tree facing the entrance to the Château. When about a quarter of a century ago I visited the field of battle in company with my son Bury, I looked in vain for the tree the roots of which had served me for a pillow. It was gone. The battle had been alike destructive of vegetable and animal life. The whole range of those fine elms which formed the avenue to the Chateau had died of wounds received in the action.[40]

16 March [1843] Ensign Henry Montagu, later Colonel-in-Chief of the Scots Guards.

Sir

The information I can give you regarding the battle of Waterloo, I fear will be of little service to you.

I was attached to the 8th Company of the battalion and remained on the position above Hougoumont till about 2 o'clock, when the 6th, 7th and 8th companies marched down together, to the orchard on our left of the garden. On reaching the left corner of the lower fence, the 6th and 7th companies filed inside the hedge, while the 8th marched in file, up to the gate leading into the grass field beyond the orchard, where there was a road which led through the field, and along the outside of the wall. There we began to form companies, when the French troops, standing in line in a rye field, immediately in our front, commenced firing by sections on us. As we got the company in line, we replied as well as we could be file firing, but being much [outnumbered?] lost many men, and were obliged to retire slowly, firing, to the lower corner, when there was a deep lane. Here we remained, being shortly afterwards [reinforced] by 2 companies of a Hanoverian regiment. I remained here a considerable time with Colonel Mercer, who was occupied, reforming stragglers and men who returned from carrying wounded officers to the rear.

The bodies of French cavalry passed over the hill in rear of us and were supported by a brigade or division of infantry which halted wihtin short musket range but did not fire on us. After a considerable interval the French cavalry was driven back and almost immediately after I was ordered to take command of the grenadier company which had lost all of its officers. I found it very well formed, occupying the strong fence above the hollow lane, at the bottom of the orchard. I remained with it keeping up a desultory fire, till suddenly a shout arose on all sides, when, we passed out of the ditch and charged across the orchard driving the French before us, and passed another road by the gap at the left corner of the garden wall. The ditch had been cut deep, and had been full of water, but when I reached it, was completely filled with killed and wounded so as to form a complete bridge.

We skirmished for a time in the wood when we were recalled into the courtyard, to be reformed and were relieved by some Brusnwick or Hanoverian Jägers.

The battle was then over although the fire was kept up in the wood for some time. As far as I recollect, the notes of the cultivation of the fields, in the plan, are correct, except that I think we were formed in the morning in a clover patch.

I have the honour to be Sir, your obedient servant

HENRY MONTAGU

PS I believe that I have omitted to state that the whole battalion was occupied all day in lining the hedges o the orchard and the inside of the garden wall and were posted in this manner at 7 o'clock.[41]

1846 Ludwig von Wissel: 4th Line Battalion, KGL, action at Hougoumont, Rifleman Henry Rohlfs, an officer attested to the bravery of this man as follows:

After the combined light companies of the four line battalions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th) together with the 2nd Line battalion, had driven the enemy out of the orchard of Hougoumont on 18th June 1815, I and Rohlfs happened to be at the left wing of the skirmish line in a ditch behind a hedge. Apparently not noticing us, and enemy captain on horseback came close to us; I jumped up and grabbed the horse's bridle, but had to let go again if Rohlfs had not come to my aid and taken the captain prisoners. That man offered his watch and purse to Rohlfs, but he nobly declined to take them.

During the brief period of our presence in that orchard, Rohlfs managed to shoot down some 12 to 14 enemy tiraileurs and two officers; before he fired he said to me each time: 'Sir, now it's that one's turn' and each time the target dropped to the ground. But then he was wounded himself and fell down; he now, in a prone position from behind his knapsack, shot down a few more enemies. Soon thereafter we took part in the advance.[42]

February 1847 The Duke of Wellington's recollections recorded at Walmer Castle:

During the battle of Waterloo the Duke observed that the French had contrived to set on fire a haystack close to the roof of the building.[1] He was in the habit of carrying in his pocket tablets of asses' skin. On one of these he wrote an order to the Officer Commanding to put out the fire. This leaf was preserved, and is (or was) in possession of Lady Wellesley. It ought to go to the British Museum. If the French had succeeded in taking Hougoumont, they could not have held it long, as our howitzers completely commanded it, but while they could hold it, their occupation would have prevented us from acting on the flank of their attacks, as we did, with so much effect, in the last advance of their guard. Hougoumont and La Haye were like two bastions to the ridge between, and made the position a very strong one.

"The Duke had noticed its capabilities on repeated visits, both in his journeys of inspection, and in a ride he took from Brussels for the purpose. It was in one' of these visits that Lady [182] E, travelling with her mother, first met the Duke upon the spot of his subsequent victory. "He had, in like manner, inspected the position once occupied by Marlborough in front of Hal. The reason why he posted Colville and Prince Frederick of Orange in force in that position was because he thought then, as he thinks now, that Napoleon ought, after Quatre Bras, to have manoeuvred in that direction, in order to draw away the British from the Prussians, with the ulterior chance of acting between them. For this purpose, he should have moved along the Nivelles road, by which we had advanced from our right. Prince Frederick had 17,000 men to hold the Hal position till he could have been joined by the Duke.[43]

[1]The name is not given, but most probably at Hougoumont.

[before 1855] A Nassau Soldier's Remembrances of the Waterloo Campaign, fragments from the unpublished memoirs of Private Johann Peter Leonhard:

On arrival [at Hougoumont] we noticed that this big farm was surrounded by a wall; the doors were open, one could see the freshly broken loopholes in the walls. Ha, I thought to myself, here you`ll settle in but leave nevermore, good night, world! The farm was now occupied at the greatest speed by us Nassauers, the right wing of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Nassau Regiment, on the inside [the grenadier and two line companies], the left wing on the outside [the light and two line companies].

We had hardly taken up position at the loopholes when masses of French came out of the wood, apparently all set to capture the farm, but [159] was so terrible that the grass in front was soon covered with French corpses. Their retiring and advancing thus went on alternately, and we were attacked four times in our farm, but each time the French were again repelled.

The fifth attack that the French launched against the Hougoumont farm was beyond description. The hornbeam trees of the garden alley, underneath which we stood, were razed by the immense cannonade, as if mown down, and so were the beautiful tall trees along the outside of the farm. Walls were collapsing from both the heavy bombardment or from the severe thunderstorm that raged above us, the likes of which I have never experienced before; one could not distinguish one from the other. The skies seemed to have been changed into an ocean of fire; all of the farm's buildings were aflame. The soil underneath my feet began to shake and tremble, and large fissures opened up before my very eyes.

After the Battle of Waterloo, the Nassauers were again drawn up ahead of the entire army, and were forced to be the vanguard, or avantgarde, through al of France to Paris. For the most part we had to march with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets. During these rapid advances, the Nassauers were never treated to detectable nor wine, but rather to the opposite, hunger, thirst, want, and all kinds of hardship. We were never quartered in towns or villages but had to camp at night under the open skies! It is thus understandable that oftentimes on this march to Paris we were in dire needs because the food supplies could not follow our fast marches in pursuit of the French. We eventually arrived at Paris and moved into this capital city on 1 July 1815, were we camped in the Boulogne Wood until 30 October before my very eyes.

After the Battle of Waterloo, the Nassauers were again drawn up ahead of the entire army, and were forced to be the vanguard, or avantgarde, through all of France to Paris.[44]

[undated] Pflung-Harttung's letter describing the activity of the Hanoverians. An extract of his undated letter:

18 June: Battle of Waterloo

Description of the terrain

Before Mont St. Jean, a small village where the highways from Nivelles and from Charleroi to Brussels merge, there is a plateau which extends across both highways. The Charleroi highway runs through the exact centre of the plateau. On following the highway for several thousand paces one comes to a ridge which is similar and runs almost parallel to the first one. The army of the Duke of Wellington. [. . .]

Before the front, where the centre joined the somewhat retired right flank, there was the farmstead of Hougoumont, which was lying slightly below the level at which the troops were posted. Its buildings and a garden attached to their left were surrounded by a wall, in which loopholes were made during the morning, which were also made on the upper floor of the building. There was an orchard and a wood of elm trees, in size about 150 square *ruten*,[1] encompassed for the most part by a wet ditch.

Before the centre and next to the Charleroi highway, in the low ground that separated the two positions, there was the farmstead of La Haye Sainte. It was adjoined by an orchard on the enemy side and by a small kitchen garden on ours, both surrounded by fairly dense hedges. The buildings had not been prepared for defence (an oversight that caused significant losses to the troops posted therein). [10]

There were hedges in a straight direction from the [Charleroi] highway towards Papelotte, along the slope of the plateau on which the left wing was positioned. [Papelotte] formed the end point of this wing. Parts [of the hedges] could be used by the troops posted in the lines as parapets, other parts as cover for the skirmishers stationed before the front. Along the best part of the hedge ran a rural road from the highway to Smohain, which was a hollow way for a good a distance. The Charleroi highway had been closed by an abattis near La Haye Sainte, at the beginning of the hedges.

It is thus seen that the retired right wing and the left wing, protected by hedges, represented the better secured parts [of the line], whereas the section between La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont farms was the most suitable part of the [enemy's] attack. It was, however, stiffened somewhat by the strong points. A successful attack could also be conducted against Papelotte, and the end point of the left wing, because it was in low ground and not dominating the surrounding terrain, as was the end point of the right wing. The plateau, on which the troops were positioned, was not particularly wide and was sloping to the rear and the front. The second line could thus partly stand in an area where it was protected from artillery fire. [11]

[. . .]

11.30am - 2.00pm

By 11.30am., the enemy had ended his preparations for the attack, and two infantry columns moved up to the attack, one of these against Papelotte, the other against Hougoumont. As these columns advanced to within firing range, the artillery at the centre opened fire, to which the enemy soon responded. Before long, the cannonading spread along the major part of the line. The attempt to take Papelotte failed and was not vigorously pursued, which was a sign that the enemy's principal attention was not directed at this vulnerable part of the line. The attack against Hougoumont was made with greater determination. At this time, it was defended by a battalion of British Guards, a grenadier company of the Nassau Regiment, a company of the Hanoverian Feldjäger Corps and a detachment of 100 men of the 1st Hanoverian Brigade. The enemy took the small adjoining wood, was expelled again, took it again and advanced to the gate of the farmstead. A forceful sortie with levelled bayonets foiled his prospect of conquering the buildings.

[1] 1 rute equals 3.76m.

2.00pm - 7.00pm

Shortly before two o`clock, the battle expanded into a general affair; the enemy commenced his attacks with large formations against several points of the line. In the right-hand area, the Hougoumont farm was still the object of heavy fighting. The buildings go up in flames from the projectiles of an enemy battery, but the farmstead still remains in the hands of our troops; they also regain part of the nearby terrain. A murderous skirmishing fire continues here throughout the day. Meanwhile, infantry columns advance against our troops posted behind the farm, bypassing it to their left. The enemy gradually moves two entire divisions into battle while supported by his calvary's repeated attacks, which are always repulsed. On our side, the greater part of the troops of the retired right wing move into action, and almost all the Netherlands troops posted at Braine l`Alleud are moved up and positioned behind the centre. Throughout the fighting, the enemy is unable to gain any terrain near the Hougoumont Farm. Towards two o`clock, infantry columns, supported by a cavalry division, also move against the La Haye Sainte farm. Attacked several times until after six o`clock in the evening, the 2nd Light Battalion of the King's German [12] Legion and the Light Company of the 5th Line Battalion of the King's German Legion tenaciously hold on to the farm. It is eventually abandoned because of lack of ammunition. While the fighting at the farmstead continues, the enemy cavalry carries out multiple attacks against the troops standing at the centre on the plateau. But it is thrown back each time by the squares of the infantry or by counter-attacking cavalry. This kind of action on the plateau in the same manner, after the La Haye Sainte farm has been taken.

On the highway itself fighting continues all day for the possession of the abattis. During the first attack on the farm, an infantry column advanced in massed formation along the side of the highway, leaving the farm to their left. After they are repulsed at great loss by the troops at the abattis and at its side, only swarms of enemy tirailleurs move into action [at this point]. The enemy succeeds several times to take possession of abattis, until it disappears entirely after a few hours. But as soon as he advances beyond it, he is driven back by the troops in the ditches of the highway and in the low spots nearby.

The left wing, extending to the centre at the highway, is attacked by the infantry of the French 1st Corps, concurrently with the first attack on La Haye Sainte. After partly succeeding in its advance up to the position, its front is held up by heavy fire. A British brigade that moves out of the position threatens its right flank with a bayonet attack, and the cavalry brigade of Major General Ponsonby hurries forward from the extreme left flank and throws it completely into a rout. Although [then] retiring in great disorder, it has taken many prisoner's and has captured two eagles. One regiment of the cavalry brigade rushes towards the rear of the infantry and disables three batteries by killing the horses, before the enemy cavalry is able to hurry up in support. As the latter moves towards the position to attack our infantry, it is forced back before the parapet like hedges, not having accomplished anything. After the total failure of this assault on the left wing, the enemy does not launch any more serious attacks [against it]. He nevertheless keeps up a heavy cannonade and persistent skirmishing by tirailleurs until the evening, both at this point and at the highway. He only succeeds, at about 6.30pm, to expel the weak defending force from Papelotte. [. . .] [13]

8.00pm - 9.30pm

The Duke of Wellington considers that the proper moment has now come to make a decisive move against the enemy army with the assistance of the Prussian troops, and to end the precarious situation of his troops on the plateau. He orders the left wing to advance in parallel with the Prussian troops that had arrived by way of Ohain and had drive the enemy out of Papelotte. At the sam time, he has the troops on the right wing that are not yet engaged in battle to advance towards Hougoumont. He draws two cavalry brigades from the left wing and orders them to attack, together with the troops standing on the ridge near Hougoumont. He indicates the farm of La Belle Alliance at the centre of the enemy position as the point where they have to direct their advance. Renewed courage inspires the troops upon receiving this order; the cavalry commences its attack that achieves the most splendid success; behind it, the infantry presses on. The enemy formations, the Guards among them, do the best they can to conduct their retreat in good order; yet those formed units are soon dispersed.[45]

[undated] A report for the 2nd Division of Lieutenant General Sir H. Clinton 1st King's German Legion Brigade of Colonel du Plat:

All was quiet during the night. The grenadier company was detached on outpost duty. At eleven o`clock in the morning, the battalions stood to arms, and the brigade formed in columns right to the front. At exactly twelve o`clock, the first cannon shot was fired from our flank, and the cannonade continued uninterruptedly. At four o`clock we were ordered to form square and to advance. On our advance, we attacked and dispersed an enemy square. Our cavalry was unable to further harm them because enemy cavalry moved up to charge us. This attack was repelled. In the meantime, the remnants of the square had taken up position in a garden to our right and in a ditch in front of us [at Hougoumont], and were so close that their fire caused us to lose several officers and men. Their fire was mainly directed at the artillery placed in front of our squares, forcing their crews to leave their guns and to join us. The square of the 95th Regiment to our left therefore changed from square to skirmish order and drove off the enemy skirmishers. At the same time, the 2nd Line Battalion was ordered to drive the enemy out of the garden, which was then successfully done. From now on, the enemy moved his numerous cavalry into battle, and we were attacked seven times, always by fresh cavalry, cuirassiers, lancers and dragoons, but they were driven off each time and suffered losses. Towards eight o`clock, the Duke of Wellington rode up and ordered the squares to form line of four ranks and advance in line against the enemy Guards; these, too, were beaten, and victory had been won. The enormous exertions, the men had eaten little or nothing during the past three days, made it impossible to take part in the pursuit of the enemy, and camp was set up one hour away from the battlefield. The Prussians, who had just arrived, now pursued the defeated enemy.

The battalion's losses were [. . .][46]

[undated] Report by the 1st Hanoverian Brigade of Major General Kielmansegge

On 18 June around 9am, it stopped raining, and the occasional ray of sunshine seemed to want to warm our limbs.

. . .

In front of the English Guards Division, which was at the right of the 3rd Division, was the Hougoumont country house. Keeping it in our hands was important for holding our position. To make up for the Guards Division's lack of light infantry, the 1st Feldjäger Company as well as 100 men, each, from the Luneburg and Grubenhagen Battalions were detached at that location. The enemy directed his first attack against this post, with many more to follow. It was taken three times by the enemy, but each time our men drove him out again. Our Jägers and riflemen killed a good many of his men since these attacks were always launched in close columns.[47]

[undated] Pflung-Harttung's letter describing the activity of part of the Royal Hanoverian Troops and the King's German Legion. An extract of his letter:

3rd Hanoverian Brigade

Until three o'clock in the afternoon, the 3rd Brigade under the command of Colonel Hugh Halkett stood in closed columns in the retired right wing, where it suffered somewhat from the cannonade. It then advanced several hundred paces up to the hollow way which in this area joins the Nivelles highway. At five o'clock the two Osnabrück and Salzgitter Battalions were drawn up, past the hollow way, towards the Hougoumont farm and formed squares on a ridge, while under heavy fire. [. . .]

The Salzgitter Battalion has to force the wood of Hougoumont, in which Brunswick infantry and other troops battled against the enemy. When he would not yield upon receiving a heavier skirmish fire, the battalion advanced against him with levelled bayonets in closed company front and took possession of the entire wood. Once past the wood, the battalion formed up again and, driving the enemy back [all the time], moved at dusk into the enemy position, where there were already troops from the left wing.

The Osnabrück Battalion, commanded by the brigadier in person, advanced against the enemy, leaving Hougoumont to its right. It ran into a square of the enemy Guard in the lower ground and dispersed it in a bayonet attack. On this occasion, Colonel Halkett in person took General Cambronne prisoner. The battalion moved into the enemy position, also always driving the enemy ahead, who was in the greatest disorder.

The two Bremervorde and Quackenbruck Battalions remained in then position taken up at three o`clock until evening, the followed the advancing line to the edge of the Hougoumont wood, without having done battle. They there spent the night.

The losses of the brigade in the battle were killed, 1 captain, 3 subaltern officers, 2NCOs, 53 men; wounded, 2 staff officers, 2 captains, 9 subaltern officers, 6 NCOs, 3 drummers, 157 men.

1st Brigade of the King's German Legion

The brigade under the command of Colonel du Plat stood at the retired right wing. It remained there after three o`clock, having wheeled into open column to be protected as much as possible against the artillery fire. [15]

The enemy cavalry repeated its attacks on the plateau, forced the artillery to go back, and moved on between the squares of infantry almost to the left flank of the brigade, which has to change front, together with the British brigade that was part of the [2nd] Division. The column then changed direction towards Hougoumont. But since the enemy cavalry remained on the plateau on this side of Hougoumont, the battalions immediately formed squares. The rearmost ones moved to the left from the column, while steadily advancing towards the plateau. The brigade commander was shot dead as this happened.

The square of the 2nd Battalion, being in front and just moving towards Hougoumont, was about to open fire against the line of enemy cavalry, when [that cavalry] already leaving the field, they were induced to do so by the advance of the squares and the fire of the batteries that had moved up at the same time. The square now moved close to Hougoumont, where it became exposed to the vigorous fire of the enemy tirailleurs in the orchard. There was little choice but to quickly assault the enemy in the ditches and to seize the orchard. This was then done, and after the battalion had gained a part of the broken terrain in this way, it gradually seized more of it from the enemy. However, his resistance stiffened to a point that some Brunswick battalion were sent in support. The battalion now fought on the broken terrain for the rest of the day with varying success, until in the evening the enemy was completely driven out with the help of the Salzgitter Battalion that had been drawn up. As soon as that had happened, the battalion was formed up on the other side of the wood and then advanced as far as La Belle Alliance.

The squares of the 3rd and 4th Battalions remained at first on the plateau from which the enemy cavalry had departed. The 1st Battalion was now moving onto the terrain where several of our batteries had been standing before the charges of the enemy cavalry, and where a number of unmanned artillery pieces had been left. An enemy infantry column,

supported by cavalry, attempted to regain this position, but was driven back by the battalion, and then moved sideways into the wood at Hougoumont. The cavalry, however, had charged twice but was beaten back. As the square had suffered heavily, it was combined into a single square with the 3rd Battalion that was standing next to it. A short time later, the squares were forcefully charged by the cavalry of the enemy Guard. The men, having loaded with two balls, firmed calmly and at point blank range so that this cavalry had to fall back with great loss, which was still increased by the two divisional batteries. Towards seven o`clock the two squares moved back a short distance on the plateau to reform their ranks. This had hardly been completed, when the Duke of Wellington gave the order in person to move in line against, and seize, [17] the batteries on the opposite side. This was done immediately. The battalions still received a few canister rounds before the artillery crews left their pieces [i.e. their guns on carriages]. The enemy was fleeing everywhere in great disorder and the battalions moved into the enemy position.

The losses of the brigade were: killed, 1 colonel, 5 captains, 2 subaltern officers, 7 NCOs, 2 drummers, 93 men: wounded, 3 staff officers, 3 captains, 14 subaltern officers, 24 NCOs, 327 men.

1st Hanoverian Brigade

The brigade under the command of Major General Count von Kielmansegge stayed at the position in the first line of the centre, about 200 paces to the right of the Genappe highway, which it had taken on the previous evening. The area of the plateau, on which it was standing, was level and without any observations on the terrain. Upon the beginning of the enemy artillery fire, it moved behind a country road which here connects the Genappe and Nivelles highways. It now stood about 300 paces off the crest of the plateau. The brigade has to form closed columns of two battalions standing side by side, one of these in left in front the other in right of front formation to allow a rapid deployment in line or square. In the latter case, it was decided that two battalions were to form a single square because of their low strengths. The Brigade's 5th Battalion stood by itself to be used according to circumstances. One of the two Jäger companies formed a line of advance posts before the brigade on the slope of the plateau; the other, together with a detachment of 100 riflemen, half of them each, from the Luneburg and Gruhenhagen Battalions, was sent to the wood of Hougoumont, where there was a lack of light troops. This detachment stayed there throughout the day and contributed to the tenacious defence of this outpost.

12.00pm - 2pm

From the beginning of the battle, the enemy kept up a heavy cannonade against the part of the line that was held by the brigade. However, the richocheting fire inflicted greater damage on the Nassau infantry regiment that stood in the 2nd line, than on the brigade. The two batteries attach to the 3rd Division and a third one had been placed at the crest of the elevation in front of the brigade, and suffered heavily. They were relieved several times by other batteries, which either quickly ran out of ammunition or were demolished within a short time and left some pieces standing. Several powder wagons blew up in front of, and close to, the brigade. [17]

[La Haye Sante]

The brigade's losses on this day were: killed, 2 staff officer, 1 captain, 2 subaltern officers, 4 NCOs, 159 men; wounded, 3 staff officers, 4 captains, 12 subaltern officers, 16 NCOs, 5 hornists, 375 men.

The total casualties of the last three days, the 16th, 17th and 18th, were: 40 officers and 900 men.

2nd Brigade of the King's German Legion

The brigade under the command of Colonel von Ompteda stood at the centre in the first line, with its left flank adjoining the Charleroi highway. The 2nd Light Battalion, commanded by Major Baring, was detached to the defence of La Haye Sainte. The battalions numbered not even 350 men [each].

Until about two o`clock the brigade suffered from heavy artillery fire. As the enemy infantry and cavalry moved up, the 2nd Light Battalion was soon surrounded in the farm and had to abandon the orchard that had been occupied by 100 men. But it put up a determined defence of the buildings, as the men fired out of the windows and through loopholes in the walls they had opened up with their rifle butts. Around three o`clock, the garrison was reinforced by two companies of the 1st Light Battalion of about 100 men, each, and then by the light company of the 5th Line Battalion, and still later by 200 riflemen of the Nassau Regiment. The enemy attacked three or four times this day, each time in the same pattern with two battalions or regiments. One went straight for the buildings, whereas the other moved against the left side, sending out swarms of tirailleurs. During the last attack, the enemy also moved up artillery against the buildings, and the barn started to burn but the fire was extinguished. Towards six o`clock in the evening the garrison had used up all of its ammunition. As the enemy noticed that there was little return fire, he scaled the wall and forced his way through the entrances of the farm, of which there were five including one that has remained unobstructed during the whole day. The garrison fell back into the building and withdrew by a back door in constant hand-to-hand fighting with the enemy.

The three battalions of the brigade [remaining] on the plateau, standing about 400 paces behind La Haye Sainte, were also ordered to drive back the infantry columns that were moving up. The 1st Light Battalion had, at this time, taken up position in the hollow way which runs from the Charleroi highway to Hougoumont. Disregarding the enemy on its front, it moved to the left of the highway and attacked with great success the left flank of the enemy attack column that had moved against our left wing. When [that column] was attacked at the same time in front by the infantry in the position to the right [left] by the Scottish [20] Brigade, and in particular by the cavalry, it soon fell into disorder, and the battalion pursued it for a consideration distance, together with the cavalry. It then returned to its former position in the hollow way, and, for the rest of the day, fired from her at the enemy whenever, he appeared on this side of La Haye Sainte, or advanced against him in the ditches of the highway, as soon as he went past the abattis.

The 8th and 5th Line Battalions had to move against enemy infantry which had attacked and gone past La Haye Sainte in close formation. [Our Battalions] had begun their froward move in line when the enemy cavalry fell upon them after roving on the plateau, following the failed charged against the nearby squares of the 1st Hanoverian Brigade. The 5th Battalion still received timely support from the British cavalry to its rear, and thus had minor losses. The 8th Battalion had moved up closer to the enemy infantry and was about to attack it with the bayonet, already seeing it turn around, when it was completely surprised by the cavalry and, for its major part, cut to pieces and dispersed, before the British cavalry was able to drive off the enemy. The officer who carried the colours received three severe wounds, and the colours were then lost. The small remainder of the battalion was assembled on the ridge behind the hollow way, where it remained for the rest of the day, being unfit for any further attack.

[la Haye Sainte]

The brigades losses. . .[48]

Pflung-Harttung concludes his letter:

Major Kuhlmann's Horse Battery of the King's German Legion

At the beginning of the battle, the battery had a British battery of the Guards Division, to which it belonged, had moved up onto the plateau behind Hougoumont, about 400 paces to the left of the farm. Right on half past eleven o`clock, it started firing at the advancing infantry, which was forced to move to the left behind the wood of Hougoumont, where it then began its attack. When, after several hours, the enemy cavalry spread out everywhere on the plateau, the much damaged artillery retreated to a ridge further to the rear and, towards evening, moved back to its former position.

The losses of the battery in killed and wounded were: 12 men and 18 horses.

Battery of Captain Cleeves

At the beginning of the battle, the battery with two other batteries had moved up to the crest of the plateau, to the right rear of La Haye Sainte and in front of the 3rd Division. It opened the battle with its firing at the infantry that advanced against Hougoumont. The enemy [cannon] fire towards this point was very effective. Some adjoining batteries had to leave their demolished cannon standing, so had the battery [Cleeve's] in the case of one of its pieces. As the attacks of the enemy cavalry became more numerous, it drew back to a position between the squares where it remained until it had used up all of its ammunition. It then retrieved to Mont St Jean to replenish its ammunition, but was only able to advance again in the evening, after the enemy had made his last attack. It remained in the position that it had held in the morning.

Its losses were: killed, 1 officer, 1 NCO, 7 men; wounded, 2 officers, 2 NCOs, 10 men, 10 horses.[49]

[undated] Colonel Sattler reports for the 1st Battalion, 2nd Nassau Regiment:

On 17 June at ten o`clock in the morning, I received orders from the commander of the 2nd [Netherlands] Division, Lieutenant General von Perponcher, to have the regiment follow the rearward movement of the division. I arrived in the morning in the line of Mont St Jean, where the allied army had already taken up position. This regiment stood to its left flank of the army and had only the Orange [Nassau] Regiment to its left. In the night from the 17th to the 18th, bivouac was set up in this position.

On 18 June at nine o`clock in the morning, an orderly officer of the Duke of Wellington brought me an order to detach the 1st Battalion of the regiment of the Hougoumont farm on the extreme right flank of the army. Commanded by Captain Büsgen, this battalion marched off immediately to its destination. He defended this farmstead throughout the course of the battle, notwithstanding all the buildings having been reduced to ashes by enemy artillery fire, nor the repeated most violent attacks by the enemy infantry on this post. At eleven o'clock in the morning, I had the 2nd and 3rd Battalions move forward several hundred paces from the position held during the night, thereby facing [154] column turn in our direction, I had these farms occupied by strong skirmisher detachments with strong reserves from both battalions. All enemy attacks made on these farms during the course of the day were steadfastly repulsed. That part of the two battalions which had remained in the line was continuously exposed to the fire of the enemy artillery. A column of English light cavalry stood on the extreme left flank of the 2nd Regiment; as far as I can remember, it was mostly made up by the Hanoverian Legion. The aforementioned position was not changed throughout the entire battle until, towards evening, the Prussians arrived from Wavre and a general advance of the allied army was ordered. Upon nightfall, I had the 2nd and 3rd Battalion set up bivouac at the highway from Brussels to Charleroi, and on 19 June I had the 1st Battalion rejoin the regiment on the march to France.

Sattler, Colonel[50]

[undated] Captain Moritz Büsgen reports for the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Ducal Regiment:

The interior of this rectangle was divided into two parts by the residential building and an archway with a gate. The upper part consisted of the large residential building and the farm buildings, the lower part of the stables and barns. Each section had a large gate, the upper facing towards the enemy position, the lower towards the opposite side.

Captain Moritz Büsgen reports for the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Ducal Regiment:

On the morning of the 18th June, the Ducal 2nd Regiment Nassau was positioned on the left wing of the allied army when its 1st Battalion under my command (800 men) was ordered to immediately break camp and march to, and occupy, the Hougoumont farm located before the right wing of the centre. Shortly after, at about half past nine o'clock, it was led by one of the Duke of Wellington's ADC's past the front of the army to this position. The farm was in the shape of an elongated closed rectangle of which three sides were enclosed by buildings, its left side, however, partly by a garden wall and buildings. The interior of this rectangle was divided into two parts by the residential building and an archway with a gate. The upper part consisted of the large residential building and the farm buildings, the lower part of the stables and barns. Each section had a large gate, the upper facing towards the enemy position, the lower towards the opposite side. To the left and adjoining the farm was the vegetable garden, on its front and left sides enclosed by a wall 5 to 6 feet high, and on its rear by a hedge. This wall bordered on its front into a wooded area (with tall trees) and, a few paces before that, was masked by a not very dense hedge. To the left of the vegetable garden was an orchard, however without access to the former. On its front it was enclosed by a hedge which was in line with that of the garden wall, but it was open on its rear. The buildings and the vegetable garden were concealed from the enemy by the wood in front.

On my arrival with the battalion, the farm and garden were unoccupied; a company of Brunswick Jäger stood on the furthest edge of the wood. A battalion of English Guards of the Coldstream Regiment under the command of Colonel Macdonell was partly deployed behind the farm, partly in a hollow way behind the said gardens, parallel with the lower part of the former [the farm].

From the existing defence preparation (barricading of the upper gate, loopholes cut in same, and part of them in the garden wall) it was obvious that this post had already been occupied [by other troops]; there was also an ample supply of infantry ammunition in one of the rooms of the dwelling house, as was discovered later.

I immediately undertook the dispositions I deemed necessary for the defence: the grenadier company I stationed in the buildings and two companies in the adjoining vegetable garden; I placed one company behind the hedge of the orchard, the voltigeurs [light company] moved into line with the previously mentioned Brunswick Jäger, and one company served these as a reserve being placed at some distance to their rear.

This deployment was barely completed when at eleven o'clock in the morning the enemy (Jerome Bonaparte's division) began his attack on the wood with a heavy cannonade with shell and case shot. Swarms of tirailleurs then pressed forward, supported by formed troop bodies, and after tenacious resistance of the three companies posted there, pushed these back towards the farm and the gardens. Closely pursued by the enemy, the retiring troops fell back, partly to the right around the buildings, partly to the left [through the opening] between the garden wall and the hedge of the orchard into the orchard. Kept back by the murderous fire directed at close quarters at the enemy, from buildings, garden wall, and the orchard hedge, he was put to flight at great loss by the combined attack of the already mentioned English Guards battalions, who had moved into the orchard, and who pursued him into the wood. It proved impossible, however, to drive him out of the wood completely during the remainder of the battle, as he was always reinforced by fresh troops. The English battalion afterwards returned to its earlier position. The Brunswick Jäger company, after bravely helping repel the enemy and suffering heavily, rejoined its corps on the main position. Towards one o'clock, the enemy renewed his attack and advanced in a great rush against the buildings and gardens, and attempted to escalade the garden wall and to gain a footing behind the orchard hedge, but was chased off by the skirmish fire from the garden wall and repulsed at all points. During the attack, the enemy set fire to large stacks of hay and straw close to the farm in an attempt to make it spread to the buildings, but without success. Between two and three o'clock, the enemy then moved up a battery to the right side of the farm

and [157] started a heavy cannonade with his guns and howitzers on the buildings. It did not take long, and they were all in flames.

The enemy now for the third time made a rash attack, which was mainly directed at the buildings. Aided by the smoke and flames, his grenadiers forced their way into the upper courtyard through a small side door; they were, however, driven out again by the fire from the building windows and the advance through the lower gate and courtyard of a detachment of the already mentioned English battalion. Some intruders were taken prisoner, but seven of our grenadiers were also captured by the enemy during this action. This action, which ended about half past three o'clock, was the enemy's last serious attempt on the Hougoumont position; the skirmish fire, however, lasted with hardly an interruption until the end of the battle.

Neither upon my being detached, nor during this entire period, was a commander named to me under whose orders I was to operate. No allied troops were drawn up near Hougoumont to either its right or left. If I mention in this account only the battalion of the Coldstream Regiment of the English Guards, then it is because I had seen no other troops sent in support of the battalion under my command; I do not know if and what other troops were later detached to reinforce this position. Due to the continuing fighting, and the view restricted by trees, hedges and walls, I was unable to observe what was happening at a distance.

The battalion occupied this position throughout the night, and, upon receipt of orders, joined the regiment on the Nivelles road on the morning of 19 June.

Büsgen, Major[51]

[No date] Pflugk-Harttung's letter to Colonel Hugh Halkett to Major von Hammerstien

The fact that Salzgitter Battalion under Your Excellency's command was not mentioned in the report on the battle of 18 June can only have been caused by the loss of my original battle report to His Excellency, General von Alten. I was able to name only the Osnabrück Battalion until the last [38] moment, while yours had to operate on its own. In the meantime, I have already expressed to you in person, and repeat it herewith, that your battalion distinguished itself in the battle in particular with the seizing and occupation of the well known wood [at Hougoumont]. This I have not only brought to the attention of His Excellency, General von Alten, but will do everything to assure that he extends to you his appropriate recognition.

H. Halkett, Colonel and Brigadier[52]

Lieutenant von Brandis, Aide de Camp to Colonel Baron Ompteda:

The assault of the French upon the garden of Chateau Hougoumont failed before the determined resistance of the defenders. But they renewed their attempts with greater numbers; the small wood in front of the chateau was lost, was retaken and lost once more; even part of the chateau went up in flames; this important post was nevertheless held by the stourt-hearted defenders.[53]

[morning of the 18th]

At 6 o'clock [am], Brigade Major Coustoll reconnoitred the area of Smohain and Frichermont, whereupon four companies of the 2st Battalion, 28th Regiment, were posted at the two locations, around 8 o'clock, His Royal Highness in person inspected the line and thanks [sic] to his untiring efforts some foodstuffs had arrived. The ammunition was replenished and the arms were made battle ready. At 9 o'clock, His Royal Highness ordered 800 men of the division to be sent to the right wing, for which the 1st Battalion, 2nd Light Regiment Nassau, was despatched. This battalion, under the command of Captain Büsgen, took possession of the farmstead of Hougoumont. It consisted of a large building within a garden, surrounded by a wall in which loopholes were made, as were also in the doors and roofs of the building. To the right of this farmstead was a small wood, in which three companies were stationed while the three remaining companies took position in the garden and buildings as time permitted.

[109]

In a vigorous attack, the French at first took the wood of Hougoumont. Our troops retreated into the farmstead, which General Reille now attacked with the 1st Corps [2nd Corps]. Towards 2 o'clock, after an extended and violent cannonade the attack on our central commenced, to which Bonaparte had assigned the 1st Corps. Regiment uon regiment followed in the assault on La Haye Sainte. Every inch of terrain was conquered with blood; there was corpses everywhere; the position remained in our hands. In the meantime, three attack columns, led by Count d'Erlon, moved against our position, with the 103rd (or 105th) Regiment at their head. The enemy crossed the ravine, protected from our fire, and drove back our skirmishers. Having approached to within fifty paces, no shot had yet been fired, but our soldiers could no longer be restrained. They began firing by ranks, but our soldiers could not longer be restrained. They began firing by ranks, but the enemy kept advancing bravely. In this attack, the brigade stood in two ranks, which caused the firing to be weak and poorly sustained. As a few of our files were overthrown, some gaps opened in the line through which the enemy column now advanced. Everything before its front was forced to give away; however, the platoons on our flanks attached themselves with great *sangfroid* to our nearest troops.

[p110 omited]

[undated] 'Report on the Corps of Troops of his Serene Highness the Duke of Brunswick fro m the 15th to and including the 18th June of 1815 with two plans'

Towards 1 o'clock, the corps eventually received orders to march off left and take position in the first line. The farmstead of Hougoumont, located in front of the right wing of our army, would have greatly facilitated an attack on our position, had it been in the enemy's hands. It was attacked by the enemy's 2nd Infantry Corps, and specifically by Prince Jérôme Napoleon's Division as early as 12 o'clock.

The corps was posted on the crest of the plateau behind the farm, and the Avantgarde was immediately detached to its garden [orchard] in support of an English regiment of Guards of Byng's Brigade which defended it. The Leib [ie Beloved] and 1st Light Battalions were posted close to its rear on an elevation, to cover it and serve as a reserve; in front of the former was the horse battery. The other battalions of the corps formed up alongside and behind the country road which ran along the plateau, with the left flank adjoining the English battalions of the centre. The English artillery was emplaced before the entire line and kept up a vigours cannonading duel with that of the enemy. The Hussar Regiment of the English German Legion, as was the foot battery. The enemy artillery moved forward and attacked us with a heavy cannonade. Our troops were somewhat protected by the height in front of them, but the charges of the well directed projectiles frequently struck the columns and caused significant losses. During this time, the Avantgarde was strongly engaged in the defence of Hougoumont were it defended the park[1] of the chateau most tenaciously and repulsed the enemy's attack.[54]

[. . .]

From 4 to 7 o'clock
The enemy now had Foy's and Bachelu's infantry divisions advance in columns in order to support the attack to be commenced upon Hougoumont and to give time to the cavalry to reform. While present at our corps, the Duke of Wellington ordered the 44th and 95th Regiments, and the 2nd and 3rd Light Battalions and the 2nd Line Battalions to move down the height against the enemy. These advancing columns came under heavy canister and small arms fire; entire files were mown down in no time at all. The enemy had observed and effectiveness of his fire and now repeated his cavalry attacks with the support of horse artillery. The battalions, that had advanced, repulsed all attacks but were forced to retire onto the plateau having suffered several losses. The Duke of Wellington again gave the order to advance; the three just mentioned battalions, having the two English regiments to their left, again passed over the height and descended down the forward slope. But this time, after having repulsed the cavalry attacks, they were again forced to withdraw to their former location due to the most violent fire from the enemy. This point they always held, although at this position a large part of the artillery had been completely demolished. In support of the advancing infantry, the cavalry of the [Brunswick] Corps and the three cavalry regiments of the English German Legion mentioned earlier moved forward, after attacks had been repulsed, and pursued the enemy. Always yielding before a renewed and stronger enemy charge, our vcavalry reformed each time behind our squares, from where they counter attacked and thereby continued the action. During this phase of the battle Colonel Olfermann, Commander of the corps, was wounded by a shot in his right hand and had to leave the battlefield, and command of the corps passed on the Quartermaster General Lieutenant Colonel von Heinemann. Majors von Brandenstein and Ebeling were here also severely wounded.

On this occasion, two extraordinary feats are to be mentioned:

1. Cavalry Sergeant Eggeling of the Hussar Regiment, a brave soldier, full of gighting ardour, was always one of the first against the enemy and was a shining example to his comrades. He is now a retired lieutenant and holder of the Guelphic Medal and of the Distinguished Service Cross, 2nd Class, of the Order of Henry the

[1] Glover posits that 'park' represents the walled garden, however, it is more likely that it is the meadow to the south and east and east. This is the formal'Wilderness' illustrated on the plan of 1777.

Lion.

2. Uhlan Liendemann wounded the commander of the French cuirassiers while close before their front, but was himself wounded by a shot through his neck. He was awarded the Guilphic Medal and the just mentioned 2nd Class of the Distinguished Service Cross.

At the same time, the enemy had the division of Prince Jérôme Napoleon repeat its attack upon Hougoumont, supported by artillery and Piré's light cavalry division. The buildings were set on fire with incediary fire, and the garrison was driven out into the park which was defended step by step by the English regiment of Guards together with our Avantgarde who eventually had to yield to the enemy's superior numbers. On Lord Hill's order, the Leib Battalion was sent to the park when it was already too late, because the dispersed English and Brunswickers, driven out of the park, hardly had time to form up and defend themselves against the enemy's light cavalry. After this attack had been repulsed, the Leib Battalion moved forward and took up position in part of the park, while the English Guards Regiment formed up again, and advanced to the right of Hougoumont and there took its stand. Next to it, the Avantgarde Battalion also had formed up.

At the same time, the 1st Light Battalion was detached to move into the park; having the Leib Battalion on its left flank, it maintained laison with it by a line of skirmishers, whereupon the enemy infantry was driven out of the park. The two battalions formed in columns after they after in the open on the far side of Hougoumont.

It was in this action that Major von Bülow, second commander of the Avantgarde, was wounded.

From 7 to 8 o'clock

The moment of decision was approaching; Napoleon believed that he could still launch a decisive thrust against the centre of the allied army, although he was pressed hard by the Prussians on his right flank. He therefore had set his Guard in motion. Four battalions of the middle Guard and 4 batteries advanced upon La Haye Sainte, followed by the 8 [160] battalions of the Old Guard. On our side, masses of troops and artillery were marshalled at this decisive point against the desperate attack of the most seasoned and valiant warriors of the French army. Our cops was also ordered to quicly move there. The battalions closest to the centre (4.5.6.7.8) at once marched off by the left. That movement was soon followed by the battalions at the Hougoumont positions (1.2.3) and by our cavalry.[55]

General Hugh Halkett's account:

The Hanoverian Infantry Brigade under my command on the day of the Battle of Waterloo, consisting of the Osnabrück, Salzgitter, Bremervörde and Quakenbrück Battalions, was employed, besides other troop bodies, in the defence of the orchards surrounding Chateau Hougoumont for a long period of time. We were involved there in some hot engagements.

At that moment, I had only the Osnabrück Battalion near me, which stood next to the eastern hedge in an open field, the other battalions were still situated between the hedges in the orchards of Hougoumont. I followed Adam's Brigade, but sent my Aide de camp, Capatin August vonSaffe of the 1st Line Battalion of the German Legion, to the other battalions to bring them the order to follow us without delay. During our advance, Captain von Saffe was killed before transmitting the order to the other battalions. This then did not follow.

In the meantime, I had advanced with the Osnabrück Battalion, about in line with Adam's Brigade, against three battalions of Napoleon's Old Guard. These fired at us and we returned the fire while we moved closer to them. They turned about and retired, we followed. They turned around once more and fired another volley that we did not leave unanswered.[56]

Ludwig von Wissel *Glorious Feats* (Hanover, 1846): 4th Line Battalion, KGL, action at Hougoumont, Rifleman Henry Rohlfs, ano officer attested to the bravery of this man as follows:

After the combined light companies of the four line battalions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th) together with the 2nd Line battalion, had driven the enemy out of the orchard of Hougoumont on 18th June 1815, I and Rohlfs happened to be at the left wing of the skirmish line in a ditch behind a hedge. Apparently not noticing us, and enemy capaint on horseback came close to us; I jumped up and grabbed the horse's bridle, but had to let go again if Rohlfs had not come to my aid and taken the captain prisoners. That man offered his watch and purse to Rohlfs, but he nobly declined to take them.

During the brief period of our presence in that orchard, Rohlfs managed to shoot down some 12 to 14 enemy tiraileurs and two officers; before he fired he said to me each time: 'Sir, now it's that one's turn' and each time the target dropped to the ground. But then he was wounded himself and fell down; he now, in a prone position from behind his knapsack, shot down a few more enemies. Soon thereafter we took part in the advance.[57]

But before we enter upon this terrible subject, let us for a moment attend more minutely to the positions chosen by the contending armies. Nothing that concerns Waterloo should be lost. Every spot should be dear to Britain, because even clod of earth is wet with the blood of her bravest sons. Every footstep attests her prowess, every object recalls to the memory of the beholder her glory– her security and their fame.

The army, under the command of his Grace the Duke of Wellington, was, as we have already noticed, posted about a mile in front of Waterloo, at the point where the position crossed the highroads leading from Brussels to Charleroy and Nivelles. Its right was thrown back to a Ravine near Merke Braine, which village was occupied. Its left extended to a height above the Hamlet Ter la Haye, which was likewise occupied. In [288] front of the right centre and near the Nivelle, road his Grace occupied the house and garden of Hougomont, or Chateau Goumont, which covered the return of that flank, and in front of the left centre he occupied the farm of la Haye Sainte *(the Holy Hedge.)* On the whole position, extending nearly a mile and a half, there was about 112 guns, British and German. The left wing communicated through Ohain with Marshal Blücher at Wavre. The British troops were posted in three lines: some few light troops in front; a line of guns on the brow of the hill; the first line of infantry behind them, under the lee of the hill, in squares, each regiment forming its own: behind, more infantry, cavalry, guns, &c. with a reserve of Dutch troops on the right. The Prussian army which began to move at break of day, was placed as follows, viz. the 4th and 2d corps marched from Wavre, by St. Lambert, where they were to take a position covered by the forest, near Frischermont, in order to take the enemy in the rear when the moment should appear favourable. The 1st corps was to operate by Ohain on the right flank of the enemy. Their line in the evening, extended about a mile and a quarter. The 3d corps was at Wavre, and was directed to follow the others in case of need. The French army was posted on a range of heights, in the front of the army under the command of the British General. The 1st corps was placed with its left on the road to Brussels, in front of the village of Mount St Jean and opposite the centre of the allied army. This corps had not been engaged on the 16th, and was consequently entire and 25,000 strong. The 2d corps had its right on the road to Brussels, and its left upon a small wood, within cannon shot of the English army. This was the corps which was so hotly engaged at Quatre Bras, where it lost 4200 men, of course about 21,000 remained. These two corps were still therefore, 46,000 strong. The formidable cuirassiers, amounting to 12,000 men[1] were in reserve behind; and the Guards, from 30 to 40,000 strong, or say only 30,000, reserve on the heights. The 6th corps, or reserve, which Soult said was not engaged on the 16th, and consequently entire, or 25,000 strong; with the cavalry of General d'Aumont, under the chief command of Count Lobau, was destined to proceed in the rear of their [289] right in order to oppose a Prussian corps in that quarter. The rest of the cavalry were with the Guards and the other two corps of the army, and altogether amounted to at least 14,000 men besides the cairassiers. To these we must add perhaps 8 or 10,000 artillerymen and engineers. The united numbers, taking the Guards at 30,000 will then make 137,000 men but from which we have to deduct the loss of the Guards on the 16th which suppose 2000, still leaves 135,000 men. The 3d and 4th corps, commanded by Vandamme and Girard, were dispatched under Grouch, on the preceding evening to get in the rear of the Prussian army. They had with them *"a large corps of cavalry,"*[2] which must have been above 7000, when we find that 5000 survived the sanguinary affair at Wavre, and the disastrous retreat from that place. These two corps were those which suffered most in the battle of Ligny, and, therefore, were not now near so strong as any of the rest; as they must certainly have lost 10,000 men on that day. Thus the reader will perceive that Bonaparte kept all his corps that were most entire, or that had not previously suffered much, in order to attack the British army for the corps of cavalry, dispatched under Grouchy, was also one of these which suffered most on the 16th. Over his whole position there

[1]This number I learned from private authority

[2]Drouet's speech Chamber of Peers, June 23d, 1815.

was 60 batteries of cannon, (Austrian Official Report.) His front when extended to meet the Prussians, was above two miles and a half. With regard to the natural strength of the respective positions, the reader, upon turning to the map, will perceive from the course of the rivers or rather rivulets, that the country occupied by the armies was the most elevated ground in those parts, and which rises from every quarter as you approach it. The whole forms numerous ridges without any very prominent eminences. The vallies betwixt these are intersected with Ravines. For half a league in advance of Waterloo the ground invariably rises to Mount St. Jean. It is interspersed as it rises with ridges like the waves of the sea, wave behind wave. At the right extremity of the front of this greatest elevation, is situated the farm house and chateau called Hougomont or Chateau Goumont. Around the premises is a wall, and a wood of several acres consisting of young trees about 12 or 14 feet in height. This wood is intersected with natural [290] hedges and ditches. In the centre of the eminence, occupied by the British army, is the village of Mount St. Jean. "The Duke," said General de Borgo, "placed his batteries on the elevated ridge, occupied the farm and the garden, and ranged his army along the eminence, protected by its height from the fire of the enemy".[1] The whole position was beautiful without being very strong. "It was very good," said General Alava, "but towards the centre it had various weak points, which required good troops to guard them, and much science and skill on the part of the General in chief. These qualifications were, however, to be found in abundance in the British troops nd their illustrious Commander". The position occupied by the Prussians, at the close of the day, joined the British at Ter la Haye. From that place the ridge which forms Mount St. Jean, turns first in a South and then in a South-west direction by Frischermont towards Planchenoit. Its front, opposite the French position, rose like an amphitheatre in several swells or ridges each higher than the other but all inferior in height to the chief ridge. At their foot was a valley from whence the ground again rose in an elevated chain towards the position of the enemy. On the front opposite, and nearly on similar ground, with a valley between the allies and them, and also between their centre and their right wing, the French army was posted. All these eminences were bristled with artillery. The country around is generally open, groups of trees only appearing behind Frischermont, Planchenoit, Mon Plaisir, and near the so much talked of Observatory. Several villages and farm houses rose amidst those fields, which were cultivated in the highest manner, and covered chiefly with rye, at this season of the year in the utmost luxuriance of vegetation. From the incessant rain all the ground was very soft; and, in some new plowed fields, the troops could not move without sinking to the calf of the leg. All the inhabitants had fled from the villages and hamlets for several miles round except the gardener at Hougomont, and at the farm of Mount St. Jean, where, it is said, the farmer's wife remained throughout the day, locked up in a garret while the combat raged with the utmost fury in the lower parts of the dwelling. In the rear of those [291] memorable fields lies the vast forest of Soigny, consisting chiefly of beeches, extremely tall and beautiful. Through this forest for several miles, runs the great road from Brussels to the frontiers. In passing the position which we have just described, the British General, on the preceding year, remarked that it was the spot which he should choose were he ever called upon to defend Brussels. Little did he at that moment imagine, that he should so soon be called upon to defend Brussels; and still less could he think that it would be against such aa enemy.

Such was the ground and such were the positions of the mighty hosts, which at Waterloo contended for the fate of Europe. The shades of a short, but gloomy, rainy, and uncomfortable night were past. The morning of the 18th *(Sunday)* dawned. Like the night it was cheerless and rainy. Dark and sullen clouds obscured the face of heaven, and blackened the approach of this eventful and bloody day. No Sun of Austerlitz here shed his morning beams on those ranks, which looked upon such omens, as an infallible sign of victory. With the morning arose thousands who were destined never to see the dawn of another. Stiff, and almost motionless, from having slept in the open fields and under such deluges of rain, the officers and soldiers awoke, and began to prepare for battle. Yet in this deplorable situation, the only feeling which was uppermost in their minds, was, least they should not be able to do their duty in the combat which was approaching. The rain continued. The day advanced. But "at nine o'clock", said the enemy, "the

[1]Gen. de-Borgo's letter to Prince Wolkousky (Russian official.)

rain was somewhat abated".[1] Breaking through the masses of dark clouds which rolled along the atmosphere, about ten o'clock the Sun made his appearance, and for a moment cast his enlivening rays over those fields as yet cheerful and bloodless. What a prospect he beheld from Braine la Leude lo the Dyle! With a dazzling lustre his beams were reflected, from the unsullied bayonets and glittering helmets of 300,000, warriors ready and eager for battle.

"All dreadful glar'd the iron face of war,
Bristled with upright spears, that flash'd afar
Dire was the gleam of breastplates, helms, and shield,
And polished arms emblaz'd the flaming fields: [292]
Tremendous scene! that general horror gave
But touched with joy the bosom of the brave"[2]

At this moment the trumpet sounded the dreadful note of preparation. The troops under Wellington were in the act of preparing their breakfast when *aid-de-camps* passing through their ranks proclaimed that the enemy was moving. The allied troops stood to their arms. The British artillery moved to the front. The enemy advanced. Every thing was arranged for attack--every thing prepared to repel! The armies brave. The leaders experienced, and famous throughout the world. The security of Europe and the general peace of mankind depended upon the issue of their exertions.

Before entering upon the terrible details of this day, it may not be unnecessary to state for the better understanding the subject, that this battle may properly be divided into six great periods. The first was the impetuous attack upon the right, at Hougomont which lasted from half past 11A.M. till 1 P.M. The second was the dreadful attack from the centre to the left which lasted from 1 P.M. till 3. The third was the tremendous attack along the whole line, but severest towards the centre which lasted from 3 P.M. till past 6. The fourth was the terrible attack made by Napoleon at the head of his Guards, which lasted from half past 6 P.M. till 8. Included in these periods also is the *murderous* combat maintained by the Prussians against the French right wing. The fifth was the general attack upon the offensive, on the part of the allies, and the attempt of Bonaparte to resist it, which lasted from 8 P.M. till near 10. The sixth was the general route and pursuit, which lasted from 10 P.M. till near midnight, on the part of the British, and on the side of the Prussians all night. In each attack arose a multiplicity of sanguinary combats. Each of these grand attacks were equal in their consequences, to combats which in other wars had decided the fate of empires; and taking the loss upon an average, each cost both sides 20,000 men. Bonaparte, it is said, hurried on the contest, contrary to the advice of his best Officers. This, however, is perhaps merely a French story put forth to throw the blame on him. But the troops like their leader would brook no delay. The French masses formed rapidly. A terrible cloud of cavalry and cuirassiers hung [293] opposite the British right. From a deep column of Infantry which was afterwards known to be composed of the Imperial Guard, and also ascertained to be the head-quarters, where Bonaparte himself was stationed, numerous officers were seen, from time to time, passing to and fro in all directions. These were carrying the necessary and the definitive orders. Immediately after this, Bonaparte passed before the line, and addressed the troops in order to encourage them to greater exertions. He reminded them of their former victories. He pointed out them the consequences of defeat in the present instance. He held out to them honours and rewards. He pressed upon minds the glory which they would gain by vanquishing English, their ancient and most inveterate enemies, and great cause of all the opposition against them. He asked if they would suffer the newly organized troops of Holland, Belgium, and the petty States of Germany, once their servants, to vanquish them. He told them that the flower of the British army was all lost in America, and that it was only raw which Wellington had with him to oppose them.[3] Finally, he told them that a rich reward for all their toils lay before them, and was within their grasp. He promised them their pleasure in, and the plunder of the capital of the Netherlands. For, "to-night, said he, we shall

[1]French official account of the battle of the 18th

[2]Pope's Homer. Iliad, *Book* xviii. lines 430 &c .

[3]See Lord Grey's speech, House of Lord, May 23d--The idea was not lost upon Bonaparte.

be in Brussels." With such harangues, and such promises, did he stimulate his troops fury. It was near eleven o'clock before the arrangements were complete. What a moment! The armies, for a second, surveyed each other with deep attention. Behind their artillery, the allied army, formed in numerous squares, ranged similar to the men in a chess-board, presented a determined front to the enemy. The French army was astonished, but not intimidated at the firm countenances of their adversaries. They bad been led to believe that it would have been otherwise. They conceived, from the commencement of the retreat, that the British would no more attempt to make a stand before them, and, in their minds, beheld them flying to their ships in shame and confusion. These ideas animated them in their advance, and encouraged them to proceed with indescribable ardour. How much they were deceived, the [294] present appearances convinced them. Their leader was transported, when he beheld the British line determined to oppose him. "I have them then," said he, "these English." He calculated upon a complete triumph, and their annihilation. The French advanced in terrible masses. The allies stood in close squares to receive them. The battle began;

> "Squadrons on squadrons cloud the dusky plain;
> Men, steeds, and chariots, shake the trembling ground;
> The tumult thickens and the slues resound;
> And now with shouts the shocking armies clos'd,
> To lances lances, shields to shields oppos'd;
> Host against host with shadow legions drew;
> The sounding darts in iron tempests flew;
> Victors and vanquished join promiscuous cries;
> Triumphant shouts and dying groans arise;
> With streaming blood the slippry fields are dy'd,
> And slaughter d heroes swell the dreadful tide."[1]

With his usual shouts, and one of his corps, the enemy attacked the post of Hougomont with the utmost fury. The place was occupied by a detachment of General Byng's Brigade of guards, which was in position in its rear. For some time, the detachment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Macdonald, and afterwards by Colonel Home. The combat here was very obstinate. The place had been strengthened during the preceding night, as much as the time would allow; and it was now defended by the British troops with excessive obstinacy. The Nassau troops found it necessary to abandon their post in the wood and in the garden. The columns of the enemy immediately surrounded the house; and, on three sides at once, attacked it most desperately. But, after losing a great number of men in killed and wounded, he was obliged to desist from the enterprise. The impetuosity of the enemy's troops was incredible, and the fire of their artillery terrible. Every tree, every walk, every hedge, every avenue, were contended for with an obstinacy altogether inconceivable. The French were killed all round to the very door of the house; but they were never able to penetrate beyond the threshold. The house and a hay stack were at length set on fire and the combat continued hand to hand amidst the flames; in which many of the wounded, on both sides, were burned to death. This part of the British line was supported by 30 pieces of cannon. The [295] enemy bad made considerable progress at this point. Prince Jerome, who commanded a division of the 2d corps, and formed its extreme right, "at one o'clock", said the enemy, "was master of the wood, and the English army retired behind a curtain."[2] But they did not remain in that position. The Duke ordered fresh battalions to advance, who recovered the wood and garden; when the combat, which had at the same time extended to the main body of the army which supported this post, "ceased for a moment at this point."[3] From this time, we hear no more of Prince Jerome's operations; who seems very soon to have got behind *"a curtain"*. Worsted at this point, the enemy then made an attempt upon the left of the allied army in order to gain the road to Brussels. He opened an horrible fire from upwards of 200 pieces of artillery, upon the line under cover of which, Bonaparte, with his troops formed in two columns, made an attack upon the allied army from his centre to his right, and with such numbers, that it required the utmost skill of the British General to post his troops, and valour of the troops to resist it. The attempt against Hougomont was most severe; but "on this point," said Blücher, "he attacked with *fury,"* intending to throw the left wing of the allied army upon the centre and thus effect its separation from the Prussian army. This attack, and the

[1]Pope's Homer. Book viii. lines 72, 84.

[2]French official account of the battle of the 18th.

[3]Alava's do.

combat which ensued in consequence thereof, was of the severest description. The French soldiers were ordered to carry the positions of their adversaries at the point of the bayonet. La Haye Sainte was the enemy's first object. It was assailed with the utmost vigour, and as vigorously defended. Fresh battalions advanced to it support, fresh battalions to attack it. The place, though defended with the utmost obstinacy, was at last carried, after a sanguinary contest, in which all its brave defenders were cut to pieces. In one of these attacks, said the Duke of Wellington, the enemy penetrated to, and carried the farm house of La Haye Sainte, as "the detachment of the light battalion of the (German) legion, which occupied it, had expended all its ammunition, and the enemy occupied the only communication there was with them.[1] While the combat raged with the utmost violence at La Haye Sainte, the columns of the enemy passed forward. [58]

[. . .]

Every village, every hamlet, all the ravines, corn fields, and forests, were filled with wounded soldiers, who had crawled to these places for shelter, and whom, even when they were seen, it was, for several days after, found impossible to remove. It was as late as the Thursday following before all the wounded then discovered could be removed. On the 21st, says one who visited the field of battle, I saw in one group of wounded 36 out of 73 who had lost an arm or a leg, besides flesh wounds, while the roads, even on the 25th, were covered with waggon loads of wounded, shrieking with pain. On the morning after the battle, numbers of the wounded were seen raising themselves up amongst the heaps of dead, and imploring from the visitors, some a mouthful of water, others, that the beholders might put an end to their miseries. Every road in every part of the country, for 30 miles round, was full of wounded soldiers, wandering about in the extremes of agony and want. The Dutch and Belgians exerted themselves to reach their home, and the French their own country. After a damp day, on the 18th, the night became clear and chill, which had a fatal effect on the wounded. Thousands perished for want of timely medical aid. Many were found in cottages and obscure retreats, their bodies become half putrid from the severity of their wounds, yet still in life. Thousands were cut off in the extremes of hunger and distress. At the end of ten, twelve, and fifteen days, there were found in bye corners, wounded men who had preserved life by gnawing the flesh from the bodies of their dead comrades, or of horses, that chanced to be near them. Others, slightly wounded, were found several days after the battle, on the field, using the French cuirasses as frying pans to dress their scanty meals. Even in the rear of the allied position, such scenes of distress were numerous. From Waterloo to Brussels, the road, for nine miles, was so choked up with scattered baggage, that the wounded could with difficulty be brought along. The way was lined with unhappy wretches who had crept from the field; and many unable to proceed lay down and died. Holes dug by the side of the road formed their graves, while their tattered garments and accoutrements covered the surrounding lands. In [346] Brussels alone more than 23,000 wounded were assembled, where they were treated with the utmost kindness and attention. The people, in crowds went out to meet them with refreshments, bandages, &c. The principal families, and women of rank, supported them with every necessary, and frequently administered to their wants with their own hands. The treatment, however, of the French prisoners by the peasantry were different. These were treated with harshness; and these poor creatures now felt the severest want and neglect. By the British only were they treated with humanity. These were seen, though wounded themselves, binding up the wounds of their enemies. What a contrast in their conduct. Every thing on these fields, for a great extent, was laid waste. For five miles round, the country appeared like a sandy waste covered with hills and heaps of slain. The corn fields were so beaten that they resembled stubble. The ground was completely plowed up by the bullets, and the feet of horses, and cut into trenches by the wheels of the artillery. Scarcely a clod of earth but was wet with the best blood of Britain, and of Prussia, and with the fiercest blood of France. At Hougomont, every tree in the wood seemed as if blighted, and were pierced with cannon bullets. Some were pierced with twenty. Their branches were broken off and destroyed. Immense graves, and dreadful heaps of ashes, the remains of burnt bodies, marked this fatal spot. Broken swords, shattered helmets, torn epaulets, and sabre sashes, bathed in blood, shewed how furious and how destructive the battle had here been. Mixed with these were seen the flaring red poppy, rearing its head amidst the fresh dug mould, while the sweet little

[1] Wellington's dispatch, 19th June 1815.

wild flower, *"Forget-me-not,"* unconscious of the ruin near it, in a few days began to spread its beauties round the warriors grave. Soldiers caps, pierced with many a ball, belts, helmets, cuirasses, tattered clothes, cartouche boxes, military decorations, crosses of the Legion of honour, French novels, German testaments, packs of cards letters from lovers to the objects of their affection, from parents to their children, mangled bodies, legs, heads in the helmets intended to protect them, and arms, strewed in fearful confusion, lay along these bloody fields. But in vain would I attempt to describe a scene altogether indescribable.[59]

1816 John Booth publishes an early account of the battle with a description of the monuments of the battlefield. An extract of his description:

Hougomont

The Duke of Wellington having determined on the ground where he would wait the attack of the French army, observed, on the right of his position, an old Flemish chateau, properly called Gomont, by defending which, he judged that much advantage might be derived. It comprised an old tower, and chapel, and a number of offices, partly surrounded by a farmyard. It had also a garden, inclosed by a high strong brick wall, and round the garden, a wood of beech,[1] an orchard, and a hedge, by which the Wall was concealed; in another part, there was a pond, serving as a moat. Steps were taken to strengthen these means of defence, by loop-holing, or perforating the walls, for the fire of musquetry, and erecting scaffolding, to give the troops within an opportunity of firing from the top of the wall; and these judicious measures greatly assisted that successful resistance that was afterwards made against so many reiterated and desperate attacks. The enemy's cannon could only be brought to bear upon the upper part of the walls and buildings; and the great damage it received was by shells. [25]

On the evening of the 17th, the following troops were allotted for the defence: The second brigade of Guards commanded by Major-General Sir J. Byng, and two light companies of the first brigade. The force was disposed as follows: The light companies of the Coldstream, and Third Guards, under Lieut. Col. Macdonell, occupied the house and garden: those of the First regiment occupied the wood to the left; these were under the command of Lieut. Col. Lord Saltoun: the rest of the brigade was placed about two hundred yards in the rear, in a commanding situation, and in readiness to support the garrison if necessary. The whole amounted to from 1400 to 1500 men. To this force was added, immediately previous to the action, about 900 of the Nassau troops some of them, however, did not remain long; owing, it is said, to their not having been sufficiently supplied with ammunition.

The action commenced at thirty-five minutes past eleven o'clock. The force of the enemy employed in making this attack, was very great; it consisted of the whole of the 2d corps, under Comte de Reille. This corps, which amounted to 30,000 men, was formed into three divisions: the division commanded by Jerome Buonaparte, commenced the attack, but was soon driven back (about half past twelve) with great loss. A most desperate attack was next made by the division of General Foy, who succeeded in gaining great part of the wood, and had nearly surrounded the house; but four companies of the Coldstream, and two of the Third regiment, moving promptly down, and attacking them, they were driven back with immense slaughter, and some prisoners were taken from them.

Several other attempts were made by the Enemy against this post, during the course of the day, until their general retreat;[2] but they did not obtain any advantage. In a most determined and gallant attack, made between twelve and one, an officer and a few men got inside of the gate of the farm-yard; but they were all killed, and at no period of the day was the communication cut off.[26] Reinforcements of men, and ammunition, were sent in whenever they were requisite. The attack against the position of Hougomont lasted, on the whole, from twenty-five minutes before twelve, until a little past eight at night.

At several periods during the day, reinforcements from the Coldstream and the Third regiment of Guards, were sent down to support the light companies, employed in the defence of the house, garden, and wood.[3]

[1] In this wood of beech, probably 2000 trees were nearly all in a wounded state; 40 to 100 wounds were found in single trees.

[2] Late in the evening, when the 2d corps had been so completely beaten, as the 1st corps bad been on the left, Buonaparte ordered forward the Imperial Guards, and part of that fine body of men were directed against Hougomont .

[3] When part of the Third regiment of Guards was sent into the wood before one, Colonel Hepbum, of that corps, superseded Lord Saltoun, who, having but few men left, obtained permission to join his battalion, where he again distinguished himself. Col. Woodford of the Coldstream, who went with the reinforcement into the house, was senior to Col. Macdonell; but in consideration of that gallant officer's conduct, Col. Woodford refused taking the command, and each undertook the defence of a particular portion of the post they occupied.

The latter was repeatedly occupied by the enemy, who were as often driven from it again, until at last these posts were occupied by the whole brigade, with the exception, of two companies. About six in the evening, when the second line was brought forward, some Hanoverian battalions occupied the ground where the 2d brigade of Guards had been placed at the commencement; and a Brunswick regiment was sent down to the wood, more to the left, than where the Guards held it.

The Hon. Col. Acheson, of the Coldstream, was ordered to defend a certain part of the wood at Hougomont. The enemy made a tremendous attack, and at the first charge the Colonel's horse was shot dead, and with his rider under him, and considerably stunned by the fall; in which situation he must have lain some time, as the enemy had passed and repassed, regarding him as dead. When he had recovered, he found himself a prisoner, by the dead weight of the horse: after a time, by great exertion, he released himself unhurt, by drawing his leg from his boot, which remained under the horse.

The loss of the Guards, in killed and wounded, in the defence of Hougomont, amounted to 28 officers, and about 800 rank and file. The foreign corps (Nassau and Brunswickers) lost about 100.

The troops occupying the farm-house of Hougomont being hard [28] pressed by the enemy, were in danger, though most gallantly defended by Liut. Col. Macdonell, of falling into their hands; when a detachment of the Coldstream Guards was ordered down to reinforce him. Before they reached the house, the enemy had succeeded in gaining possession of the outer court, stabling, &c and also of some neighbouring banks, from which they kept up a very destructive fire, and could only be dislodged by the resolute advance of the reinforcing party. Major Dumaresque, Aid-de-camp to Sir John Byng, who had accompanied the detachment, finding, at the entrance of the wood, from the circumstance of the troops having to pass through a very narrow lane, in close pursuit of the enemy, and under a most galling fire, from which they had suffered extremely, that it would be impossible to get them sufficiently formed to resist the attack it was natural to suppose the enemy would immediately make with fresh troops, returned to the Duke, and acquainted him with the situation of the detachment. His Grace desired him to order Col. Woodford to move forward to their assistance, with the remainder of the Coldstream. Sir John Byng had anticipated the necessity of this movement, and had already given a similar order. Before Col. Woodford reached the spot, however, the enemy had again possessed themselves of the wood and adjoining banks, from which they were immediately driven.

Major Dumaresque, in advancing a second time, with this detachment, was shot through the body, when close to the house, by one of the enemy's infantry, many of whom he had passed while moving forward. But knowing the Duke's anxiety that this post should be maintained, (as the enemy were now making a vigorous attack on the left,) he galloped up to his Grace, regardless of his wound, and having communicated the welcome intelligence, that the French had been driven out of the wood, and the house secured, fainting from loss of blood, and overcome by his great exertions, he was removed from his horse, and conveyed to the rear by the assistance of a friend.[1] [28]

It is said the enemy were ignorant of the strength of the position, the garden wall being concealed by the wood and hedge: but the wall was so protected by trees, that it would not have been easy to have brought cannon to play against it, and- besides it was of great thickness. The enemy brought guns to a height on the right of the position, which enfiladed it, and caused great loss; and they succeeded in setting fire to a hay-stack, and part to the buildings,[2] by means of shells; but that did not prevent the garrison from occupying the remaining part.

It has been said that the inhabitants of the place were not friendly to the English, but this is quite a mistake. They leaf it with much trepidation when the cavalry of the enemy appeared in the evening of the 17th; they returned, however, for a short time, very early on the 18th, to take some things away; and their conduct generally implied friendship for the English, and terror of the French.

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[1]This fact is somewhat differently stated in Paul's Letters, but the Editor believes this to be the correct fact.

[2]It was the Tower that was burnt.

Within half an hour 1600 men were killed in the small orchard at Hougomont, not exceeding four acres.

The loss of the enemy was enormous. The division of General Foy alone lost about 3000, and the total loss of the enemy in the attack of this position is estimated at 10,000 in killed and wounded. Above 6000 men of both armies perished in the Farm of Hougoumont; 600 French fell in the attack on the chateau and the farm; 200 English were killed in the wood, 25 in the garden, 1100 in the orchard and meadow, 400 near the farmer's garden; 2000 of both parties behind the great orchard. The bodies of 300 English are buried opposite the gate of the chateau; those of 600 French have been burnt at the same place. On a square stone in the garden, above the spot where Capt. Blackman of the Guards is buried, who was killed in this place at the age of 21, there is the following inscription sent by his father:- "John Lucie Blackman, Waterloo, 18th June, 1815."

Another inscription to the memory of the same John Blackman [29] will be mentioned among those which are in the cemetery of the Reformed Church at Brussels.

Among the brave men who perished in defending Hougoumont, was Thomas Crawford, aged 21, Captain in the Third Regiment of Guards, and son of Sir James Crawford. He was first interred in the garden of the chateau, near to the place where death had struck him. His body was removed some days afterwards by his respectable father and Mr. Yornaux, who lives in one of the suburbs of Brussels, and who had been formerly attached to the family. The body was conveyed to England in a leaden coffin to be deposited in the family vault on one of the estates.

The true name of the chateau is Gomont. The public prints call it erroneously Hougoumont. Its name according to ancient tradition comes from the circumstance, that the hill on which is at present the neighbouring plantation, was covered with large pines, the rosin of which was in great request. The place was hence called Gomont, for Gomme Mont, or Mont de Gomme. This chateau has existed for ages. It has long belonged to the family of Arrazola Deonate. Its possessor took the title of Gomont. One of the Deonates distinguished himself at the battle of Lepante: another, or perhaps the same, was Viceroy of Naples. The illustrious author of Don Quixote, Miguel Cervantes, who lost a hand at this battle, highly praises this Viceroy.

M. de Lonville Gomont, residing at Nivelles, formerly a Major in the Austrian service, but now retired on a pension, who is descended on the mother's side from the family of Arrazola Deonate, is the present owner of this chateau, and has just put it up to sale. We have these particulars from him.

An article of intelligence from Brussels, under date the 29th of March 1816, says that the winds have thrown down the observatory, which commanded a view of all the eminences and hollows of Waterloo. On the other hand, the proprietor of the ruins of the chateau of Hougomont, has caused all the woods to be felled. Those trees torn by thousands of balls, and that observatory, the witnesses of so much glory, and so much suffering, have vanished for ever![60]

2st King's German Legion Brigade of Colonel du Plat 3rd Line Battalion, KGL: Lieutanant Henry Dehnel, *A retrospective of my Military Career in the years from 1805 to 1849*, (Hanover 1859).

The time might have been about 5 o'clock when du Plat's [1st KGL] Brigade left its position, where we had rested for five long hours under a cross fire of artillery, as it were, but with remarkably low losses. It then advanced beyond the Nivelles highway towards Hougoumont after having chaned fronts in a left-marched-off column of companies, with the rifle battalion at its head. [31] [. . .]

Both the fire from an enemy battery that had moved up to our left, and the skirmish fire directed at us from the Hougoumont gardens [orchards] all of a sudden became extremely deadly. Captain Heise, our battalion commander, was mortally wounded and killed on the very same spot were captains von Holle and Diedel, of whom the latter had been a great example for us with his brave and calm demeanour, and had now succumbed to the fate whose foreboding had caused his low spirits on the previous evening. The fourth captain of the battalion, Beurmann, received a glancing shot to his head, through which he lost consciousness for a considerable time and had to be laid down near Hougoumont a short time later. At the same time, grape shot blew down a corner of the now small square so that from that moment on the battalion changed to more of a round formation than a square one, as the men were drawing together. Since the enemy musketry from the hedges of Hougoumont before us kept causing us losses, and remaining further in the position [33] would completely annihilate our small group, I then, together with the fellow officers of my company von Sode and vvon Rönne, and with us all the other officers of the battalion, stepped before its front and led it against the nearest of our annoying enemies. The brave riflemen followed us at the double-quick, with firm determination, with an Hurrah! And levelled sword bayonets. The enemy did not wait for the clash of arms, however; they yielded and withdrew gehind the next line of hedges.

Shortly thereafter, swarms of enemy tirailleurs pushed ahead past the hedges and towards the main position, but were energetically thrown back by General Adam's advanced brigade, upon the Duke of Wellington's personal instruction. This brigade also had to repulse several cavalry attacks before it withdrew behind the crest of the position, to where the remaining battalions of our brigade had also retired, with the exception of the 2nd Line Battalion, which was sent to reinforce us between the hedges of Hogoumont that we were holding . . .

The arrival of our rifle battalion, much weakened as it was, and of the 2nd Line Battalion, provided both necessary as well as welcome and energetic assistance to the Guards fighting at Hogoumont. The attacks and advances of the French tirailleurs, until then of increasing vehemence, diminished at that moment, and there was a pause in the fighting, as sometimes happened in a battle. During that period, Corporal Brinkmann, of the rifle company now under my command after Diedel's death, made a French tirailleur officer his prisoner, who had not immediately followed his retiring men, by a quick jump over the hedge that we had occupied.

[. . .]

In the meantime, in our particular part of the battlefield, between the orchard hedges and hte wood of hogoumont, the Allied troops had become mixed up and interspersed due to the incessant attaks of the enemy tirailleurs and the open order of fighting, the moving up of reinforecemtns and the frequent alternating between advances and withdrawals.

When about 8 o'clock in the evening the attack of the Imperial Guard was beaten back, only the smaller part of out much weakened rifle battalion happened ot be near Chaptain Beuermann, who was in command. He ordered me to search for any of our men in the walled guarden, the chateau building, the farm buildings and the adjoining spaces and to gather them and bring them back.

My prompt and eager efforts had no significant success. If found only a few men who had brought up from the basement of the chateau a drink of beer, where some was still available.[1] I do not dare describe the

[1] This is the only mention I have found that Hougoumont had a cellar; whil it wound not be unsuual, I cannot find any corroborative evidence. [KWR: See Friends of the Waterloo Committee *Newsletter*. Cellar space excavated mid 1980s.

sceneray that I faced on the inside of the estate: it would be a picture full of blood, with burned and mangled corpses, with dying, wounded and fatigued warriors, surrounded by burning and smoking ruins. This scene of a context fought most bitterly for long hours I left as fast as I could and rejoined Captain Beuermann.

Of the advancing British troops on the extreme right wing, who passed by Hougoumont, a number also moved into the environs of the estate. With their help, the enemy tirailleurs who still resisted energetically, ignorant as they were of what had happpened elsewhere, were now completely driven out of the wood. Beuermann, with all the men of the battalion he had been able to gather, now rushed on with the tumult of the advancing troops; the other part of the riflemen had joined the 2nd Lion Battalion. In the vicinity of the tavern of la Belle Alliance . . . The British troops were told to halt. The daylight already began to yield to the darkness of night. Most of our totally exhausted men sank down on the wet ground not far from the well known observatory, and let themselves be embraced by the god of sleep, to the extent this was possible, so did I myself. But as is easily understood, this rest would not remain undisturbed. Apart from the incessant monotonous noise peculiar to such scenes of war, there was here and there a thunderous blowing up of a power wagon or a limber. In their anger and utter despair, badly wounded enemies would fire their muskets at groups of our men who had gathered around camp fires; r there was small arms fire for other unknown reasons. Added to that was the moaning and groaning of innumerable wounded who were imploring in different languages for a drink to still their terrible thirst, or for any help, even often for their deaths. A large number of horses without ther riders were running loose and caused unrest, not to think of the disturbances that were visited upon those, who had lain down, by scavengers and other vagrants crawling about, and not least of all by one's own excitable state of mind . . .

[. . .]

The troops took up arms early in the morning of 19 June. This served the purpose of fascilitating the reassembling the men, who had been scattered partly due to helping back the wounded – a duty that an undeniably large number than necessary had engaged in – partly from the fighting as such, as well as from the search for a more comfortable place to rest in the dark or for something to eat or for other kinds of things . . .

Ensign Ferdinand von Uslar-Gleichen, part of *Reminiscences of German Officers in British Service from the Wars 1805 to 1816* (Hanover, 1864).

On the day of battle at Waterloo, I, a very youthful ensign, happened to be with the rifle company of the 4th Line Battalion. During the course of the battle we left the position assigned to us on the right wing in the second line of the battle order and moved towards Chateau Hougoumont in support of the troops that had been engage in ad around it fro some time.

Near the chateau at a place where the battlefield was marked by three trees we had to fight off several vigorous cavalry charges and then suffered considerable losses from a battery moved against us at a distance of about 400 paces, and also by skirmish fire from the hedge of Hougoumont.

After Captain Holle of the 1st, and Captain Diedel of the 3rd Line Battalion had been killed, the commander of the rifle battalion, Captain Heise, was mortally wounded, and many men had fallen, the fourth captain, Beurmann of the 2nd Line Battalion, was struck by a ricochet on his head that rendered him unconscious for a short time.

It was urgently necessary for us to extract ourselves from this critical situation; Lieutenant Dehnel, of the 3rd Line Battalion, took the initiative, with his sabre raised, he stepped in front of the square and shouted: 'Forward!'

With him in front were the remaining officers, Ensign Heise of the 1st, Lieutenants Dawson and Lowson of the 2nd, Lieutenant von Sode and Ensign von Rönne of the 3rd, and von Lasperg and my humble self of the 4th Line Battalion of the German Legion. We immediately advanced to the attack, followed by our brave riflemen, against the French tirailleurs behind the first of the hedges surrounding the orchard of Chateau Hougoumont, and with the bayonet drove them out and also out of a second one behind the first hedge.

Because the French received reinforcements we had to fall back to the first hedge, and then the fighting continued back and forth until we eventually retook the second hedge and held on to it during this action I was on the extreme left flank of our skirmish line.

At Hogoumont orchard on its east side there was a narrow opening which led to the field between the opposing armies. I walked through this opening for a view of the lay of the land. But on stepping outside I at that very moment, faced a French officer on horseback who was riding along, and close to, the hedge.

Having hardly outgrown my boyhood at the time, I – to tell the truth – was caught unawares. Without further thought I grabbed the reins of the horse with all my might. If the strong enemy horseman had resisted, things would have turned bad for me. But I received help from the wing corporal of the company who had come through the opening directly behind me and ensured that the officer remained our captive.

After our prisoner had dismounted from his horse he gave me his well filled purse, his watch and other precious things, which I passed on to the corporal with the instructions to return half of the money to the officer. I was then thinking what to do with the captured enemy and the horse when Captain Beurman of our rifle battalion, who just had somewhat recovered from his contusion, walked up to me and said: 'My dear little huntsman' [Schütz] – [which became] my nickname that was often jestingly used at that time by my officer comrades – 'that horse is indeed too large for you, just let me have the animal'.

My liking of the older brave officers and a heavy dose of bashfulness prompted me to say 'yes' immediately. Apart from a certain, albeit remained to the 'little huntsman' of the extraordinary feat of capturing an enemy officer, on horseback besides, but the humble role of beholding how Captain Beurmann sent horse and prisoner back under escort and the corporal pocketed both purse and watch.

The highroad to Nivelle passed along the hollow between the two. Both ridges terminated in a ravine that enclosed our right flank, running down from the Château de Hougoumont (although it be pretended now that the name is "Goumont," I persist in the orthography which is found in all the old maps of this department) in the direction of Merke Braine; in short, a contracted continuation of the greater valley lying between the two armies and nearly at right angles to it.

The sides of this ravine (much steeper than any other ground near), as far as I can recollect, [298] were partially covered with bushes; and, from the summit of the one opposite to us, the ground ascended by a very gradual slope for about 800 or 1000 yards; and there, on what appeared as the height of the land, there were several small clumps of wood. This slop itself was still covered with fine crops of standing corn. The crest was occupied by the long line of lancers already spoken of, whose movements I was ordered to watch, but on no account to interfere with, unless they attempted to pass the ravine.[1] Such was our front view.

To the right we looked over a fine open country, covered with crops and interspersed with thickets or small woods. There all was peaceful and smiling, not a living soul being in sight. To our left, the main ridge terminated rather abruptly just over Hougoumont, the back of it towards us being broken ground, with a few old trees on it just where the Nivelle road descended between high banks into the ravine. Thus we were formed *en potence* with the 1st line, from which we (my battery) were separated by some [299] hundred yards.[61]

[. . .]

[1]The light cavalry of the 2d Corps fourmed in three lines across the causeway from Nivelle, &c., nearly at the height of the first woods at Hougoumont, scoring all the plan by the left, and having main guards near Braine le Leude, and its battery of light artillery on the causeway of Nivelle. *Memoir of Napoleon* lib ix cap. Vi. P 134; O'Meara's Translation.

They were certainly pitiable objects, but their vehement exclamations, &c., were so strongly contrasted with the quiet resolute bearings of hundreds, both French and English, around them, that it blunted one's feelings considerably.

I tried in vain to pacify them; so walked away amidst a volley of abuse as a hardhearted wretch who could thus leave two poor fellows to die like dogs. What could I do? All, however, though in more modest terms, craved assistance; and every poor wretch begged most earnestly for water. Some of my men had discovered a good well of uncontaminated water at Hougoumont, and filled their canteens; so I made several of them accompany me and administer to the most [341] craving in our immediate vicinity. Nothing could exceed their gratitude, or the fervent blessings they implored on us for this momentary relief. The French were in general particularly grateful; and those who were strong enough, entered into conversation with us on the events of yesterday, and the probable fate awaiting themselves. All the non-commissioned officers and privates agreed in asserting that they had been deceived by their officers and betrayed; and, to my surprise, almost all of them reviled Buonaparte as the cause of their misery. [342]

We had not yet finished our meal, when a carriage drove on the ground from Brussels, the inmates of which, alighting, proceeded to examine the field. As they passed near us, it was amusing to see the horror with which they eyed our frightful figures; they all, however, pulled off their hats and made low bows. One, a [345] smartly-dressed middle-aged man, in a high cocked-hat, came to our circle, and entered into conversation with me on the events of yesterday. He approached holding a delicately white perfumed handkerchief to his nose; stepping carefully to avoid the bodies (at which he cast fearful glances *en passant*), to avoid polluting the glossy silken hose that clothed his nether limbs. May I be pardoned for the comparison: Hotspur's description of a fop came forcibly to my mind as we conversed; clean and spruce, as if from a bandbox, redolent of perfume, he stood ever and anon applying the 'kerchief to his nose. I was not leaning on my sword, but I arose to receive him from my seat of armour, my hands and face begrimed and blackened with blood and smoke – clothes too. "I do remember when the fight was done," &c. &c. It came, as I said, forcibly to my mind as I eyed my

friend's costume and sniffed the sweet-scented atmosphere that hovered round him. The perfumed handkerchief, in this instance, held the place of Shakespear's "pouncet-box"–the scene was pleasant to remember! With a world of bows my man took leave, and proceeded, picking his steps with the same care as he followed the route of his companions in the direction of Hougoumont. [346]

Having despatched our meal, and then the ammunition-waggons to Waterloo, and leaving the people employed equipping as best they could, I set off to visit the Chateau likewise; for the struggle that had taken place there yesterday rendered it an object of interest. The same scene of carnage as elsewhere characterised that part of the field over which I now bent my steps. The immediate neighbourhood of Hougoumont was more thickly strewn with corpses than most other parts of the field the very ditches were full of them. The trees all about were most woefully cut and splintered, both by cannon-shot and musketry. The courts of the Chateau presented a spectacle more terrible even than any I had yet seen. A large barn had been set on fire, and the conflagration had spread to the offices, and even to the main building. Here numbers, both of French and English, had perished in the flames, and their blackened swollen remains lay scattered about in all directions. Amongst this heap of ruins and misery many poor devils yet remained alive, and were sitting up endeavouring to bandage their wounds. Such a scene of horror, and one so sickening, was surely never witnessed.

Two or three German dragoons were wandering [347] among the ruins, and many peasants. One of the former was speaking to me when two of the latter, after rifling the pockets, &c., of a dead Frenchman, seized the body by the shoulders, and, raising it from the ground, dashed it down again with all their force, uttering the grossest abuse, and kicking it about the head and face revolting spectacle! doing this, no doubt, to court favour with us. It had a contrary effect, which they soon learned. I had scarcely uttered an exclamation of disgust, when the dragoon's sabre was flashing over the miscreants' heads, and in a moment descended on their backs and shoulders with such vigour that they roared again, and were but too happy to make their escape. I turned from such scenes and entered the garden. How shall I describe the delicious sensation I experienced!

The garden was an ordinary one, but pretty-long straight walks of turf overshadowed by fruit-trees, and between these beds of vegetables, the whole enclosed by a tolerably high brick wall. Is it necessary to define my sensations. Is it possible that I am not understood at once? Listen then. For the last three days I have been in a constant state of excitement in a perfect fever. My eyes have beheld nought but war in all its [348] horrors my ears have been assailed by a continued roar of cannon and cracking of musketry, the shouts of multitudes and the lamentations of war's victims. Suddenly and unexpectedly I find myself in solitude, pacing a green avenue, my eyes refreshed by the cool verdure of trees and shrubs; my ear soothed by the melody of feathered songsters yea, of sweet Philomel herself and the pleasing hum of insects sporting in the genial sunshine. Is there nothing in this to excite emotion? Nature in repose is always lovely: here, and under such circumstances, she was delicious. Long I rambled in this garden, up one walk, down another, and thought I could dwell here contented for ever. Nothing recalled the presence of war except the loopholed wall and two or three dead Guardsmen;[1] but the first caused no interruption, and these last lay so concealed amongst the exuberant vegetation of turnips and cabbages, &c., that, after coming from the field of death without, their pale and silent forms but little deteriorated my enjoyment. The leaves [349] were green, roses and other flowers bloomed forth in all their sweetness, and the very turf when crushed by my feet smelt fresh and pleasant. There was but little of disorder visible to tell of what had been enacted here. I imagine it must have been assailed by infantry alone; and the havoc amongst the trees without made by our artillery posted on the hill above to cover the approach to it principally, perhaps, by Bull's howitzer battery.

I had satisfied my curiosity at Hougoumont, and was retracing my steps up the hill, when my attention was called to a group of wounded Frenchmen by the calm, dignified, and soldierlike oration addressed by one of them to the rest. I cannot, like Livy, compose a fine harangue for my hero, and, of course, I could not retain the precise words, but the import of them was to exhort them to bear their sufferings with fortitude; not to repine, like women or children, at what every soldier should have made up his mind to suffer as the fortune of war, but, above all, to remember that they were surrounded by Englishmen, before whom they ought to be doubly careful not to disgrace themselves by displaying such an unsoldierlike want of fortitude.

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[1] In some accounts of the battle, and visits to the field, &c., it has been stated that this garden was a scene of slaughter. Totally untrue ! As I have stated in the text, I did not see above two or three altogether. There certainly might have been more concealed amongst the vegetation, but they could not have been many.

The speaker was sitting on the ground, with his lance stuck [350] upright beside him an old veteran, with a thick bushy grizzly beard, countenance like a lion a lancer of the Old Guard, and no doubt had fought in many a field. One hand was flourished in the air as he spoke, the other, severed at the wrist, lay on the earth beside him; one ball (case-shot, probably) had entered his body, another had broken his leg. His suffering, after a night of exposure so mangled, must have been great: yet he betrayed it not. His bearing was that of a Roman, or perhaps of an Indian warrior, and I could fancy him concluding appropriately his speech in the words of the Mexican king, "And I too; am I on a bed of roses?" I could not but feel the highest veneration for this brave man, and told him so, at the same time offering him the only consolation in my power a drink of cold water, and assurances that the waggons would soon be sent round to collect the wounded. He thanked me with a grace peculiar to Frenchmen, and eagerly inquired the fate of their army. On this head I could tell him nothing consolatory, so merely answered that it had retired last night, and turned the conversation to the events of yesterday. This truly brave man spoke in most flattering terms of our troops, but said they had no idea in the French army we should have fought so obstinately, [351] since it was generally understood that the English Government had, from some inexplicable reason, connived at Napoleon's escape from Elba, and therefore had ordered their army only to make a show of resistance.[62]

Other first-hand accounts of the action at Hougoumont not included here:

> Notes and reminiscences of a staff officer, chiefly relating to the Waterloo campaign and to St. Helena matters during the captivity of Napoleon (London: J. Murray, 1903).

VISITOR OBSERVATIONS
GUIDEBOOK DESCRIPTIONS

On our way home we passed through the forest in total darkness. Occasional flashes of lightning gave us glimpses of the narrow defile, and heightened the sublimity of the feelings excited by our experiences during the whole of this most interesting day.

Lady Francis Shelley's Journal, 15 September 1815[63]

At 8 this morning we mounted our Cabriolets for Waterloo. Donald put on his Waterloo medal for the first time, and a French shirt he got in the spoils, and a cravat of an officer who was killed, and I wrapped myself in his Waterloo cloak, and we all felt the additional sensation which the anniversary of the day produced on everybody. It brought the comparison of the past and present day more perfectly home. Donald was [260] ready with his recollections every minute of the day, what had been his occupation or his feeling.

Mrs. Edward Stanley writes to Lady Maria J. Stanley, 18 June 1816 [64]

16 - 20 June 1815

Thomas Creevey writes in his diary and writes his *Reminiscences* in 1822. His time in 'Brussells' begin during the Autumn of 1814, relating to the conflict and his tour of the field of battle he writes:

On the 16th there was a ball at the Duke of Richmond's, to which my daughters, the Miss Ords, and their brother went; but I stayed at home with Mrs. Creevey. About half-past eleven at night, I heard a great knocking at houses in my street la Rue du Musée just out of the Place Royale, and I presently found out the troops were in motion, and by 12 o'clock they all marched off the Place Royale up the Rue Namur. [. . .] I sat up, of course, till my daughters and their brother returned from the Duke of Richmond's, which they did about two o'clock or half after. I then found that the Prussians had been driven out of Charleroi[1] and other places by the French, and that all our army had been just then set in motion to meet them. The Duke had been at the ball had received his intelligence there, and had sent off his different orders. There had been plenty of officers at the ball, and some tender scenes had taken place upon the ladies parting with them.

I saw poor Hamilton[2] that night; he came home in the carriage with the Miss Ords and their brother.

On Friday the 16th the Duke and his staff rode out of the Namur gate about nine,[3] and we were [229] without any news the best part of the day. I dined at Mr. Greathed's in the Park. . . . In walking there between 4 and 5, poor Charles Ord, and I thought we heard the sound of cannon; and when we got to Greathed's we found everybody on the rampart listening to it. In the course of the evening the rampart was crowded with people listening, and the sound became perfectly distinct and regular."[4]

Just before we sat down to dinner, Greathed saw Col. Canning, one of the Duke's Aides-de-camps, walking by the window, and he called him up to dine. He had been sent by the Duke on a mission to the French King at Alost, and was then on his return. He was killed two days afterwards at Waterloo.

In the evening or rather at night Colonel Hamilton rode in to Brussells, to do some things for General Barnes, and to see us. We found from him that the firing had been the battle of Quatre-Bras. He was full of praises of our troops, who had fought under every disadvantage of having marched 16 miles from Brussells, and having neither cavalry nor artillery up in time to protect them.[5] He was full, too, of admiration of the talent of Buonaparte in this daring attempt to get between the English and Prussian armies. . . . Hamilton had seen the Duke of Brunswick killed at the head of his Brunswickers,[6] and represented the grief of these soldiers as quite affecting. Two of our young Brussells officers and friends had been killed, too, in the action Lord Hay, aide-de-camp to General Maitland, and a brother of Jack Smyth's. Upon one occasion during the day, Hamilton stated, Wellington and his whole staff had been very nearly taken prisoners by some

[1]Napoleon left Paris at daybreak on 12th June. On the 14th his headquarters were at Beaumont, about 16 miles south of Charleroi, but he did not cross the frontier till the morning of the 15th.

[2] His step-son-in-law.

[3]Other witnesses say 8 a.m.

[4]The action at Quatre-Bras began about 3 p.m. and lasted till 9 o'clock.

[5]The Allies began the action with 7000 infantry and 16 guns. Van Merlen's horse, 1200 strong, joined them before 5 o'clock, but Lord Uxbridge's division of cavalry halted on the Mons-Brussells road, through a mistake in their orders.

[6]Their black uniform, with silver death's-head and crossbones, commemorated the death of the Duke's father at the head of his Brunswicker Hussars at Jena.

French[230] cavalry.[1] . . . Hamilton returned to headquarters about 12 at night.

On Saturday the 17th I remember feeling free from much alarm. I reasoned with myself that as our troops had kept their ground under all the unequal circumstances of the day before, surely when all the Guards and other troops had arrived from 18th and Enghien, with all the cavalry, artillery, &c., they would be too strong for the French even venturing to attack again. So we went on flattering ourselves during the day, especially as we heard no firing. About four o'clock, however, the Marquis Juarenais [?J, who I always found knew more than anybody else, met me in the street and said: "Your army is in retreat upon Brussels, and the French in pursuit." He quite satisfied me that he knew the fact; and not long after, the baggage of the army was coming down the Rue de Namur, filling up my street, and horses were bivouacked [picketed ?] all round the park.

At night Hamilton came in to us again, and we learnt from him that Buonaparte had beaten Blucher so completely the night before that all communication between the latter and Wellington had been cut off, and that, under such circumstances, Wellington had been obliged to fall back and take up another position.

It was now clear there was going to be a desperate battle. Hamilton said so, and we who knew the overflowing ardent mind, as well as the daring nature, of his General (Barnes), well knew the danger his life would be exposed to next day. He returned to headquarters, according to custom, at midnight.

Sunday, June the 19th, was of course a most anxious day with us. I persuaded poor Charles Ord to go that day to England. Between 11 and 12, I [231] perceived the horses, men, carts and carriages of all description, laden with baggage, which had filled every street all night, had received orders to march, and I never felt more anxiety than to see the route they took; for had they taken the Antwerp or Ostend road, I should have concluded we were not to keep our ground. They all went up the Rue de Namur towards the army.

About three o'clock I walked about two miles out of the town towards the army, and a more curious, busy scene it was, with every kind of thing upon the road, the Sunday population of Brussells being all out in the suburbs out of the Porte Namur, sitting about tables drinking beer and smoking and making merry, as if races or other sports were going on, instead of the great pitched battle which was then fighting.

Upon my return home about four, I had scarcely got into my own room to dress for dinner, when Miss Elizabeth Ord came running into the room saying: For God's sake, Mr. Creevey, come into the drawing-room to my mother immediately. The French are in the town 'I could not bring myself to believe that to be true, and I said so, with my reasons; but I said 'Let all the outside blinds be put to, and I will come in an instant.' So having remained five or ten minutes in the drawing-room, and hearing nothing, I went out; and then I found the alarm had been occasioned by the flight of a German regiment of cavalry, the Cumberland Hussars, who had quitted the field of battle, galloping through the forest of Soignes, entering the Porte Namur, and going full speed down the Rue de Namur and thro' the Place Royale, crying out the French were at their heels. The confusion and mischief occasioned by these fellows on the road were incredible, but in the town all was quiet again in an instant.

I then sat down to dinner, in the middle of which I heard a very considerable shouting near me. Jumping up to the window which commanded the lower part of the Rue de Namur, I saw a detachment of our Horse Guards escorting a considerable body of French prisoners, and could distinctly recognise one or two eagles. I went into the Place Royale [232] immediately to see them pass, and then returned to my dinner. Their number was said to be 1500. In half an hour more I heard fresh shouting, and this proved to be another arrival of French prisoners, greater in amount it was said 5000 in all had arrived.

[1]This happened just after the Duke of Brunswick fell. The Brunswick infantry giving way before a charge of French cavalry, Wellington rode up with the Brunswick Hussars to cover them; but these also fell into disorder under a heavy fire of musketry, and were then driven off by Pirn's Red Lancers. Wellington galloped off, closely pursued. Arriving at a ditch lined by the Gordon Highlanders, he called out to them to lie still, set his horse at the fence, and cleared it, bayonets and all.

About this time, in looking out of my window I saw Mr. Legh, of Lyme, M.P. for Newton,[1] arrive on horseback at his lodgings, which were next to my house; and finding that he had been looking at the battle, or very near it, I rejoiced with him upon things looking so well, which I conceived to be the case from the recent arrivals of prisoners. My surprise, therefore, was by no means small when he replied that he did not agree with me: that from his own observation he thought everything looked as bad as possible; in short, that he thought so badly of it that he should not send his horses to the stable, but keep them at his door in case of accidents.

After this I went out to call on the Marquis Juarenais in the Park, to collect from him what news I could; and in passing the corner of the Hotel Bellevue I came in contact with one of our Life Guards a soldier who had just come in. I asked him how he thought the battle was going when he left the field; upon which, after turning round apparently to see if anybody could hear him, he said: ' Why, sir, I don't like the appearance of things at all. The French are getting on in such a manner that I don't see what's to stop them."

I then got to Juarenais's, and was shown into a drawing-room, in the middle of which I saw a wounded officer of our Foot Guards (Griffiths, his name was, I knew afterwards) sitting in apparently great pain a corporal on one side picking his epaulet out of the wound, and Madame de Juarenais holding a smelling-bottle under his nose. I just heard the officer apologise to Madame de Juarenais for the trouble he was giving her, observing at the time that he would not be long with them, as the French would be in that night, and then he fainted away.

In going out of the drawing-room into the balcony commanding the Park, the first thing I saw [233] was General Barnes's chaise and four going as fast as it could from his own house in the Park towards the Porte Namur and, of course, the field of battle; upon which I went immediately to Barnes's to see what intelligence I could pick up there; when I found a foreign officer of his staff, I forget his name who had just arrived, and had sent off the General's carriage. His information was that General Barnes was very badly wounded that Captain [illegible] Erskine of his staff had lost an arm that Major Hamilton[2] was wounded but not severely, and that he thought everything was going as badly as possible.

With this intelligence I returned to Mrs. Creevey and my daughters between 8 and 9, but I did not mention a word of what I had heard, there being no use in my so doing. About ten o'clock, however, or between that and 11, Hamilton entered the room, and then the ladies and myself heard from him that Genl. Barnes had been shot through the body by a musquet ball about 5 o'clock that his horse having just previously been killed under him, the general was on foot at the time that Hamilton and the orderly sergeant had put him immediately upon Hamilton's horse, and that in this manner, one on each side, they had walked these 12 miles to Bruxelles, tho' Hamilton had been wounded both in the head and in one foot. Observe the road had been so choaked by carts and carriages being overturned when the German regiments ran away, that no carriage could pass that way for some time.

Well Hamilton had put his general to bed, and was then come to give us the opinion, both of the general and himself, that the battle was lost, and that we had no time to lose in getting away. Hamilton said he would immediately procure horses, carriages or anything else for taking us from Bruxelles. After a very short consultation, however, with Mrs. Creevey, under all the circumstances of her ill health and helplessness, and the confusion of flying from an army in the night, we determined to remain, and Hamilton returned to his general.

The young ladies lay down upon their beds without undressing. I got into my own, and slept [234] soundly till 4 o'clock, when, upon waking, I went instantly to the front windows to see what was passing in the Rue Namur. I had the satisfaction of seeing baggage, soldiers, &c., still moving up the street, and towards the field of battle, which I could not but consider as very favorable. Having dressed and loitered about till near six, I then went to the Marquis Juarenais's, in pursuit of news; and, upon the great court gate being opened to me, the first person I saw was Madame de Juarenais,

[1]Grandfather of the present Lord Newton.

[2]Mr. Creevey's son-in-law of The Cumberland Hussars.

walking about in deshabille amidst a great bivouac of horses. She told me immediately that the French were defeated and had fled in great confusion. I expressed so much surprise at this, that she said I should learn it from Monr. Juarenais himself; so she took me up to his bed, where he was fast asleep. When he woke and saw me by his bedside in doubt about the truth of the good news, he almost began to doubt himself; but then he recollected, and it was all quite right. General Sir Charles Alten, who commanded the Hanoverians, had been brought in to Juarenais's late at night, very badly wounded; but had left particular orders with his staff to bring or send the earliest accounts of the result. Accordingly, one of his officers who had been on the field about 8 o'clock, when the French had given way, and who had gone on with the Duke in the pursuit as far as Nivelles,[1] had brought all this intelligence to Alten at Juarenais's about 3 o'clock.

I went in the first place from Juarenais's to General Barnes's; where, having entered his bedroom, I found him lying in bed, his wound just dressed, and Hamilton by his side; and when I told him the battle was won (which he did not know before), and how I knew it, he said: "There, Hamilton, did not I say it was either so or a drawn battle, as the French ought to have been here before now if they had won. I have just sent old [illegible] (one of his staff) up to headquarters for news."

I then returned directly home, and of course we were all not a little delighted at our escape. About eleven o'clock, upon going out again, I [235] heard a report that the Duke was in Bruxelles; and I went from curiosity to see whether there was any appearance of him or any of his staff at his residence in the Park. As I approached, I saw people collected in the street about the house; and when I got amongst them, the first thing I saw was the Duke upstairs alone at his window. Upon his recognising me, he immediately beckoned to me with his finger to come up.[2] "I met Lord

[1]Wellington did not follow as far as Nivelles, but handed over the pursuit to Blücher at La Belle Alliance.

[2]It may seem improbable that the Duke should have made himself so accessible to a mere civilian on such a momentous morning; but there is ample confirmation of Mr. Creevey's narrative from the Duke's own lips. In 1836 he described the circumstance to Lady Salisbury, who noted it in her journal (unpublished) as follows:

'I was called,' said the Duke, 'about 3 in the morning by Hume to go and see poor Gordon' (in the same inn at Waterloo), 'but he was dead before I got there. Then I came back, had a cup of tea and some toast, wrote my dispatch, and then rode into Brussels. At the door of my own hotel I met Creevey: they had no certain accounts at Brussels, and he called out to me: – 'What news?' I said:-- 'Why I think we've done for 'em this time.'

'The dispatch was begun at Waterloo and finished at Brussels, evidence of which remains in the draft of the original now at Apsley House, which is headed first "Waterloo;" that is struck out and "Bruxelles" substituted.

Arthur Hill in the ante-room below, who, after shaking hands and congratulation, told me I could not go up to the Duke, as he was then occupied in writing his dispatch; but as I had been invited, I of course proceeded. The first thing I did, of course, was to put out my hand and congratulate him [the Duke] upon his victory. He made a variety of observations in his short, natural, blunt way, but with the greatest gravity all the time, and without the least approach to anything like triumph or joy.[1] It has been a damned serious business,' he said.' Blücher and I have lost 30,000 men. It has been a damned nice thing the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life. Blücher lost 14,000 on Friday night, and got so damnably licked I could not find him on Saturday morning; so I was obliged to fall back to keep up [regain ?] my communications with him.'[2] Then, as he walked about, he praised greatly [236] those Guards who kept the farm (meaning Hugomont) against the repeated attacks of the French; and then he praised all our troops, uttering repeated expressions of astonishment at our men's courage. He repeated so often its being so nice a thing so nearly run a thing, that I asked him if the French had fought better than he had ever seen them do before. 'No,' he said, 'they have always fought the same since I first saw them at Vimeira.' [3] Then he said: 'By God! I don't think it would have done if I had not been there.'[4]

When I left the Duke, I went instantly home and wrote to England by the same courier who carried his dispatch. I sent the very conversation I have just related to Bennett[5] I think, however, I omitted the Duke's observation that he did not think the battle would have been won had he not been there, and I remember my reason for omitting this sentence. It did not seem fair to the Duke to state it without full explanation. There was nothing like vanity in the observation in the way he made it. I considered it only as meaning that the battle was so hardly and equally fought that nothing but confidence of our army in himself as their general could have brought them thro'. Now that seven years have elapsed since that battle, and tho' the Duke has become very foolishly, in my opinion a politician, and has done many wrong and foolish things since that time, yet I think of his conversation and whole conduct on the 19th the day after the battle exactly the same as I did then: namely that nothing could do a conqueror more honor than his gravity and seriousness at the loss of lives he had sustained, his admission of his great danger, and the justice he did his enemy.

"I may add that, before I left him, I asked whether he thought the French would be able to take the field again; and he said he thought certainly not, giving as his reason that every corps of France, but one, had [237] been in the battle, and that the whole army had gone off in such perfect rout and confusion he thought it quite impossible for them to give battle again before the Allies reached Paris."

On Tuesday the 20th, the day after this conversation with the Duke, Barnes and Hamilton would make me ride over to see the field of battle, which I would willingly have declined, understanding all the French dead were still on the field unburied, and having no one to instruct me in detail as to what had passed I mean as to the relative positions of the armies, &c. However, I was mounted, and as I was riding along with Hamilton's groom behind me about a mile and a half on the Brussells side of the village of Waterloo, who should overtake me but the Duke of Wellington in his curricle, in his plain cloaths and Harvey by his side in his regimentals. So we went on together, and he said as he was to stop at Waterloo to see Frederick Ponsonby and de Lancey, Harvey should go with me and shew me the field of battle, and all about it. When we got to Waterloo village, we found others of his

[1] At Ligny.

[2] Napoleon had detached the column of Maréchal Grouchy, 34,000 men with 96 guns, on the 17th to pursue the Prussians to Namur.

[3] In 1808.

[4] Captain Gronow, to whom Creevey gave an account of this interview, remarks: 'I do not pretend to say what the Duke meant in his conversation with Mr. Creevey, who was truth itself' [*Reminiscences*, vol. i. 212].

[5] Hon. H. G. Bennet, M.P. 2nd son of the 4th Earl of Tankerville.

staff there, and it ended in Lord Arthur Hill being my guide over every part of the ground.

My great surprise was at not being more horrified at the sight of such a mass of dead bodies. On the left of the road going from Waterloo to Mont St. Jean, and just close up to within a yard or two of a small ragged hedge which was our own line, the French lay as if they had been mowed down in a row without any interval.[1] It was a distressing sight, no doubt, to see every now and then a man alive amongst them, and calling out to Lord Arthur to give them something to drink. It so happened Lord Arthur had some weak brandy and water in his holster, and he dismounted to give some to the wounded soldiers. It was a curious thing to see on each occasion the moderation with which the soldier drank, and his marked good manners. They all ended by saying to Lord Arthur: '*Mon général, vous êtes bien honnête.*' One case in particular I [239] remember, on the other side of the road near the farm at Hugomont, a remarkably fine-looking man reared himself up from amongst the surrounding dead. His aiguilette streaming down his arm, Lord Arthur asked him if he was an officer, to which he replied no, but a sergeant of the Imperial Guard. Lord Arthur, having given him some drink, said he would look about for some conveyance to carry him off (his thigh being broken), and apologised for its not being sooner done, on account of the numbers of our own men we had to take care of. The Frenchman said in the best manner possible: '*O mon général, vous êtes bien honêete: apres les Alliés*.'

"I rode home with Hume the physician at head quarters, who said there were 14,000 dead on the held; and upon my expressing regret at the wounded people being still out, he replied: 'The two nights they have been out is all in their favor, provided they are now got into hospitals. They will have a better chance of escaping fever this hot weather than our own people who have been carried into hospitals the first.'[65]

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[1] Where Picton's 5th Division repulsed d'Erlon's corps in the morning. The ragged hedge has now disappeared.

June 1815 Mrs. Elizabeth Ord, stepdaughter to Thomas Creevey, writes:

On Thursday 15th June after dinner Lord Arthur Hill came to ask Mr Creevey to go out with him about getting some money as Lord Wellington had just received an account of Blucher's having been beat at Charleroi, that the French were pushing on & that it was expected th English Headquarters would be moved in the night. We went to the Duchess of Richmond's Ball that night, more to hear news than with the expectation of seeing any of our friends. The room however was full of officers of all ranks, some not knowing the news, others making light of it that their friends spirits might be kept up and all of them except at the moment of taking leave of those they loved, looking forward as if they were delighted the moment for action was come & that they were sure of success. Lord Wellington walking about with Lady F[rancis] Webster on his arm sometimes talking nonsense to here and sometimes reading reports and giving orders but not seeming as if he had more than usual on his mind. Lord Uxbridge received his orders to go and collect the [225] cavalry, just as he was going down to supper and so did General Ponsonby. The young officers insisted on our dancing but it was with such an effort that of course it did not last long. Little parties with pale cheeks and red eyes were to be seen in many parts of the room. Those on the Staff belonging to Headquarters told us they had no doubt they should be take a ride the next day but they should most likely return in the evening. As we came home about 2 o'clock the streets were full of regiments collecting to march and of officers' baggage horses. Two of the Highland regiments assembled in the Place Royal with their bagpipes playing cheerful tunes were affecting without thinking of our friends.

The next morning Friday 16th passed quietly enough, Mr Creevey went to dine with the Greatheads; soon after a very heavy [firing] began & I had the pleasure of hearing from different passengers under the window that there had been 'fighting from 8 in the morning', 'that the French were within 8 miles', 'that the English army had been engaged', 'that some heard that one side had the better', sometimes the other, and the stories the servants picked up were still more alarming. All this rumour I kept to myself & when Mr Creevey came home between 9 & 10 he relieved our minds by telling us it had only been an engagement with the Prussians & that Colonel Canning, Lord W[ellington]'s Aide de Camp, who had dined with them, though nothing of it as he could hear no musketry. About ½ past 11 however, a horse arrived at our door, and Major Hamilton came upstairs with his face black with smoke and gunpowder & his mouth so parched he could hardly speak to tell us that when Lord Wellington arrived with his army about 2 o'clock, the French were already beginning to attack them, that not half of the English were come up, not a horse soldier being within sight of the battle.

The fighting was on this account very severe and many English regiments, particularly the Scotch *were nearly cut to pieces.* The Belgian troops ran like sheep but the Hanoverian Militia behaved like Englishmen, one regiment of Belgic light horse after moving away were rallied by General Barnes, Major Hamilton & Captain Erskin who each had their horses shot under them. At one time a troop of French cuirassiers charged into the middle of Lord W[ellington]'s Staff, but under the direction of General Barnes the good conduct of one infantry regiment did not let a man of them return to tell the story. The day ended in the retreat of the French, and if there had been any cavalry to pursue, the victory would have been complete.

Lord W[ellington] & his Staff supped at Genappe about 20 miles from here & Major Hamilton came off here to tell us [of the event & order up fresh horses for himself & General Barnes. He had tasted nothing from dinner the day before and had been on horseback & in the [226] action the whole day & was going to return as soon as his horse could be got ready. At 2 o'clock he started again and we went to bed, sleep we never had much of as there was an eternal passage of baggage troops & artillery across the 'Place' and our house commanding a side view up the street leading to the Namur Gate through which everything passed, our time principally passed at the window. On Saturday people's spirits were up, several of Lord W[ellington]'s Staff came into town, saying that if they had beat the fellows before their means were up, what should they do when they had and joined by Old Blucher into the bargain.

Towards evening however different reports came in that Lord

W[ellington] was retreating & that the French in the preceding night had made a very successful attack upon the Prussians & separated their communications with the British. Also of baggage coming *down* the Namur [road], that instead of up rather confirmed this, about two Major Hamilton again arrived saying it was true, that Bonaparte's movements had been most masterly & that when he left the headquarters, Lord W[ellington] did not know where the Prussians were. They had been joined by a fresh corps but that even had not stopped their retreat, that in consequence Lord W[ellington] had *been* obliged to retreat to a position about 12 miles from Brussels where he would remain if the French did not attack him. There had been skirmishing all day but on the whole the retreat had been well got through, the artillery was getting well places [*sic*] & though the French were in tremendous force & very impudent, if people did their duty he (Major H[amilton]) had no doubt that they would get a very pretty licking. This was by no measns a comfortable account. During the whole of the night between Saturday & Sunday the baggage as is always the case previous to a battle was ordered to the rear & was pouring down the Namur street & the whole of this part of the town was almost impassable from the crowd of wagons, horses & men. About five in the morning Anne was at the window & saw a troop of horse gallop down into the 'Place' with their swords drawn & the main guard at the end of our street being called out were instantly marched off towards the gate & terror & confusion was the expression of the crowd. Of course we imagined some detachment of French dragoons were in possession of Brussels for we knew the town was drained of troops. Our fright you may have some idea of, but after consulting for about ten minutes whether we should go down to my mother, to our great surprise the guard came marching quietly back again & piled their arms as if nothing had happened.

About six Mr Creevey had a note from RM McDonald telling him he was leaving Brussels as he thought things looked very bad, that in the retreat the 7th Hussars had been entirely cut up & that Lord Uxbridge [227] was certainly killed. I think Sunday was the most miserable day I ever spent in my life & one I could never forget if I was to live 1000 years. Of course Anne & I never stirred out during any of those days but Mr C[reevey] was constantly backwards & forwards. During the morning we tried to flatter ourselves that as we heard nothing of a very distinct firing perhaps nothing very material was going on though none of use had the least comfort in our hearts; about dinner time an account arrived that in a very brilliant charge the Horse Guards had taken two eagles & a great many prisoners, who about an hour afterwards were marched in under an escort of the Horse Guards who were not a little proud of their performances, but some that Mr C[reevey] talked to, told him they doubted thngs were not going well at the army.

About 7 Mr C[reevey] went out & returned in about an hour with a face of misery & so restless that we were all convinced something had happened, he said he had been to the Marquis Trezueguine's were he had found them all engaged in attending to an officer of the guards who had just been brought in badly wounded & billeted upon them. We attributed his bad spirits to what he had seen, this poor young man suffer & to his having told him he thought the event of the battle very doubtful when he left the field. After this Mr C[reevey] never remained one minute in one place & we all sat not venturing to mention our thoughts to one another. At ½ past ten Major Hamilton came, Mr C[reevey] immediately said 'well Hamilton the General?' & it them came out that his walk he had seen one of the general's orderly men come in for his carriage as he was badly wounded. Major H[amilton] however had got him mounted on a horse and had led him (himself on foot slightly wounded in 2 places) the whole way from the filed of battle, and having had his wound dressed & put him to bed, he had just run over to tell use that never had there been such a battle fought before or such things done by both officers and men, that the French might be beat by such determined skill & courage, but that the loss was so immense & their superiority in numbers particularly above 20,000 of the finest cavalry that ever was seen, & the Prussians though hanging like a black cloud in sight never fired a shot when he came away. He doubted whether Lord W[ellington] would be able to keep the field, he therefore begged us to consider what we ought to do & that if we determined to go he would press a carriage for us and send a guard with us, that he did not thing they [would] do more then than plunder us but we must think whether we could stand the fright &c &c.

We persuaded my mother to go to bed, Anne & I laid down, [but] did not take off our clothes. Between 4 & 5 in looking out we saw baggage moving *up* Namur Street, this struck us as not looking so bad as we [228] expected. However we held a consultation with Mr Creevey & before we finally determined upon going he said he would go & ask the Marquis

Trezueguine what he thought was our danger in remaining. Though it was not 6 o'clock the Marquise was at her door & she took him up to the marquis in his bed & they told him the events that he had taken place after General Barnes came away. He then went to General B[arne]'s where he found him propped up in bed, covered with his blood with a very dangerous would through the shoulder, grinning from ear to ear, at the news, & as composed & indifferent about himself as if he had done or suffered nothing. Though the good news was more confirmed every minute we hardly knew how to believe it & it was so mingled with the idea of the slaughter that the sensations of thankfulness, about escape & sorrow for our friends almost deprived on of our faculties. We had five badly wounded Prussian common soldiers billeted upon us at 12 o'clock that night and as we have not outbuildings we were obliged to lay them on the floor of our dining room, it was so late we could get no straw for them or could do anything but feed them. Poor fellows, their groans were miserable & we cold not understand one another's language. After their wounds were dressed, we hired a woman to wash them & do what we possible to make them comfortable & they were very grateful, but the third morning the surgeon told us two of them would certainly die & that their wounds were becoming offensive. We got them carried to a church which was given up for an hospital & as we sent their mattresses with them, they were better off than most of their poor countrymen who have plundered and committed such outrages in this country while they have been in it even as friends, that one cannot wonder at the people feeling little inclination to assist them.

On the Monday morning Lord W[ellington] cam into Brussels & as Mr C[reevey] was passing under his window, he called to him to come in, he was alone, hafl his dispatches written & lying on the table & himself walking up & down the room, he was very grave, seeming almost awed by the recollection of the tremendous news of the battle & himself walking up & down the room, he was very grave, seeming almost awed by the recollection of the tremendous news of the battle & oppressed by the loss of lives. He shook hands with Mr C[reevey] & said 'Well, we have done the business, but we have paid dearly for it.' Then he took to walking again, sometimes stopping & putting his hands up & saying, [**Hougoumont**] 'Those brave Guards in the garden, how they fought. No, there never was anything like it, I can hardly conceive it now I think of it. It was critical, I do believe *that if I had not been on the ground myself it would have been lost'* & all this in an under solemn voice that come not be put on & yet with these very feelings so strong upon him, he wrote the coldest and most common place dispatch that ever was [229] written, neither doing justice to the army nor to individuals. The army hurt at it, particularly are [we] about the manner in which General Barnes' is mentioned. Even his friend the Duke of Richmond says how bad it was & that the only thing that can be said is Lord W[ellington] cannot write & that he believes his feelings stupefied him. It was not the least vanity in him to say he thought the day would have been lost if he had not been on the ground. There is no difference in opinion, that the confidence both officers & men having in him, his inalterable coolness, his decision, the quickness of his eye, qualities united to such a degree in no other general, were all necessary to the event. Then his gallantry in exposing himself was surpassed by none on the field and the only miracle is how he or any one is still alive. In one instance the Brunswick troops (who never recovered [from] the loss of their poor duke on the first day) were falling back in great dismay when Lord W[ellington] rode up to them & calling to them asked them whether they would not follow him, they did come back & he said they would make them charge, Lord Uxbridge remonstrated with him as thinking (them) not to be trusted; his answer was 'I know what I am about, let me alone, follow me Brunswickers, you'll follow me won't you' & he charged with them just as his quick eye saw some movement in the French which made him call out 'By [God?] they are turning' and it really was so.

In the pursuit as he was riding through the village with some of his Staff Colonel Hervey said to him 'My Lord, don't ride this way, we may find some stragglers behind a wall who may take a shot at us', he said 'Never mind Hervey, I believe my life was of some consequence this morning, but it is no matter now' & he rode on. In the battle of the 18th Captain Erskine had an arm shot off & the other badly wounded, he was out on a blanket by two soldiers but either from their being hit or from some other cause he bas left by the side of the road. Lord W[ellington] riding that way, on seeing him checked his horse, when Erskin called out 'Never mind me my lord' & then gave him three cheers, he was brought home to his wife that night & is doing as well as possible. When General Barnes was hit, he & major Hamilton having already lost six horses the general was on foot & on the major remonstrating with him on the danger he was unnecessarily exposing himself to in heading a charge on foot, he said 'Then give me yours & go for another' & just as Major H[amilton] touched the ground a French soldier stepped from

the ranks, levelled his musket & the ball struck the general wth such force as to turn him round. Major H[amilton]'s wounds are quite well, his escapes are as marvellous as anybody's having gone four or five times through the wood & to the garden [of Hougoumont] where all the most desperate work was, it being what they call, the key of the position. The [230] business was so hot that one of Lord W[ellington]'s own Staff who had never before been thought a shirker found his nerves fail him when he was sent with orders & was seen to turn about; he was killed afterwards poor fellow. It [Hougoumont] was defended by the Guards who were told that they must skit by the walls after the inside of the house was burnt and they did so. In short, there is no end of the instance of heroism that were displayed from the Duke down to the common men on his tremendous & glorious day. Lord W[ellington]'s conduct since he has been near Paris does him equal credit with the rest.

The Prussians were eager to attack Paris at any risk for the sake of plunder; but Lord W[ellington] said nothing would make him fight & sacrifice his soldiers unnecessarily, that rather than do so he would retire to a stronger position to await til such numbers of the allies surrounded Paris as to force it to yield & that useless glory should not make him risk the life of one of his men. He wished also to save Paris from absolute plunder & destruction. In short he has made the character of England if possible higher than it was by the discipline of his troops & the contrast they form to the Prussians who plunder friend and foe, and destroy everything that comes in their way. The English army has its rewards in this country, for though I believe there is a greater wish among the natives to belong to France than to Holland, the way in which they show their personal affection from the English wounded is quite affecting. There seems to be nothing from the highest to the lowest that they could not do for them; they treat them as if they were their own children. I say, they think everything is too little to show their sense of their good conduct since they came out into this country. As it was the only way in which we could show our thankfulness for our own escape and that of the people we were most interested about, we told the Duke's surgeon that he might make any use of our dining room he chose; accordingly he sent us a Captain Dumaresque, General Byng's Aide de Camp, who having been shot through the lungs, just wanted good air & quiet. Mr Hope occupies Charles' room; he was badly wounded in the arm.[66]

June 1815 Lady Caroline Lamb reports to Viscountess Melbourne from Brussels soon after the battle:

Your letter is the only one of any sort we have received. & very acceptable it was — I cannot describe to you how totally cut off from news of every sort. It is said that Bonaparte & his Brothers having delivered themselves up to the protection of England are gone there & Madame de la Ruilliere (?) to our great regret & hers set out this morning with the Prince de Conde for Cambery by Louis orders. The English name stands so high from Ostend here that it makes one feel proud. The moment they see you every one pulls off their hats & caps, — & if they ask yr. Country & you say "English" they answer "that is passport enough." [. . .]

The great amusement at Bruxelles, indeed the only one except visiting the sick, is to make large parties & go to the held of Battle- & pick up a skull or a grape shot or an old shoe or a letter, & bring it home. William has been, I shall not go — unless when Fred [Ponsonby] gets better, & [171] goes with me. There is a great affectation here of making lint & bandages — but where is there not some? & at least it is an innocent amusement. It is rather a love making moment, the half wounded Officers reclining with pretty ladies visiting them — is dangerous. I also observe a great coxeombality in the dress of the sick— which prognosticates a speedy recovery. It is rather heart-breaking to be here, however, & one goes blubbering about — seeing such fine people without their legs & arms, some in agony, & some getting better. The Prince of Orange enquired much after all his acquaintance; he suffers a great deal, but bears it well. The next door to us has a Col' Millar, very patient, but dreadfully wounded. Lady Conyngham is here — Lady C. Greville — Lady D. Hamilton, Mrs. A. B. c. d. Smith, Lady F. Somerset, Lady F. Webster most affected — & Lady Mountmorress[1] who stuck her parasol yesterday into a skull at Waterloo. Perhaps a certain rivalship makes me see her less favourably, but indeed Lady F. Webster is too ridiculous. Mr. Bradshaw, an amiable Dandy close by me, says it makes him ill for 2 hours after he has seen her. I conclude that you have heard that the D[uke] of Wellington fell desperately in love with her & 2 others, Avhieh was the cause of his not being at the Battle in time. The Duchess of Richmond's fatal Ball has been much censured; there never was such a Ball — so fine & so sad — all the young men who appeared there shot dead a few hours after.

After a great war, when the energies of mankind [172] have been set on destruction and not on construction, it is obvious that the condition of all the countries concerned must be in a very bad state.

After the long years of war with Napoleon England was no exception to this rule. The reduction of the Army after the Battle of Waterloo had made matters worse by throwing a vast number of men out of work, and even before Napoleon's escape the Government had begun to try and help the misery of the poor by bringing in a Corn Bill.

Frederick Lamb was now on his way back from Vienna to Paris, and his mother wrote to him a masterly resume of the probable results of this Bill.[67]

[1] Lady Mountmorres, mother of Lady Frances.

2 July 1815 Charles Percy writes from Peronne to his sister:

Dearest Susan, — I could not spare a moment to write from Brussels, nor have I had any opportunity since. I will give you a detailed account of my operations from my arrival until the present time. On Monday morning at 3 o'clock, after a very disagreeable passage in company with Lord Alvanley, we reached Ostend, where we were detained two hours. From there we pushed our journey, famished and still suffering from nausea, to Brussels, by Bruges, Ghent, &c, &c. We arrived about 5 o'clock. We dined with Lady Sidney Smith, and Henry pursued his course with despatches to Lord Wellington, who was supposed to be at Compiegne, but I have heard nothing of him since.

I stayed two days at Brussels, which place I delight in, and recommend by all manner of means for Louisa (Lady Lovaine) to summer there. Saw Waterloo, but, alas! the dead were all buried; the ground was covered with blood, and looked like a [117] field of crows, it was so covered with caps and helmets. The horror that those who stayed at Brussels suffered is indescribable. All the firing was heard distinctly, and as it receded or advanced their hopes and fears predominated. To add to their alarm, the Cumberland Hussars galloped into the town declaring it was all lost! The Rumbolds and the Duke of Richmond determined to remain. Every moment the dying and the wounded were brought into the town and laid in the Park, where the ladies dressed the less severe wounds, and administered every comfort and consolation in their power.

English and Belgians seem equally to have devoted themselves to the care of the troops. As far as I could ascertain, there were 10,000 wounded in Brussels. You probably have seen the returns long before this. I have not. Sir Sidney Smith saved 117 men, who were left mingled with the dead. He went in his carriage with wine, bread, and ice on purpose. One great inconvenience was the want of a sufficient number of surgeons.

But to return to my journal. Henry procured me a bed at Lord Wellington's. Lady Smith feasted me all day, so that I had none of the little inconveniences which render life burthensome. Our party there consisted of Lady Smith and the Rumbolds, the Duke of Richmond, Berkeley Paget, Lord G. Lennox, and Horace Seymour. I was so [118] busy about horses, commissary, &c, that I saw nothing of Brussels.

I must confess that I felt some dread of setting out on my route to Paris all alone, neither the servants or myself able to speak French! However, I had a pass, an officer's, which ensured me a bed, and some eatables. But then the misery of that indescribable, unmanageable word and thing, ‘a billet’ — how was I to manage for my breakfast, dinner, washing? There was a load of anticipated affliction.

The first day I rode to Mons. You know the road, therefore I shall make no guidish remarks! All the churches, houses, &c, were ornamented with lilies and flags, &c. One would have thought that the people were enthusiastically attached to the Bourbons! But only a week before they appeared with equal enthusiasm as fierce Napoleonists.

You used always to fret me, and say when I was squeamishly delicate, 'If you were to travel, what would you do?' And I always answered that when I had no right to expect comfort and cleanliness, I should do without it as well as my neighbours.

And I find I was quite right. My anticipations had so far exceeded the reality, that I was delighted with my room at Mons (which was by far the most wretched you can conceive), and I felt fearful that I should not have so good again. I dined at a traiteur's, and paid a boy to show me all the lions. The only one I saw was on the principle of the tea [119] garden at Bayswater; and in the centre was a stage where the good people waltzed, and, in my opinion, exquisitely ill.

On my return mine host conveyed me to a cafe, where he smoked into my mouth, obliged me to drink beer and punch, panegyrised his wife, a scarecrow of sixty hung over with loose yellow skin, and told me she was esteemed very like an Englishwoman, so much so that all our country-men mistook her for one!

The next day I proceeded from Mons to Beauvais, and, after two hours' rest, to Gateau, where I was billeted with a *pharmacien*. From Cateau to Cotelet (two hours' rest), to Peronne, where I am writing to you, in the etude of a notaire; he is quite a doat of an attorney, and everything comfortable and clean, like the best inn in England, with much more civility. In consequence, I have decided to give the horses a day's rest here. In three days I shall be at Paris, and from thence I will write the conclusion of Captain Percy's adventures on the staff of General Maitland. They tell me that the King and Lord Wellington are to enter that place to-day.

Nothing can be more nattering hitherto than the reception of the English. The Prussians are detested, and I believe with reason; they pay the French in their own coin. Your affectionate brother,

Charles Percy[68]

15 July 1815 Charles Grenfell to his father, Pascoe Grenfell:

My dear father,
I returned at 7 o'clock this evening from visiting the scenes of the late action; and though we had no other guides than the peasantry have been able to collect sufficient information to put me nearly au fait as to the positions of both armies, on the morning of the action of the 18th, and the general points upon which the contest & carnage was most severe [&] horrendous. The road to Waterloo is one of the finest things I ever saw. At about a mile and a half from the town the Forest of Soignes begins, and continues without any cessation for about 7 miles. The village of Waterloo is situated about half a mile from the termination of the forest & the other generals took up their quarters. The English army were posted on some rising ground about a mile in front of the forest, the line extending about 3 miles their right near Nivelles, their left centre at a country seat called Chateau Hougoumont, the right [left?] at a farm called La Haye Sainte, between which position the artillery were planted on a rising ground commanding several chaussées beyond which the French lines, at a distance of certainly not three hundred yards were drawing up. It was at the two last mentioned places that the action was most bloody. The attack began by the French endeavouring to dispossess the Guards of their position at the Chateau Hougoumont; and it is impossible to conceive anything more horrible that must have been the contest, from the effects that still remain of it. The wood leading to the house may be about four or five acres, and there is scarcely a single tree standing in which the marks of bullets are not visible, and all the smaller trees are actually shot in two, in one trunk I counted eighty gun marks. The houses & buildings of every description are wholly destroyed, a few of the walls are standing, but so perforated with cannon balls that it is almost hazardous to approach too near. The gate at the entrance has not a square inch in it through which the shot has not passed and the whole presents a scene of desolation & ruin I never saw before. The remnants of many a poor fellow be scattered about in all directions; and I saw several skulls & bones which had escaped the notice of those employed to bury the dead. The garden walls were in many places covered with blood and even now the whole field of battle is showered with caps, scabbards, and a variety of things which the peasantry have not thought worth carrying away. I have seen many friends of mine among the wounded, and never was more shocked than it meeting on our road to Waterloo, the litters of two officers of the artillery, whose wounds had not permitted their removal from Waterloo til today. One was a Captain Napier, brother I believe of the Napier's who have in almost every action been so unfortunate. When he passed us, I heard him pray to the men who were carrying him to let him stop, for that he could not bear it; he so bled also groaned with pain; I learned from the men who accompanied him that he had eight most severe wounds from shots & pikes of the lancers. The farm of La Belle Alliance is on the high road and not above three hundred yards from La Haye Sainte, where also the battle was for a long time almost severely contested.[69]

27 July 1815 John Wilson Croker travelled to Paris at the beginning of the month and travels on to Waterloo. He writes in his diary:

We breakfasted at home. Though the weather was still very bad, we were obliged by our want of time to go to Waterloo; so the Duke, the Duchess, and Lady Mary called on us in their landau at 11 o'clock, and we set out. The road goes straight from the town for 10 or 12 miles through the forest, which, in spite of the horrid weather, we thought very fine. It is a *pavé* the whole way, and well for us it was, for with the rain which had been falling the last ten days and quantity of waggons and cannon which had passed it, the *terres* on each side were now quite impassable; indeed, they were black and muddy and deep, like an Irish bog, and the whole way along was strewed with soldiers' hats and caps, broken arms, bones of horses, and other reliques of an army. Waterloo is a little town about half a mile long, prettily situated on the other side of the forest, but distant from the scene of the action about a mile and a half, and separated from it by a couple of pretty woods. Beyond these woods is the little village of Mont St. Jean. Here the Duke had sent his horses for us, and we mounted to ride over the field while the ladies returned to Waterloo. As the Duke had seen the whole action up to 3 o'clock on the 18th,[1] and had been since twice over the ground and knew all the particulars, we could not have had a better guide, and he conducted us over the whole of the ground. Without such a guide we should have seen but little; for one might have passed along the two roads that lead through the ground, nay, might have ridden over it without finding out that anything very extraordinary had passed there. When clear of the woods I have mentioned, you see a great undulating plain, without a hedge or tree, and nothing but two or three farm-houses visible for miles. This plain or succession of little hills is all under tillage, and was covered at the day of the battle with high corn and clover; in many places the oats and clover had [72] grown up again; in some places the farmers had already ploughed up the ground, but in others, where the action had been hottest, the marks of trampling, &c., were still visible. The whole of the extent when you came to ride over it was strewed with the cartridges and waddings of the cannon; letters which had been thrown out of the pockets of the killed and wounded, and the torn remains of hats, caps, and helmets. You also could see the graves into which the dead had been thrown, sometimes singly, sometimes two or more at a time, and in many places by fifties and hundreds. The farm of Hougoumont, which was the right of the action, was totally destroyed, the house and offices burnt and battered with shot, the trees around it (for it had an orchard and a little wood) cut to pieces; its courts and ditches strewed with caps and cartridges, and the fields around it broken up with graves.

On several parts of the field we saw people searching for some remains of plunder, but they had not got much, as the whole had been already carefully gleaned over by the peasants; two boys had two English Lifeguardsmen's swords. All the peasants of Mt. St. Jean and Waterloo have collected great quantities of spoil — clothes, swords, helmets, cuirasses, crosses of the Legion of Honour, &c., which they offer to you for sale. At first these things were bought by the curious cheap enough; now the purchasers are more numerous and the commodity rarer, and therefore their prices are much enhanced. The Duke has bought a dozen of cuirasses taken from the bodies of the French, and Peel bought a very handsome one for two napoleons. I bought for you a little cross of the Legion of Honour, which had been taken from a dead French officer; this cost me one napoleon. I also gave one franc a-piece for half-a-dozen of the broken eagles which the French soldiers wore on the fronts of their caps. The Duchess made me a present of the orderly book of one of the French regiments, which she had bought, and these, with the things I picked up myself on the field, are all my spoils.

The very morning after the battle the peasants were ordered to bury the dead, and when the Duke of Richmond rode over the field on Wednesday morning all the bodies had been already stripped and plundered. This part of the ceremony was performed by the fair sex. The most valuable part of the soldier's dress to the plunderers were the shoes and stockings, which of course they made great haste to lay hold [73] of, except only the stockings of the Highlanders, which could be of no use to them, and therefore one saw their bodies, in other respects naked, lying with their plaid stockings on; but

[1] It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that it is the Duke of Richmond who is here referred to.

this is enough on this subject. We rode back as fast as we could to Waterloo, having got wet to the skin; in the meanwhile, when the Duchess and Lady Mary had laid out a lunch of sandwiches and wine, which they had brought with them, to which the woman of the inn added an omelette and some of the Flemish pancakes called *gaufres*, while Peel and the ladies were cheapening spoils from the villagers, I went to the stove and dried myself. It was in this little inn that the Duke of Wellington had his quarters. On the morning of the battle the poor landlady was weeping and bewailing her danger, but the Duke, she said, encouraged her, and said, slapping her on the shoulders, "*C'est moi qui répond de tout,* personne ne souffrira aujourd'hui des Français excepté les soldats." In this house the Prince of Orange had his wound dressed.

Opposite to the inn door is a curious little chapel, in which one monument is already erected to an officer who fell in the action, a Capt. Fitzgerald, of the Lifeguards, I am told; his poor wife brought out a leaden coffin to remove the body, but it would not go into it, and she was obliged to bury him at Waterloo. Some bodies which had been buried have been taken up and sent to England. One officer, the Duchess told me, of the name of Lindsay, was so disinterred, and, though he had been a fortnight in the earth, when they took him up to remove him he was not in the slightest degree changed; he had been buried in his clothes, and was immediately recognised by his friends. This seems to me very surprising. Some very extraordinary cases of wounds occurred in the action, which I heard of at Brussels. One officer received a severe wound in the shoulder as, it was thought, from a ragged ball, but when the substance came to be extracted it turned out to be a tooth; some poor devil's head had been, it is supposed, knocked to pieces by a cannon ball, and his tooth had been driven into this officer's arm. Another officer had his thigh dreadfully lacerated, and the substance was lodged so deep that the extraction was exceedingly difficult; when it was taken out it was found to be a piece of five francs, and two pieces of one franc each; these two must have been shot out of some other person's pocket, as he declared he had not had them in his own. A soldier, Somerville's [74] surgeon told him, had a ball through the forehead which came out behind, yet is alive and doing well. I have heard twenty other such stories, but these are quite enough to exercise your faith.

We dined again with the Duke of Richmond, and as we could not get away before, and were to be off at dawn of day, I endeavoured to persuade Peel not to go to bed for two or three hours, but to hasten on to Ostend as the wind was fair, and to get there in time to have our carriage embarked; but he would not, which, as afterwards turned out, was very unlucky. He was very stout about travelling all night and every night when we left Paris, and seemed only to fear my laziness or reluctance, and made several speeches in its praise; but the second night, I fancy, did not please him as well as the first, for he said no more on this subject, and seemed a good deal annoyed; and this night, though we were to be in bed but three hours, he was decidedly unwilling to come on.

We are now lying at sea with our sails flapping, and shall think ourselves well off to be at Ramsgate or Deal with the next afternoon's tide.

On Peel's return to Ireland after this trip, he was two nights and a day crossing from Holyhead to Dublin — a journey which now occupies on the average about four hours;[70]

August 1815 Sir David Wilkie visits the battlefield and in December writes to Sir George Beaumont:

Kensington, 12th Dec. 1816.

Dear Sir George,

For some time back I have been only waiting for an occasion to write to you, and am happy now to have such a one as your very obliging letter presents. I thank you for your considerate inquiries about my health, which owes much, I assure you, to such intervals of relaxation as you recommend. With a view to this, indeed, and in order to make a tour that you advised me to long ago, I have lately made a journey through Flanders and Holland.

One of the first circumstances that struck me wherever I went was what you had prepared me for, the resemblance that every thing wore to the Dutch and Flemish pictures. On leaving Ostend, not only the people, the houses, and trees, but whole tracts of country, reminded one of the landscapes of Teniers; and, on getting further into the country, this was only relieved by the pictures of Rubens, Wouvermans, and some other masters, taking his place. I thought I could trace the particular districts in Holland where Ostade, Jan Stein, Cuyp, and Rembrandt had studied, and could fancy the very spot where pictures of other masters had been painted. Indeed, nothing seemed [451] new to me in the whole country; for I had been familiar with it all upon canvas: and, what one could not help wondering at was, that these old masters should have been able to draw the materials of so beautiful a variety of art from so contracted and monotonous a country.

One of the next objects that interested me was the view of the pictures that had been returned from Paris to Antwerp and the Hague. I saw the three great works of Rubens, the Assumption of the Virgin, The Ascent, and The Descent, restored to their places in the Great Church at Antwerp, and never felt more strongly the atrocity of their removal. The other pictures were still upon the ground in the Museum, and I saw them with every advantage for examination.

General Phipps and Mr. Jackson had made the same tour; but as they had landed first in Holland, they had more leisure to examine the private collections, which I entirely missed. I passed Mr. Jackson on the road between Ghent and Brussels, but could not stop him. The general I found at Brussels.

The field of Waterloo was to me, as to every Englishman, a subject of the deepest interest. Whatsoever one's pursuits might be, it was impossible to visit such a place but with the keenest associations. I did not expect that, to a common observer, the genius displayed in the choice of the ground would be so apparent; but it gave me a most striking idea of the powers of our great General. I wonder no one has thought of making a model of the field: the ruin of Hougomont would, by itself, make the finest subject for this that it is possible to conceive.

As I know you will feel interested in any [452] circumstance of a pleasing nature that occurs to me, I cannot refrain from mentioning that the Duke of Wellington has commissioned me to paint him a picture; and that when he was last in England, he called upon me with some friends to give me the subject. He wants it to be a number of soldiers of various descriptions seated upon the benches of the door of a public house, with porter and tobacco, talking over their old stories.

At present we are alive in art. The studies made in the British Gallery are on view, and look more like a school of art than they did before. The entire south room is filled with large drawings of heads and groups of the Cartoons. Haydon has made a great number, of which it is not saying much that they are the best, though there are others of great merit. The copies of the oil pictures are not so good; and as for the Claudes, they have almost all mistaken them.[71]

6 August 1815 Henry Crabb Robinson begins a tour and includes the field at Waterloo. In 1850 he revisits and edits his journal:

Tour in Belgium and Holland.

Rem.[1] - The Battle of Waterloo having taken place in June, I was determined to make a tour in Belgium, to which I was also urged by my friend Thomas Naylor,[2]-- who was my travelling companion from Sunday, August 6th, to Saturday, September 2nd. [494]

I kept a journal of this tour, and have just finished a hasty perusal of it. It contains merely an account of what occurred to myself, and the incidents were so unimpressive that the narrative has brought to my recollection very few persons and very few places. I shall, therefore, not be tempted to dwell upon the events.

Naylor and I went to Margate on the 6th, and next day, after visiting Ramsgate, embarked in a small and unpromising vessel, which brought us to Ostend early on the following morning. There were on board four young men, who, like ourselves, were bound for Waterloo. We agreed to travel together, and I, being the only one who understood any language but English, was elected governor; most of us remained together till the end of the journey. I have lost sight of them all, but I will give their names. There was a young Scotch M.D., named Stewart, whom I afterwards met in London, when he told me the history of his good fortune. It was when travelling in France, after our *rencontre*, that he by accident came to a country inn, where he found a family in great alarm. An English lady was taken in premature labour. The case was perilous. No medical man was there. He offered his services, and continued to attend her until her husband, a General, and personal friend of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wellington, arrived. The General acknowledged him to be the saviour of his wife's life, and in return obtained for him a profitable place on the medical staff of the English army.

The other young men were Barnes, a surgeon, and [495] two merchants or merchants' clerks, Watkins and Williams.

Our journey lay through Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp, Breda, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, the Hague, Delft, Rotterdam, and the Briel, to Helvoetsluys, and from thence to Harwich.

No small part of the tour was in barges. One in particular I enjoyed. It was the voyage from Bruges to Ghent, during which I certainly had more pleasure than I had ever before had on board a vessel, and with no alloy whatever. This canal voyage is considered one of the best in the Netherlands, and our boat, though not superbly furnished, possessed every convenience. We took our passage in the state-cabin, over which was an elegant awning. I found I could write on board with perfect ease; but from time to time I looked out of the cabin-window on a prospect pleasingly diversified by neat and comfortable houses on the banks. The barge proceeded so slowly that we could hardly perceive when it stopped. A man was walking on the side of the canal for a great part of the way, and I therefore suppose our pace was not much more than four miles an hour.

We embarked at half-past ten, and at two o'clock an excellent dinner was served up, consisting of fish, flesh, and fowl, with rich pastry, and plenty of fruit. For this dinner, and the voyage of between thirty and forty miles, we paid each 5fr.

The main object of the tour was to visit the field of the recent great Battle of Waterloo. It was on the 14th of August when we inspected the several points [496] famous in the history of this battle. Not all the vestiges of the conflict were removed. There were arms of trees hanging down, shattered by cannon-balls, and not yet cut off. And there were ruined and burnt cottages in many places, and marks of bullets and balls on both houses

[1]Written in 1850.

[2]Father of Samuel Naylor, the translator of "Reineke Fuchs," and son of Samuel Naylor, of Great Newport Street, agent to Mr. Francis, in whose office Mr. Robinson was an articled clerk. H. C. R. says, "S. Naylor, Senr., took me to the first play I ever saw in London; it was 'Peeping Tom of Coventry.' I have forgotten all about it, excepting that I was troubled by the number of people on the stage, and that I saw and admired Jack Bannister."

and trees; but I saw nothing in particular to impress me, except that in an inn near the field I had a glimpse of a lady in weeds, who was come on a vain search after the body of her husband, slain there. A more uninteresting country, or one more fit for 'a glorious victory,' being flat and almost without trees, than that round Waterloo, cannot be imagined. I saw it some years afterwards, when ugly monuments were erected there, and I can bear witness to the fact of the great resemblance which the aspect of the neighbourhood of Waterloo bears to a village a mile from Cambridge, on the Bury road.

On the field and at other places the peasants brought us relics of the fight. Dr. Stewart purchased a brass cuirass for a napoleon, and pistols &c. were sold to others. For my own part, with no great portion of sentimental feeling, I could have wished myself to pick up some memorial; but a mere purchase was not sufficient to satisfy me.

We dined at Waterloo. Our host was honest, for on my ordering a dinner at 2fr. a head, he said he never made two prices, and should charge only 1½ fr. In the village, which is naked and wretched, a festival was being held in honour of the patron saint; but we were told that, in consequence of the battle, and out of [497]respect to brave men who lay there, there was to be no dancing this year.

In the circular brick church of Waterloo we saw two plain marble monuments, bearing simply the names of the officers of the 1st Foot Guards and 15th King's Hussars who had fallen there. Even the reward of being so named is given but to one in a thousand. Sixty thousand men are said to have been killed or wounded at Waterloo. Will sixty be named hereafter?

In general I admired the towns of Belgium, but Ghent was my favourite. The fine architecture of the Catholic churches of the Netherlands gratified me, while I was disgusted with the nakedness and meanness of the Protestant churches of Holland.

Among the few objects which have left any traces in my memory, the one which impressed me most was the secluded village of Broek, near Amsterdam. My journal for the 21st of August contains the account of our visit to this village and that of Saardam.[72]

Early August, 1815

Nearly seven weeks after to battle the Misses Capel were taken to view the Field of Waterloo. 'I made them go to Waterloo with the D. Of Richmond for I really thought some dissipation necessary' wrote their mother. Next day Georgy wrote the following description:

Nobody could view everything with more deeply interested feelings than I did, as I had so many objects of interest engaged upon the same occasion. The road approaching the position of Waterloo from Brussells is beautiful as it is tho' a fine wood. Each side of the Chausee is marked with mounds of earth covering dead horses, and, to this moment, there are many caps, broken swords and knapsacks stript of their contents; and, lying by the roadside, the damaged biscuit, and the spilt corn which has taken root, shews the track of our soldiers; the road is still very much cut up on each side of the Chausee by the heavy waggons and baggage. Before we reached the plains of Waterloo, we past thro' the village and went into Lord Uxbridge's quarters. Oh my dear Grand Mama, how can I express what I felt When the old woman shewed us in to the room in which he had been carried, the chair on which he sat when his limb was amputated *with blood* upon it. His boot which had been cut off, and the bedding, also covered with *his* blood; she shewed me exactly the spot and answered the numerous questions put to her, most satisfactorily. She appears to feel thoroughly the honor of having sheltered *such a Hero* under her roof and spoke of him in a manner that would have warmed [134] your heart as I am sure it did mine; from the house we went into her pretty neat little garden in the *centre* of which his leg is interred, it was overgrown *with weeds, which we cleared away*. The old woman is expecting a stone with an inscription from Brussels which is to be laid upon it. She also praised his whole *État Major* which comprised tow of our particular Sett [*sic*], and begged we would say 'Milles choses de sa part' to Lord Uxbridge, as he was 'le polus brave Homme du Monde'; this I hope you will say, if you, who must know best, think he will be gratified by the humble and grateful remembrance and admiration of an old woman – From this interesting spot we went to the Duke of Wellington's quarters, which were also the Prince of Orange's, where we saw his bed [the Prince's] covered with blood and the door upon which he [was] carried off the filed. The King has been to see these tokens of his son's sufferings, and the Queen is expected soon. We were also shewn many others, which, as they only concerned Colonel Gordon and several people with whom I believe you are not acquainted, it will only bore you. From thence we proceeded to the position of Waterloo; it would be vain to endeavour to express all the different feelings with which I saw the scene of such horrors, but you can understand them, I am sure. We went to the Farm of Hugoumont, walking across a great part of the Field over graves loosely covered with earth, when our presence scared away thousands of crows and ravens from their ungrateful office. I never saw such marks of war and ravage as at this house, which was almost entirely unroofed, The walls perforated by balls and blackened by fire which has destroyed a great part of it. We went into Generals Maitland's and Byng's Quarters who commanded the Brigades of Gds. *I* went to see the part of the Farm occupied by Colonel Wyndham which was one mass of black and smoke, broken rafters, dust cinders, old bones, bricks, shattered windows, balls, Guard caps and many things which evince the horrid scenes which this once peaceful little farm had witnessed. We then proceeded to the Garden and saw a high wall in which Genl. Byng had caused great holes to be made, from whence the Guards fired upon the French, who were in possession of a small wood on one side of the house; [it] was in defence of this house *upon* which I am told the fate of the day so much depended, where poor Hastings Forbes met his death. The trees are literally barked, balls sticking in them and the ground torn up and strewed with caps and splinters, cannon shots, letters, &c.; we then went into the orchard belonging to the farm where the Grenadiers had behaved so well; in the garden we saw a grave of an officer of the Guards with flowers planted over him. We then went in La Belle Alliance, memorable for being the spot on which the Duke of Wellington and Blucher met after the Battle; at a distance we saw te Telegraph erected by Buonaparte and where they say he mounted to view the fight. But the spot most interesting to me was yet to come, near a house called Haye-Sainte near the road to Chaleroy which was occupied by the French and were *your own* dear Paget made such a magnificent charge. I felt more at hearing and seeing all that concerned the *Cavalry* than at all the rest. The Lennoxes feel quite differently, they think the *Guards* are superlative, [136] chacun à son gout. I would give anything in the world to go over the whole with him, or with

someone who would energetically feel what I do, and explain all I wish to know in their own language, not *womanised*, for tho' I do not pretend to understand their *military* terms it loses much of the effect when the same sense is conveyed in *civil* terms; we spent several hours in walking nd driving about to all the different positions and then return[ed] to Waterloo to dine in the *Prince's* room. After dinner we went to see the grave of a Colonel Richard FitzGerald of the Life Guards who died of his wounds and who was entered in a Catholic burying ground; the spot particularly struck my fancy, it is in a beautiful wood, to reach it we past thro' a Paddock overgrown with underwood; the back of the grave, upon which there was a long inscription, was sheltered by the thick wood, in the front were the dreary plains of Waterloo, as if he had retired from the scenes of his *Glory* to *seek and find rest in these quiet shades*; there was something so tranquil in the whole and so unlooked for on the spot so near the field, that for a moment I forgot what *horrible* commotions had purchased *that* tranquillity; 'Night came, the moon from the East looked on the mournful field, in the narrow plain beneath the oak he lies; a dim ghost defends his tomb – Peace, Peace, Peace to the souls of the Herroes, their deeds were great in fight' – Do not think me very romantic when I own to you that I was thinking of Ossian very often yesterday, and when we walked over the graves I fancied one of the nights he describes so beautifully – 'the leaves whirl round the wind and strew the graves of the dead – at times are seen the Ghosts of the departed, when the musing [137] hunter alone slowly stalks over the field'. Hastins Forbes is buried in Brussells and poor dear Colonel Gordon near one of the gates of this town: 'A tree stands alone and marks the slumbering Hero.' – I believe I have now told you all the particulars of our adventure yesterday, it made us quite melancholy; we had most propitious weather but I think I should have preferred the Moon to the Sun – Peasce which had been scared away, appears almost afraid to return again – tho' the ground is ploughed and many an unhallowed grave disturbed and affords food to flocks of birds of prey – Such, my dear Grand Mama, is a true and faithful account and I hope it has not fatigued yr. Attention. I forgot to say that Muzzy and I bought two cotton handkerchiefs from the fat old woman at Ld Uxbridge's Quarters *pour l'amour de mon oncle sand doute et de son État Major*.

'. . . Mama and Miss Cecilia, Camilla, Theodosia, Elisabeth, Geraldine, Valerie, Priscilla, (who claims all these names without possessing one) are quite well. Papa I am sorry to say is not at all so, tho' he is better than he had been and we were all very good nurses.'

'I have now hopes,' wrote an anxious Caroline next day, 'of seeing poor dear capel relieved from very great suffering – A Tumour has formed on the . . . nape of the neck . . . It was found necessary to open it, which was done this morning; the operation was most painful from the position and depth of the tumour, and I called in a second medical man before it was performed – They . . . Assure me that his general health will be improved by it . . . I would not tell you of this before, or allow the girls to do so, but it has been a sd time for us all. For three [138] weeks, he has, I am certain, not had three hours sleep or cessation of pain – For days together nothing remained on the stomach . . . Thank God he is now asleep, Laudanum having for the first time taken effect.'

On August 10th, . . .[73]

[. . .]

' . . . We returned from Our Tour thoro' those ever Memorable Spots, the Quatre Bras, Genappe & Waterloo, & tho' it was quite dusk I cold not bear to go by the House where poor Paget suffered so much, without going in;

[. . .]

'. . . Has any body read Walter Scott's 'Waterloo' to you? I hope, if you have heard it, that you are as much enraged about it as I am, he had better call it ' The Towers of Hougoumont' for it is full of *Nothing* else – not one word of La Haye Sainte or the Cavalry does he condescend to mention, nor does he grace his *sublime* Pages with a name which must reflect honour upon them and prove a Passport to the Hearts of all his Readers [i.e. Lord uxbridge] – So now dear Grand Mama Pray *read, mark learn & inwardly* digest and Give me yr. Opinion. The fact is Scott came to Brussells with the intention of *writing* a Poem, *par consequence* it is very flat & not altogether correct, for certainly he must have been dreaming when he bestowed *Towers* upon the Farm of Hougoumont; but I have reached the end of my *paper* before my *subject* so Goodbye, dearest best Grand Mama.'[74]

9 August 1815 John Scott visits Waterloo with his brother Sir Walter, he recorded in his Journal:

We visited the field of Waterloo, accompanied by Captain Campbell aide-de-camp to General Sir F. Adam, and Major Pryse Gordon, who then resided at Brussels. After a delightful drive through the beech forest of Soigne, we breakfasted in the Inn which had been the head-quarters of Wellington, on the 17th of June. [44] Thence we proceeded to Mount St. Jean where we left our carriages. Scott was accommodated with a pony, and we were first conducted by our friends to the left of the British position, along the straggling hedge, which extends from the Charleroi road, near Mount St. Jean, towards the hamlet of Papelotte; and examined the ground which had been occupied by the troops of Sir Thomas Picton, Sir Dennis Packe, and Sir James Kempt.

Thence we crossed by the farm of La Haye Sainte towards the right of our position, where the brigade to which one of our companions was attached, had been stationed during the action; and thence descended to Hougomont.

After spending some time in the wood and garden of that most important and severely contested post, we walked along the French line towards La Belle Alliance, where we rested, and engaged Jean de Coster to attend us.

When in the farm-house, or Hotel, as it was now called, several weapons and ornaments, as [45] pistols, eagles, &c., belonging to the French soldiery, were brought to us for sale, and also a few cuirasses of coarse manufacture, one of which was perforated by a bullet. It was the back part of the armour; and from the edges of the hole being turned outwards, it appeared that the shot must have penetrated the body of the unfortunate wearer. It is now at Abbotsford.

The extraordinary love of relics shewn by the English was a subject of no less satisfaction to the cottagers who dwelt near the field, than of ridicule to our military friends. One enthusiast had carried off a brick, another one of the doors of the house. Our own party did not pass over the field without following the example of our countrymen; each of us, I believe, making his own little collection of curiosities. The ground was strewed so completely with shreds of cartridge paper, pieces of leather, and hats, letters, songs, memorandum books, etc. as to resemble.[46]

In a great measure, the place where some vast fair had been held, and where several parties of gypsies had lighted fires at intervals, to cook their victuals.[1] Several of these we picked up, as we walked along; and I still have in my repositories, a letter evidently drenched with rain, dated April 3rd., which, from the portion still legible, must have been sent from Yorkshire; and also a leaf of a jest book, entitled "The Care Killer."

At Hougomont I purchased a bullet of grape shot, with which the wood in front of it had been furiously assailed, as was evinced by the marks visible on every tree.

The time which had elapsed since the date of [47] the action had taken from the scene that degree of horror which it had recently presented; but the vast number of little hillocks, which were scattered about in all directions, — in some places mounds of greater extent, especially near the chaussee above La Haye Sainte, and above all the desolate appearance of Hougomont, where too the smell of the charnel house tainted the air to a sickening degree, gave sufficient tokens of the fearful storm which had swept over this now tranquil rural district.

De Coster then accompanied us to the places which he described as having been the principal stations of Napoleon during the day: and when in the ravine, formed by the causeway between La Belle Alliance and La Haye Sainte, which he pointed out as the spot from which he gave orders for the last charge of the Imperial Guard, "related to us his well known history of the

[1] On this are recorded an interview between a staunch veteran and a manufacturer of Glasgow, and the exploits of some redoubted Fluelleny who insists on haying "a sufficient store of leeks to put in our Monmouth cap on St. Taffie's day, in memories and honours of her prafe Taffie, who in ploody pattle in Bangor, stick leek in hur cap, and cry— Follow, prase boys, and kill our enemies.'

events of the day, and the demeanour of the Emperor[1].”[48]
While listening to these details of the battle, Sir Walter remained seated on his pony near [49] the peasant, to whom, as well as to our other conductors, he put many questions, with keen anxiety. He then rode off by himself from the rest of the party, and remained a long time gazing on the field with an expression of deep attention.

How strong was the impression which this remarkable scene produced in his mind, is proved by the language in which he has himself recorded the feelings with which he contemplated it.

“To recollect,” says he, ”that within a short month, the man who had so long held the highest place in Europe, stood on the ground which I now occupied — “that right opposite was placed the commander, whom the event of the day hailed ‘Vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre,’ — that [50] the landscape, now solitary and peaceful around me, presented so lately a scene of such horrid magnificence to recollect all this, oppressed me with sensations which it is impossible to describe.”

We then proceeded to the farm of La Haye Sainte, and took our last view of the field from the celebrated tree, near which the Duke had so long been stationed with his attendants, and which had been so repeatedly struck by the enemy's artillery.

In concluding these notices of our visit to the field, I cannot help mentioning one or two observations made by Sir Walter Scott many year after, when presiding at a public dinner, which for a considerable period was held annually at Melrose, in commemoration of the battle of Waterloo.

In alluding to the Duke of Wellington and his former services, particularly in the Peninsula, he observed: —

“That in vain had the bravest and most [52] experienced officers of France endeavoured to oppose the advance of the British and their gallant commander. Marshal after marshal had been driven from the field, and now the time had arrived, when their redoubted chief himself was compelled to acknowledge him as his superior.”

When referring to the action itself, his words, as nearly as I can remember, were the following:—

“Never was a battle more remarkable, both for the importance of its results, and for the fame and valour of the combatants. Never was the honor of the British name more bravely asserted, or the efforts of her arms crowned with a more glorious recompense. In speaking of this great contest we may justly say, in the language of Shakspeare—

“Oh ! such a day —
So fought, so followed, and so fairly won—
Ne'er came till now to dignify the times,
Since Caesar's fortunes.” [53]

In the evening we partook of the hospitality of Major Pryse Gordon, and set off the day after to Mons.[75]

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[1]It occasioned at first no small degree of disappointment to discover from the statements which were published by Major Pryse Gordon, and others, respecting this De Coster, that a narrative, which at the time appeared curious and interesting, should have been given on authority so little worthy of consideration. The anecdotes of our guide might no doubt be in some respects actually correct, for he was “a sagacious Walloon,” and likely to pickup the most probable intelligence; or like the ballad of Autolycus, they might be “very true,” certainly, “but a month old.” At all events we must now be content to receive them on no better evidence than that of a person who was “in a hiding place ten miles off, with 'a blacksmith, during the whole day.” — Pryse Gordon's Mem. p. 325, vol. ii.

The Fleming's story was got up with much plausibility. He bore testimony to the coolness displayed by Napoleon–he described his manner. “*Il prenoit de tabac toujours toujours,*” said he; “*come ça*” imitating the action; –"*et il m'en donnoit aussi. Il regardoit fixement la bataille;*” and frequently consulted his watch.

When from his station on the height near La Belle Alliance, he first discovered the Prussians, he hastened, as our guide informed us, to the place where we were then standing, and remained there until the fatal moment when he was assured of the ruin of his army, and exclaimed to Bertrand, A present” c'est fini — Sauvons nous.” “When he saw,” said De Coster,” that the guards were retreating in disorder, horse and foot, in one mass of confusion, “il devonoit pale comme un mort,” and said to his attendants, looking down and shaking his head, “Ils sont melés ensemble.”

August 1815 John Scott publishes his first account of visiting the battlefield with his brother Sir Walter, *Paris Revisited in 1815, by way of Brussels*, 1816.

In this way, certainly, I was struck by the plain of Waterloo. No display, I think, of carnage, violence, and devastation, could have had so pathetic an effect, as the quiet orderly look of its fields, brightened with the sunshine, but thickly strewed with little heaps of up-turned earth, which no sunshine could brighten. On these the eye instantly fell, and the heart, having but a slight call made upon it from without, pronounced with more solemnity to itself, the dreadful thing that lay below, scarcely covered with a sprinkling of mould. On a closer inspection, the ravages of the battle were very apparent, but neither the battered walls, splintered doors, and torn roofs of the farm houses of La Haye Sainte, astounding as [202] they certainly were, nor even the miserably scorched relics of what must have been the beautiful Hougoumont, with its wild orchard, its parterred flower garden, its gently-dignified chateau, and its humble offices, now confounded and overthrown by a visitation, which, from its traces, seemed to have included every possible sort of destruction, not all these harsh features of the contest had, to my mind at least, so direct and irresistible an appeal, as the earthy hillocks which tripped the step on crossing a hedge-row, clearing a fence, or winding along among the grass that overhung a secluded path-way. In some spots they lay in thick clusters and long ranks; in others, one would present itself alone: betwixt these a black scathed circle told that fire had been employed to consume as worthless refuse, what parents cherished, friends esteemed, and women loved. The summer wind that shook the branches of, the trees, and waved the clover and the gaudy heads of the thistles, brought along with it a foul stench, still more hideous to the mind than to the offended sense. The foot that startled the small bird from its [203] rest amidst the grass, disturbed at the same time, some poor remnant of a human being, either a bit of his showy habiliment in which he took pride, or of his war-like accoutrements which were his glory, or of the frame work of his body itself, which he felt as comeliness and strength, the instant before it became a mass of senseless matter.

The length of the road from Brussels to v the village of Waterloo, is about nine miles, and the view, as you leave the city, is very pleasing, and even beautiful. The forest of Soignies soon receives you, and it has a deep, matted, impervious look, which more frequently characterizes the woods of the continent than those of our islands, and which gives them a good deal of poetical interest. My companion, a military Friend, pointed out spots, as we passed along, where the troops halted for an instant, where such a general officer rode by, where some particular circumstance of confusion or distress took place when the wounded and the baggage were returning. The remains of bayonet sheaths, the tatters of caps and jackets, were seen lying [204] along the sides of the road, when we got about four or five miles from Brussels, and so continued for the rest of the way. Many bodies were buried along the whole track, the wounded having sunk at different distances as they crept from the field of battle, according as their strength failed them. For many weeks after the engagement, labourers were employed upon the line of this road to cover the remains of human beings. Behind our carriage, was an English sociable with a party of our countrymen and women on the same errand with ourselves: before it was an English tandem; and, at the doors of the small inns, belonging to one or two hamlets, several English equipages were standing. The people of this foreign land seemed all to look as if they expected us, when we met them on the road. They nodded their heads to each other when they passed us, as if saying, "More of the English for Waterloo!" At last we entered this pretty considerable village, the name of which has such an import in the minds of its visitors, that its quiet rustic look almost surprises them. Waterloo! what a change [205] has suddenly taken place in all the associations of that word! From the obscure indications of the spot where a few dull Flemish rustics had their humble abodes, and went through their monotonous daily tasks, it has been raised to a par with the most famous names of the world, never to be forgotten until some interruption happens to the human race, and sure to form the inspirement of many a future impulse of patriotic emotion, of fiery ambition, and perpetuating and adorning genius. Our carriage rolled on past its humble church, while at the opposite inn we saw a collection of vehicles, all belonging to strangers, horses led by boys backwards and forwards, and a bustle almost as great as occurs in a country town of England, when it happens that a horserace, or a boxing match, takes place in its vicinity.

It is more than a mile from Waterloo to the small hamlet of Mont St. Jean. Probably the Duke of Wellington took little or no note of these few houses, in the immediate front of which his army was formed, and which might therefore have [206] been expected to give their name to the battle, notwithstanding that his headquarters were at Waterloo, at the inn of which he slept on the night of the 17th. Whether it were accident, or intention, however, that caused his Grace's selection of the latter place, to distinguish his achievement, we have reason to be pleased that such a choice was made, for the appellation that must occur so often in future history, and which is so frequently referred to by those of the present time, accords well with the language of the people, to whom, as a property it belongs.

Almost every house in the hamlet of Mont St. Jean, poured forth women and old men, to every fresh arrival of visitors, who eagerly offered relics of the battle for sale. From the complete cuirass, the valuable sabre, carbine, and case of pistols, down to the buttons that had been torn from the jackets of the slain, all the wreck of the field had been industriously collected, and each article found ready purchasers. Letters taken from the pockets of the dead, were frequently offered, and were always eagerly bought. In a bundle, [207] which fell into my hands, I found one addressed to a *"dear brother"* written from Lyons, and congratulating the person to whom it was sent, on his being so fortunate as to receive from the Emperor a situation in the old imperial guard. It mentions the death of a near relation, and says, *"but we must console ourselves by force."* The letter, with its congratulations, and condolences, could have come to hand only a day or two before he who received it was removed beyond all further loss or gain. "Here's fine revolution;" as Hamlet says, "an' we had the trick to see it." In the pockets of the dead German soldiers, it is said, several bibles were found, and in those of the slaughtered French, many of the loose pamphlets and collections of songs which are vended in the Palais Royal.

From St. Jean, the road immediately rises up the back of the ridge, on the height and in the front of which, the infantry of the Duke of Wellington's army was formed in line. The cavalry, at the beginning of the battle, were posted on the St. Jean side of the eminence. The ascent [208] is easy: you reach the top unexpectedly, and the whole field of battle is then at once before the eye. Its sudden burst has the effect of a shock, and few, I believe, are found to put any question for the first five minutes. The point from whence this complete view of the scene, so often pictured in imagination, first presents itself, is one of the most interesting that it includes. It is the summit of the ridge close to the road, over which hangs an old picturesque tree, with a few straggling branches projecting in grotesque shapes from its ragged trunk. The British position extended on the right and left of the road, for the extent of about a mile and three quarters, along the top of a continued line of gentle eminences, immediately confronted by very similar heights, distant from half to three quarters of a mile, along which the French army was posted. The intermediate plain, and the ascent of our ridge, form the field of battle. The tree already mentioned, fixed on the bank above the high road from Brussels to Charleroi, denotes the centre of our position, and, the Duke of Wellington having been near it the greater [209] part of the day, it goes by the name of the "Wellington tree." I found it much shattered with balls, both grape and musket; all of which had been picked out by visitors. Its branches and trunk were terribly splintered. It still retained, however, the vitality of its growth, and will, probably, for many future years, be the first saluting sign to our children and our children's children, who, with feelings of a sacred cast, come to gaze on this theatre of their ancestors' deeds. We who now describe them, must soon join those whose fall we commemorate, and other generations will have their curiosity excited, only to follow us where all human interests cease; but this venerable tree will remain, a long survivor of the grand battle in which it was no slight sufferer, a monument of its circumstances, a conspicuous mark to denote and to impress.

Its old head, rising over the graves of so many gallant men, who dropped under what it withstood, struck one as conveying a mortifying reproach of the weakness of our species. An empire has withered under its shade; the hopes of [210] ambition, the prayers of affection, the strength of the brave, and the skill of talent, lie abortive beneath its branches: yet it will continue to put forth its leaves in the spring, to break the winds of autumn, and to sustain the snows of winter, to overhang succeeding crops, as it overhung the thinning ranks of armies, to shelter the bird, whose note shall echo over fields, that groaned under the crushing wheels of cannon, and shook under the thundering tramp of charging squadrons.

A little way down from this tree, keeping near to the road, is the farm of La Haye Sainte. Here I saw for the first time in my life, a specimen of what war does to the habitations of the peaceful. The spectacle was one of horror, and when contrasted in the mind with the quiet and secure cottages and farm houses of Britain, enforced a lively sense of the good fortune of our

country. The garden was a heap of devastation: hedges were levelled, walls broken down. The door was riddled through and through with all sorts of shot, and furnished a most appalling proof of the fury of the attack, and the determination [211] of the defence. This post, after a most gallant resistance by the party to whom it was entrusted, was forced by the enemy, and every soul within the building bayonetted. Its situation must have rendered this a most alarming- event. On entering into the court yard, the aspect of wretchedness and destruction was still more fearful. The farmer and his family had hastily fled, –nor was there as yet any indications of their returning. A little child came out to us, begging for a sous; the roofs of the dwelling house and offices were knocked into great holes by bombs and cannon balls: the windows were hideous wrecks, –not a pane of glass remaining in the whole range, the frames all broken, and –the fragments hanging most forlornly. The extent of the destruction went beyond all I had ever conceived of such scenes, assisted as one's imagination has of late been by numerous and minute descriptions.

From the farm yard I walked into an enclosed orchard: the combat here had been dreadfully fierce: the paper of the exploded cartridges still lay thickly on the [212] ground, and the caps of the soldiers were strewed about, most of them having holes through them, by which had entered the death of their wearers. The heart exerted itself to discredit the eye, when the latter testified that to some of these decaying bits of felt or leather, the corrupting remains of the heads of human beings were attached. In this orchard the trees were numerous, and in general very slender; but neither my companion nor myself, though we took a regular survey for the purpose, could find one that had escaped being hit by a ball. After observing this I was only astonished that the number of men destroyed on these dreadful occasions is not greater than it is.

Many small heaps of newly up-turned earth disfigured the pleasant green of this orchard, which we quitted by a torn aperture in its hedge, through which the French had forced a violent passage, under a shower of shot, and at the point of the bayonet. The flowered twigs now hung beautifully and silently over the relics of the carnage, and the signs of the tumult. A hasty step across the small ditch, brought me almost [213] upon one of the graves, that were dropped hereabout very thickly. The putrid smell was extremely strong, and the bodies seemed to be hardly covered: a narrow rural footpath wound itself emblematic of the gentleness and peace of nature, through these horrid monuments of man's fury. It led us from the fields to the road, along which we advanced towards the French position. Bodies were extended here by the side of the waggon ruts, only covered with the loose gravel; a man's hand shewed itself to terrify away the look from one of these heaps. As the road began to rise towards the inn of La Belle Alliance, we came, by crossing it in a direction to the left, as looking towards the French position, to the spot where Buonaparte stood, partially sheltered by a sand bank, when he was farthest in advance, and directed the last charge made by his Imperial Guard. Turning now again to look back on the English position, the extent of field on the other side of the road from La Haye Sainte, upward to the ridge which is separated from the Wellington tree by the same common track, appeared [214] to have been the theatre of still more terrible combating than any of which we had as yet observed the vestiges. It was here that the Imperial Guard charged upon the hedge where the Highlanders and Scotch Greys were drawn up, and it was here that they were slaughtered. It was from this side too that the Prussians arrived, overwhelming the already routed French. The graves here lay in large collections, and pits contained the bodies of hundreds of horses. Bayonet sheaths, bits of caps, and the rags of clothes, covered the ground. We walked on to the famous house of La Belle Alliance. It is the most convevenient [*sic*] mark for indicating Buonaparte's place in the battle, as the tree previously mentioned denotes the, post of our commander. In this, as in other respects, the latter has the advantage: La Belle Alliance had been sufficiently repaired to enable its proprietor to derive profit from the circumstances of the time: it had all the vulgar coarse appearance, when I saw it, of a crowded suttling house, and gave a turn to the feelings, very different from that [215] which they received under the influence of the Wellington monument. Its two disordered rooms were full of people drinking, as they stood or walked about. Every one was putting questions, calling for refreshments, their horses, or their guides. There were four or five British parties on the field on the day of my visit to it, and two foreign ones, I believe. Miserable paralytics, aged men and women bent double, and dirty ragged children, gathered about you here, clamorously importunate that you should buy from them eagles, buttons, Serjeants' books of companies, grape-shot, and other refuse of the battle. *"Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them!"*

The two rooms of this Flemish public house, offered a most singular spectacle in the scribbling on their walls, which were covered, like a seat in

Kensington Gardens, with names, inscriptions, drawings, devices, and poetry; all the fruits of those "longings after immortality," that are peculiarly impulsive in the breasts of our country folks, if we many judge by their peculiar taste for [217] these records, written and hieroglyphic. The whimsical humour that distinguishes the public character of these islands, had not been at all repressed by the awful circumstances of the situation. A "Mr. John Todd," had been careful to leave behind him information that he "came to the field of battle at Waterloo, the 10th July 1815," and some one had done him the justice to supply the deficiency, for which his modesty was accountable, by adding, "*veni, vidi, vici*". There was something less pleasant in the bit of biography, tacked by some impartial person to the rather too concise history, which an individual had thought proper to give of his interesting self, in the words "Thomas Jackson:" a pencil inscription in another hand, rendered the memorial less meagre, and more instructive, by stating, that "he was hanged at the last assizes for sheep stealing!" The portrait of "Thomas Sutcliffe, of the second Life-guards," had been delineated on the wall by some friendly hand, in coal outline: a critic on the fine arts, jealous probably of the honour thus paid, had endeavoured [217] to depreciate it by putting the words "ugly *theef*" in very prominent connection with this otherwise flattering imitation. The higher flights of the muse were not wanting in this collection of the effusions of elegant imaginations. The following verse seemed to me worthy of selection from several:

> "The tyrant thought our army to destroy,
> And Belgium to regain by his deceit,
> But British valour did his hopes annoy,
> And warm reception did each project meet."

Less splendid than these commemorations of individuals, was the small branch of fir, which had been stuck on the top of a heap of earth, at the back of the house, under which was laid the body of a French general, who had died here of the wounds which he received in the battle that raged below.

From La Belle Alliance we walked across the ridge of the French position, to the left, as now looking to the English lines, until we reached the ruins of Hugoumont, which formed a strong post in advance of the British right, held by a small detachment of the English Guards and Hanoverians, [218] in spite of the most furious attempts of the enemy, to get possession of it. In the course of our walk, we stumbled into the deep holes made by the shot from our guns, which had plunged into the midst of the French columns. Every now and then we crossed broad rugged tracks, which seemed as if they had been swept by some fiery up-tearing stream, that had hardened in excrescences on the surface of the earth. These were the traces of the squadrons of French cavalry, and denoted the directions in which they gallopped into the battle. Here, too, the heaps of dead were scattered about, and numerous parties of the peasantry were employed in raking more earth over the bodies, their first thin covering of mould having been in many instances washed away by the rains.

The gentle ascent, through a beautiful orchard wood, to the chateau of Hougoumont, presented the most delightful rural images, in close connection with the unequivocal signs of death and horror. Every tree here, also, was wounded by the balls, and the fragments of caps and clothing, indicated what was covered by the many [219] brown hillocks of earth, over which we were obliged to step.

The buildings of Hugoumont were infinitely more shattered than even those of La Haye Sainte. They belong to a gentleman of independent circumstances, who, before the battle, had in this spot one of the pleasantest, and most tranquil-looking retreats that can be imagined. The garden, which had been laid out with great care, in the old style of parterres and walks, was the chief post of the English Guards, who obstinately resisted the inveterate attacks of the large columns moved by the enemy on this, at times insulated, position. These attacks were the commencement of the battle, and were repeated in the violent style of Buonaparte, with encreased means, but were all finally unsuccessful. In one corner the most terrible ravages attested the violence with which the enemy strove to force a passage: trees were felled and laid cross-wise for the purpose of defence, and in a single spot, a mere point, fifty dead bodies lie together, where they all fell. Near to this, there is a black scorched space, where six hundred human [220] corpses, found in these grounds, were collected and burnt. Fire had been set to the buildings in the course of the engagement, and, in short, the whole place seemed to have been the theatre of some supernatural mischief, some celebration of infernal rites, or manifestation of heavenly vengeance.

Proceeding round, to return to the center of the British position by its right, we went along the ridge which here bends backward in the shape of a semi-circle. Near a cluster of trees, the fight seemed to have been very heavy:

about this spot I observed the complete impression of a man's body on the ground, as distinctly marked as if he had fallen on the snow: he had been of a large size, probably either a Life-guards-man or a cuirassier, and the hole, which had taken the shape of his head, was full of a corrupted fluid, that one shuddered to look at. Downward from this, along the easy slope, which slants off to the farm of La Haye Sainte, the charges of the cavalry had trampled deep scarrings into the ground: all the surface of the field here [221] was torn and scattered by the hurricane of the battle: here too we came upon vast pits, in each of which hundreds of horses had been buried, and which flung a fearful stench over the whole extent of this most impressive scene.

Returned again to the Wellington tree, we walked from it, along the position of the left wing of the British army. A broken and ragged hedge fringes the top of the line of eminence after crossing the road, and a long rank of graves, lying under this hedge, intimates the loss of the brave highlanders, who from here met and destroyed the imperial guard.

But enough of particular description has now been given; I hope, however, not too much. The public and private interests, connecting themselves with the events that have left these affecting vestiges, warrant a considerable minuteness of detail. Curiosity cannot be easily surfeited, nor feeling palled on such a theme; and I trust that I have not come too late to experience a portion of the advantage which has thus been enjoyed by the many writers who have [222] taken Waterloo for their subject. But to my mind, I must confess, it appears, that there can be no tiring in dwelling on what directs and kindles the contemplation of gigantic efforts of character, called up by stupendous circumstances, including almost every ingredient of sublimity, such as pomp, terror, triumph, power, and weakness. I would set him down, at once, as either diseased or dull, who would object, either in the tone of humanity or philosophy, to the gross exhibitions of these scenes. It is true the materials are of blood, and the various signs of carnage, but the temper that shrinks from the spectacle cannot know of what human nature consists, of what it is capable, and how it should be treated. Some who are forward to represent in a favourable light that faulty frame of personal disposition which engenders wars, shrink back within their pampered sensibilities, from all that can direct their imaginations to the actual features of these mortal contests. But this is surely reversing the healthy process of a well-constituted mind: the external phenomenon is often [223] grand, when the cause is dark and pestilential: –the effects in those who are influenced, belong to the highest order of poetry, --but the influence itself is hateful selfishness. For the few, there may be exaltations and exercises of spirit, of a purer and loftier kind than any that great battles can furnish, –but the animations of the latter are by far the most universally operative to lift, to inflame, to agitate, –to stir the human affections, –to extend the connected chain of feelings, –to call forth what is most peculiarly human in the nature of man, –what chiefly distinguishes him from the inferior animals. What genius can do for some by its exertions in literature and art a battle can do for all, namely strengthen the action of the faculties, widen the sphere of the sympathies, and encrease the ardour of the passions. A battle and a devotional exercise, are the only means of raising up the style of thought and feeling in common breasts, to the standard of keen spirits and refined fancies. There is on these occasions a grand community of soul, pervading multitudes, who, [225] in all common cases, and on all common subjects, have scarcely a point of contact, or a clue to sympathy. There will ever be exceptions; there will ever be grovellers and dastards in war, and hypocrites in religion, but enthusiasm generally takes place under these stimulants, and enthusiasm causes "the toe of the peasant to come near the heel of the courtier."

The feeling on leaving the field of Waterloo, was that which attends committing a paltry desertion. What right had the living thus, as a matter of course, to quit the graves of the dead, to go about their pleasures, and their profits, to enjoy their friends and their families, to talk, and to dress, to eat, and to sleep? Thousands of those who were accustomed to do all this, who were dear to their friends and to their families, who had tastes for pleasures, and calls to business, entered it never to quit it more: and what interest had they in the cause, more than the crowds who took a summer morning's walk over their bodies, to return when wearied, and derive consequence from the exploit! There is nothing to be said for it, but as he has [225] said, who says what is best for every thing and every body.

"Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play:
For some must watch, while some may sleep, –
Thus runs the world away."–

On returning to the village of Waterloo, I went over from the inn to the church: the boys around the door stood there in waiting for British

visitors, and made rather a riotous play of shewing the simple monuments to some of the slain, which have been put up against the walls by their surviving brother officers. On two plain tablets of stone, the names of several gallant gentlemen of the foot guards, and of the fifteenth hussars are engraved, as having "fallen gloriously in the battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo;" and it is added, that these memorials have been erected by the officers of the regiments specified, in commemoration of their companions. The boys, who were not the most congenial associates in such a pilgrimage, but whom it was impossible to shake off, went on, laughing and calling, to shew us the way, along the path of a pleasant little Wood, to the spot, rural, [226] quiet, and secluded, were two flat stones, lying on the ground, pointed out the graves of Lieutenant Colonel Fitzgerald of the second Life Guards, and of Colonel De Langrehr, commandant of the first battalion of Bremen.

I am now about to bid adieu to a theme which has occupied a very considerable portion of these pages, and from which to any other, must be a descent.[76]

May 4. — Having risen, foolishly paid 40 naps, to [62] the coachmaker. My Lord and servant stepped into the caliche. I and a servant got on horseback, and went to Waterloo. We soon entered Soignies, which on both sides formed a beautiful wood (not forest, for it was not wild on either side) for several miles. The avenue it formed varied in length: sometimes the end was formed by a turn of the road, sometimes by the mere perspective effect of narrowing. The trees are all young—none of above thirty years' growth. We then reached Waterloo, where were the head-quarters of Napoleon. An officious host pressed us to order dinner. We ran from his pressing, and advancing came to St. Jean, where the boys continued the offerings we first had at Waterloo of buttons, books, etc. This was the village which gave the French name to the battle, I believe, as it was the spot which Napoleon tried to gain. The view of the plain, as we advanced to the right, struck us as fields formed almost with the hopes that spirit and war would make their havoc here. Gentle risings, sufficient to give advantage to the attacked — few hedges—few trees. There was no sign of desolation to attract the passer-by; if it were not for the importunity of boys, and the glitter of buttons in their hands, there would be no sign of war. The peasant whistled as blithely, the green of Nature was as deep, and the trees waved their branches as softly, as before the battle. The [63] houses were repaired. Only a few spots with white plaster between the bricks pointed out the cannon's ruin; and in ruins there was only Hougoumont, which was attacked so bravely and defended so easily — at least so I should imagine from the few killed in the garden and the appearance of the whole, while so many French lay dead in the field. In the garden were only 25 English killed, while in the field 1500; and on the other side 600 French, not counting the wounded, were slain. Indeed, the gallantry, the resolution and courage, which the French displayed in attacking this place, guarded from the heights by our cannon, and by our soldiers through the loop-holes, would alone ennoble the cause in which they fought. Before arriving at Hougoumont, the spots where Hill, Picton, and the Scotch Greys did their several deeds, were pointed out to us. The spot which bore the dreadful charge of cavalry is only marked by a hedge. The cuirassiers advancing, the Scots divided — showed a masked battery, which fired grape into the adverse party's ranks — then it was the Scots attacked. I do not now so much wonder at their victory. The cuirasses which we saw were almost all marked with bullets, lance- and sabre-cuts. Buonaparte and the French, our guide said, much admired the good discipline and undaunted courage of the short-kilted Scot. Going forward, the spot at which [64] the Prussians, the lucky gainers of the battle, emerged, was pointed out to us — and, a little farther on, we were shown the spot where Colonel Howard, my friend's cousin, was buried before being carried to England. Three trees, of which one is cut down, mark the spot, now ploughed over. At Hougoumont we saw the untouched chapel where our wounded lay, and where the fire consumed the toes of a crucifix. We there inscribed our names amongst cits and lords. We found here a gardener who pointed out the garden — the gate where the French were all burnt — the gap in the hedge where the French attempted, after the loss of 1500 men, to storm the place — the field, quarter of an acre, in which were heaps of Gallic corpses. The gardener and the dog, which we saw, had been detained at Hougoumont by General Maitland in case of a retreat. The peasants declare that from 4 to 5 the affair was very, very doubtful, and that at the last charge of the Imperial Guards Napoleon was certain of being in Brussels in quatre heures. Wellington, after the defeat of the Prussians etc., on the 17th went to Waterloo, and determined where he would place each corps. This was a great advantage: but, in spite of the excellence of his position, he would certainly have been defeated had it not been for the fortunate advance of the Prussians. From Hougoumont [65] we went to the red-tiled house which is the rebuilding of the house where was Buonaparte's last station and head-quarters. It was from this spot that he viewed the arrival of the Prussians, under the idea of their being the corps of Grouchy. It was here he felt first the certainty of defeat, just after he had led the old Imperial Guard, in the certainty of victory, to his last attack. La Belle Alliance next appeared along the road, here where Wellington and Blucher met. The name is derived from a marriage in the time of peace: it is now applicable to a war-meeting. Thence we returned to St. Jean, after going again to Hougoumont. There we were shown cuirasses, helms, buttons, swords, eagles, and regiment-books. We bought the helms, cuirasses, swords,

etc., of an officer and soldier of cuirassiers, besides eagles, cockades, etc. Beggars, the result of English profusion. A dinner, measured by some hungry John Bull's hungry stomach. We rode off the field, my companion singing a Turkish song—myself silent, full gallop cantering over the field, the finest one imaginable for a battle. The guide told us that the account Buonaparte's guide gave of him after the battle was that he only asked the road to Paris, not saying anything else.

At Hougoumont various spots were pointed out: amongst the rest the one where Maitland stood [66] watching a telegraph on the neighbouring rise, which told him what was going on on both sides.

We rode home together through Soignies forest — black. The twilight made the whole length of the road more pleasing. On reaching home, we found the coach was jogged; so much so that it would not allow us to put confidence in it, etc. At last we gave it into Mr. Gordon's hands. My friend has written twenty-six stanzas Q) to-day — some on Waterloo.

[There are a few points in this narrative of May 4 which call for a little comment.

1. As to " the spot where Colonel Howard, my friend's cousin, was buried before being carried to England." Few passages in the 3rd canto of Childe Harold, which in its opening deals with Byron's experiences in these days, are better known than the stanzas (29 to 31) where he celebrates the death of "young gallant Howard."

   Stanza 30 is the one most germane to our immediate purpose — "There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee, And mine were nothing, had I such to give. But, when I stood beneath the fresh green tree which having waves where thou didst cease to live, And saw around me the wide field revive With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring Come forth her work of gladness to contrive, with all her reckless birds upon the wing, I tum'd from all she brought to those she could not bring."

2. The statement that "the coach was jogged" [67] refers to that caleche which had been just bought in Brussels for the servants — not to the elaborate travelling-carriage. Some trouble ensued over the caliche. The coachmaker who had sold it tried to make Lord Byron pay up the balance of the price. Not carrying his point, he got a warrant-officer to seize a different vehicle, a chaise, belonging to the poet. The latter, so far as appears, took no further steps,

3. To write twenty-six stanzas in one day is no small feat; especially if these are the nine-line stanzas of Childe Harold, and if the substantial work of the day consisted in riding from Brussels to Waterloo and back, and deliberately inspecting the field of battle. The entry, as written by Charlotte Polidori, stands thus — "26 St.," which I apprehend can only mean "stanzas." If one were to suppose that the Stanzas thus written on May 4 were the first twenty-six stanzas of Childe Harold, canto 3 (but this of course is not a necessary inference), Byron now got up to the stanza which begins "And wild and high the 'Camerons' gathering' rose."]

I made up my accounts, and was not a little startled by a deficit of 10 napoleons, which I at last found was a mere miscalculation. Rode about thirty miles in all.

Forgot to say I saw Sir Nath[aniel] Wraxall at [68] Dover, who, having introduced himself to Lord Byron as a friend defamille, began talking, knocking his feet in rattattat, still all the while oppressed by feeling very awkward.

[I do not find in Byron's correspondence any reference to this interview, on April 25 or 26, with Sir Nathaniel Wraxall. But, in his letter of April 25 to his half-sister, he mentions that he met on the 24th with Colonel Wildman, an old school-fellow, and later on the purchaser of Newstead Abbey, who gave him some details concerning the death of Colonel Howard at Waterloo.]

At Brussels, the people were in a great stew, the night of the battle of Waterloo — their servants and others waking them every minute to tell them the French were at the gates. Some Germans went there with mighty great courage, in flight. Lord W[ellington?] sent to a colonel to enquire whether he was going to fly from or to the battle, giving him his choice to act in either way. On hearing this, the said colonel boldly faced about, and trotted to Brussels with his troop. A supernumerary aide-de-camp, the brother of N., with two others, was riding between the ranks while the French were firing ; when, ours crying out " They aim at you," all three were struck in the jaw, much in the same place, dead. After the battle, a friend asking what was

become of N., the [69] Serjeant pointed to his feet, saying "There," which was fact. Dacosta, the guide, says that Buonaparte was cool and collected till the Prussians arrived; that then he said to Bertrand, "That appears to be the Prussian eagle "; and, upon Bertrand's assenting, his face became momentarily pale. He says that, when he led up the Imperial Guard, on arriving at the red-tiled house, he went behind a hillock, so as not to be seen, and so gave them the slip. Wellington acted the soldier when he should have acted the general, and the light-limbed dancer when he should have been the soldier. I cannot, after viewing the ground, and bearing in mind the men's superior courage, give Wellington the palm of generalship that has been snatched for him by so many of his admirers. Napoleon only took one glass of wine from the beginning of the battle to the end of his flight.

10 August 1815 Sir Walter Scott writes to the Duke of Buccleauch following his visit to the battlefield.

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &tc.

My dear Lord Duke,

I promised to let you hear of my wanderings, however unimportant; and have now the pleasure of informing your Grace, that I am at this present time an inhabitant of the Premier Hotel de Cambrai, after having been about a week upon the Continent. We landed at Helvoet, and proceeded to Brussels, by [356] Bergen-op-Zoom and Antwerp, both of which are very strongly fortified. The ravages of war are little remarked in a country so rich by nature; but every thing seems at present stationary, or rather retrograde, where capital is required. The chateaux are deserted, and going to decay; no new houses are built, and those of [an] older date are passing rapidly into the possession of a class inferior to those for whom we must suppose them to have been built. Even the old gentlewoman of Babylon has lost much of her splendour, and her robes and pomp are of a description far subordinate to the costume of her more magnificent days. The dresses of the priests were worn and shabby, both at Antwerp and Brussels, and reminded me of the decayed wardrobe of a bankrupt theatre: yet, though the gentry and priesthood have suffered, the eternal bounty of nature has protected the lower ranks against much distress. The unexampled fertility of the soil gives them all, and more than they want; and could they but sell the grain which they raise in the Netherlands, nothing else would be wanting to render them the richest people (common people, that is to say) in the world.

On Wednesday last, I rode over the field of Waterloo, now for ever consecrated to immortality. The more ghastly tokens of the carnage are now removed, the bodies both of men and horses being either burned or buried; but all the ground is still torn with the shot and shells, and covered with cartridges, old hats, and shoes, and various relics of the fray which the peasants have not thought worth removing. Besides, at Waterloo and all the hamlets in the vicinage, there is a mart established for cuirasses; for the eagles worn by the imperial guard on their caps; for casques, swords, carbines, and similar articles. I have bought two handsome cuirasses, and intend them, one for Bowhill, and one for [357] Abbotsford, if I can get them safe over, which Major Pryse Gordon has promised to manage for me. I have also, for your Grace, one of the little memorandum-books, which I picked up on the field, in which every French soldier was obliged to enter his receipts and expenditure, his services, and even his punishments. The field was covered with fragments of these records. I also got a good MS. collection of French songs, probably the work of some young officer, and a croix of the Legion of Honour. I enclose, under another cover, a sketch of the battle, made at Brussels. It is not, I understand, strictly accurate; but sufficiently so to give a good notion of what took place. In fact, it would require twenty separate plans to give an idea of the battle at its various stages. The front, upon which the armies engaged, does not exceed a long mile. Our line, indeed, originally extended half a-mile farther towards the village of Brain-la-Leude; but as the French indicated no disposition to attack in that direction, the troops which occupied this space were gradually concentrated by Lord Wellington, and made to advance till they had reached **Hougomont** a sort of chateau, with a garden and wood attached to it, which was powerfully and effectually maintained by the Guards during the action. This place was particularly interesting. It was a quiet-looking gentleman's house, which had been burnt by the French shells. The defenders, burnt out of the house itself, betook themselves to the little garden, where, breaking loop-holes through the brick walls, they kept up a most destructive fire on the assailants, who had possessed themselves of a little wood which surrounds the villa on one side. In this spot vast numbers had died; and, being hastily buried, the smell is most offensive at this moment. Indeed, I felt the same annoyance in many parts of the field; and, did I live near the[358] spot, I should be anxious about the diseases which this steaming carnage might occasion. The rest of the ground, excepting this chateau, and a farm-house called La Hay Sainte, early taken, and long held, by the French, because it was too close under the brow of the descent on which our artillery was placed to admit of the pieces being depressed so as to play into it, the rest of the ground, I say, is quite open, and

lies between two ridges, one of which (Mont St Jean) was constantly occupied by the English; the other, upon which is the farm of La Belle Alliance, was the position of the French. The slopes between are gentle and varied; the ground every where practicable for cavalry, as was well experienced on that memorable day. The cuirassiers, despite their arms of proof, were quite inferior to our heavy dragoons. The meeting of the two bodies occasioned a noise, not unaptly compared to the tinkering and hammering of a smith's shop. Generally the cuirassiers came on stooping their heads very low, and giving point; the British frequently struck away their casques while they were in this position, and then laid at the bare head. Officers and soldiers all fought, hand to hand, without distinction; and many of the former owed their life to dexterity at their weapon, and personal strength of body. Shaw, the milling Life-Guards' man, whom your Grace may remember among the champions of The Fancy, maintained the honour of the fist, and killed or disabled upwards of twenty Frenchmen, with his single arm, until he was killed by the assault of numbers. At one place, where there is a precipitous sand or gravel pit, the heavy English cavalry drove many of the cuirassiers over pell-mell, and followed over themselves like fox-hunters. The conduct of the infantry and artillery was equally, or, if possible, more distinguished, and it was all fully necessary; for, besides that [359] our army was much outnumbered, a great part of the sum-total were foreigners. Of these, the Brunswickers and Hanoverians behaved very well; the Belgians but sorrily enough. On one occasion, when a Belgic regiment fairly ran off, Lord Wellington rode up to them, and said, "My lads, you must be a little blown; come, do take your breath for a moment, and then we'll go back, and try if we can do a little better;' and he actually carried them back to the charge. He was, indeed, upon that day, every where, and the soul of every thing; nor could less than his personal endeavours have supported the spirits of the men through a contest so long, so desperate, and so unequal. At his last attack, Buonaparte brought up 15,000 of his Guard, who had never drawn trigger during the day. It was upon their failure that his hopes abandoned him.

I spoke long with a shrewd Flemish peasant, called John De Costar, whom he had seized upon as his guide, and who remained beside him the whole day, and afterwards accompanied him in his flight as far as Charleroi. Your Grace may be sure that I interrogated Mynheer very closely about what he heard and saw. He guided me to the spot where Buonaparte remained during the latter part of the action. It was in the highway from Brussels to Charleroi, where it runs between two high banks, on each of which was a French battery. He was pretty well sheltered from the English fire; and, though many bullets flew over his head, neither he nor any of his suite were touched. His other stations, during that day, were still more remote from all danger. The story of his having an observatory erected for him is a mistake. There is such a thing, and he repaired to it during the action; but it was built or erected some months before, for the purpose of a trigonometrical survey of the country, by [360] the King of the Netherlands. Bony's last position was nearly fronting a tree, where the Duke of Wellington was stationed; there was not more than a quarter of a mile between them; but Bony was well sheltered, and the Duke so much exposed, that the tree is barked in several places by the cannon-balls levelled at him. As for Bony, De Costar says he was very cool during the whole day, and even gay. As the cannon-balls flew over them, De Costar ducked; at which the Emperor laughed, and told him they would hit him all the same. At length, about the time he made his grand and last effort, the fire of the Prussian artillery was heard upon his right, and the heads of their columns became visible pressing out of the woods. Aid-de-camp after aid-de-camp came with the tidings of their advance, to which Bony only replied, *attendez, attendez un instant,* until he saw his troops, *fantassins et cavaliers*, return in disorder from the attack. He then observed hastily to a general beside him, *je crois qu'ils sont mêlés*. The person to whom he spoke, hastily raised the spyglass to his eye; but Bony, whom the first glance had satisfied of their total discomfiture, bent his face to the ground, and shook his head twice, his complexion being then as pale as death. The general then said something, to which Buonaparte answered, c'est trop tard sauvons nous. Just at that moment, the allied troops, cavalry and infantry, appeared in full advance on all hands; and the Prussians, operating upon the right flank of the French, were rapidly gaining their rear. Bony, therefore, was compelled to abandon the high-road, which, besides, was choked with dead, with baggage, and with cannon; and, gaining the open country, kept at full gallop, until he gained, like Johnnie Cope, the van of the flying army. The marshals followed his example; and it was the most complete *sauve qui peut* that can well be imagined. Nevertheless, the [361] prisoners who were brought into Brussels maintained their national impudence, and boldly avowed their intention of sacking the city with every sort of severity. At the same time they had friends there. One man of rank and wealth went over to Bony during the action, and I saw his hotel converted into an hospital for wounded soldiers. It occupied

one-half of one of the sides of the Place Royale, a noble square, which your Grace has probably seen. But, in general, the inhabitants of Brussels were very differently disposed; and their benevolence to our poor wounded fellows was unbounded. The difficulty was to prevent them from killing their guests with kindness, by giving them butcher's meat and wine during their fever. As I cannot put my letter into post until we get to Paris, I shall continue it as we get along.[78]

Mid August, 1815

Nearly seven weeks after to battle the Misses Capel were taken to view the Field of Waterloo. 'I made them go to Waterloo with the D. Of Richmond for I really thought some dissipation necessary.' wrote their mother. Next day Georgy wrote the following description:

Nobody could view everything with more deeply interested feelings than I did, as I had so many objects of interest engaged upon the same occasion. The road approaching the position of Waterloo from Brussells is beautiful as it is tho' a fine wood. Each side of the Chausee is marked with mounds of earth covering dead horses, and, to this moment, there are many caps, broken swords and knapsacks stript of their contents; and, lying by the roadside, the damaged biscuit, and the spilt corn which has taken root, shews the track of our soldiers; the road is still very much cut up on each side of the Chausee by the heavy waggons and baggage. Before we reached the plains of Waterloo, we past thro' the village and went into Lord Uxbridge's quarters. Oh my dear Grand Mama, how can I express what I felt When the old woman shewed us into the room in which he had been carried, the chair on which he sat when his limb was amputated *with blood* upon it. His boot which had been cut off, and the bedding, also covered with *his* blood; she shewed me exactly the spot and answered the numerous questions put to her, most satisfactorily. She appears to feel thoroughly the honor of having sheltered *such a Hero* under her roof and spoke of him in a manner that would have warmed [134] your heart as I am sure it did mine; from the house we went inot her pretty neat little garden in the *centre* of which his leg is interred, it was overgrown *with weeds, which we cleared away*. The old woman is expecting a stone with an inscription from Brussells which is to be laid upon it. She also praised his whole *État Major* which comprised tow of our particular Sett [*sic*], and begged we would say 'Milles choses de sa part' to Lord Uxbridge, as he was 'le polus brave Homme du Monde'; this I hope you will say, if you, who must know best, think he will be gratified by the humble and grateful remembrance and admiration of an old woman – From this interesting spot we went to the Duke of Wellington's quarters, which were also the Prince of Orange's, where we saw his bed [the Prince's] covered with blood and the door upon which he [was] carried off the filed. The King has been to see these tokens of his son's sufferings, and the Queen is expected soon. We were also shewn many others, which, as they only concerned Colonel Gordon and several people with whom I believe you are not acquainted, it will only bore you. From thence we proceeded to the position of Waterloo; it would be vain to endeavour to express all the different feelings with which I saw the scene of such horrors, but you can understand them, I am sure. We went to the Farm of Hugoumont, walking across a great part of the Field over graves loosely covered with earth, when our presence scared away thousands of crows and ravens from their ungrateful office. I never saw such marks of war and ravage as at this house, which was almost entirely unroofed, The walls perforated by balls and blackened by fire which has destroyed a great part of it. We went into Generals Maitland's and Byng's Quarters who commanded the Brigaes of Gds. *I* went to see the part of the Farm occupied by Colonel Wyndham which was one mass of black and smoke, broken rafters, dust cinders, old bones, bricks, shattered windows, balls, Guard caps and many things which evince the horrid scenes which this once peaceful little farm had witnessed. We then proceeded to the Garden and saw a high wall in which Genl. Byng had caused great holes to be made, from whence the Guards fired upon the French, who were in possession of a small wood on one side of the house; [it] was in defence of this house *upon* which I am told the fate of the day so much depended, where poor Hastings Forbes met his death. The trees are literally barked, balls sticking in them and the ground torn up and strewed with caps and splinters, cannon shots, letters, &c.; we then went into the orchard belonging to the farm where the Grenadeers had behaved so well; in the garden we saw a grave of an officer of the Guards with flowers planted over him. We then went in La Belle Alliance, memorable for being the spot on which the Duke of Wellington and Blucher met after the Battle; at a distance we saw te Telegraph erected by Buonaparte and where they say he mounted to view the fight. But the spot most interesting to me was yet to come, near a house called Haye-Sainte near the road to Chaleroy which was occupied by the French and were *your own* dear Paget made such a magnificent charge. I felt more at hearing and seeing all that concerned the *Cavalry* than at all the rest. The Lennoxes feel quite differently, they think the *Guards* are superlative, [136] chacun à son gout. I would give anything in the world to go over the whole with him, or with someone who would energetically feel what I do, and explain all I wish to know in their own language, not *womanised*, for tho' I do not pretend to

understand their *military* terms it loses much of the effect when the same sense is conveyed in *civil* terms; we spent several hours in walking nd driving about to all the different positions and then return[ed] to Waterloo to dine in the *Prince's* room. After dinner we went to see the grave of a Colonel Richard FitzGerald of the Life Guards who died of his wounds and who was eterred [ie interred] in a Catholic burying ground; the spot particularly struck my fancy, it is in a beautiful wood, to reach it we past thro' a Paddock overgrown with underwood; the back of the grave, upon which there was a long inscription, was sheltered by the thick wood, in the front were the dreary plains of Waterloo, as if he had retired from the scenes of his *Glory* to *seek and find rest in these quiet shades*; there was something so tranquil in the whole and so unlooked for on the spot so near the field, that for a moment I forgot what *horrible* commotions had purchased *that* tranquillity; 'Night came, the moon from the East looked on the mournful field, in the narrow plain beneath the oak he lies; a dim ghost defends his tomb – Peace, Peace, Peace to the souls of the Herroes, their deeds were great in fight' – Do not think me very romantic when I own to you that I was thinking of Ossian very often yesterday, and when we walked over the graves I fancied one of the nights he describes so beautifully – 'the leaves whirl round the wind and strew the graves of the dead – at times are seen the Ghosts of the departed, when the musing [137] hunter alone slowly stalks over the field'. Hastins Forbes is buried in Brussells and poor dear Colonel Gordon near one of the gates of this town: 'A tree stands alon and marks the slumbering Hero.' – I believe I have now told you all the particulars of our adventure yesterday, it made us quite melancholy; we had most propitious weather but I think I should have preferred the Moon to the Sun – Peasce which had been scared away, appears almost afraid to return again – tho' the ground is ploughed and many an unhallowed grave disturbed and affords food to flocks of birds of prey – Such, my dear Grand Mama, is a true and faithful account and I hope it has not fatigued yr. Attention. I forgot to say that Muzzy and I bought two cotton handkerchiefs from the fat old woman at Ld Uxbridge's Quarters *pour l'amour de mon oncle sand doute et de son État Major*.

'. . . Mama and Miss Cecilia, Camilla, Theodosia, Elisabeth, Geraldine, Valerie, Priscilla, (who claims all these names without possessing one) are quite well. Papa I am sorry to say is not at all so, tho' he is better than he had been and we were all very good nurses.'

'I have now hopes,' wrote an anxious Caroline next day, 'of seeing poor dear Capel relieved from very great suffering – A Tumour has formed on the . . . nape of the neck . . . It was found necessary to open it, which was done this morning; the operation was most painful from the position and depth of the tumour, and I called in a second medical man before it was performed – They . . . Assure me that his general health will be improved by it . . . I would not tell you of this before, or allow the girls to do so, but it has been a sd time for us all. For three [138] weeks, he has, I am certain, not had three hours sleep or cessation of pain – For days together nothing remained on the stomach . . . Thank God he is now asleep, Laudanum having for the first time taken effect.'

On August 10th, . . .

[. . .]

' . . . We returned from Our Tour thoro' those ever Memorable Spots, the Quatre Bras, Genappe & Waterloo, & tho' it was quite dusk I cold not bear to go by the House where poor Paget suffered so much, without going in;

[. . .]

'. . . Has any body read Walter Scott's 'Waterloo' to you? I hope, if you have heard it, that you are as much enraged about it as I am, he had better call it ' The Towers of Hougoumont' for it is full of *Nothing* else – not one word of La Haye Sainte or the Cavalry does he condescend to mention, nor does he grace his *sublime* Pages with a name which must reflect honour upon them and prove a Passport to the Hearts of all his Readers [i.e. Lord uxbridge] – So now dear Grand Mama Pray *read, mark learn & inwardly* digest and Give me yr. Opinion. The fact is Scott coame to Brussells with the intention of *writing* a Poem, *par consequence* it is very flat & not altogether correct, for certainly he must have been dreaming when he bestowed *Towers* upon the Farm of Hougoumont; but I have reached the end of my *paper* before my *subject* so Goodbye, dearest best Grand Mama.'[79]

3 October 1815 Robert Southey, the poet Laureate, visits Brussels and travels on to view the battlefield. He writes in his *Journal*:

Left Brussels after an early breakfast and went thro' the Forest of Soigny to Waterloo. The forest is for the most part a close plantation, approaching so close to the road as to shade it and prevent it from drying. There are wells in all the villages, and almost at every house; they are generally under a shed, perfectly secured against any accident from carelessness, and with a wheel over which the rope passes. The church at Waterloo is a singular and not unhandsome building, considering its size and materials, with a dome. It is some distance from thence thro' the Forest to the scene of action, which commences at Mont St. Jean. We neglected to mark the distance, and now differ about it, some saying scarcely one mile, others extending it to three, to which latter opinion I more nearly incline, but the difference shows how little a vague estimate is to be trusted. Upon leaving the forest you come upon an open country, and at the village of Mont St. Jean (where you may look in vain [80] for anything like a mount) we saw the first direct mark of the battle, a large curb-stone at a barn door, cracked and splintered by a cannon ball. Here we were surrounded by men in their blue frocks and caps, contending who should be our guide. Luckily the one was successful whom I should have selected for his striking countenance and manner, and a better choice could not have been made. He led us along the road toward La Haye Sainte. The enemy never could pass a cross road leading from Wavre to Braine le Leud, which crosses the *chaussée* between Mont St. Jean and La Haye Sainte. Here the Highlanders were posted. "O my God!" the man exclaimed, "how well they fought those Scotchmen those men without breeches! How they fought! If they had not fought so well, Brussels and Waterloo would have been taken and Mont St. Jean burnt!" This was always the burthen of his song. Mont St. Jean was the dwelling-place, and his fate as well as that of Europe depended upon the issue of the battle.

While we were surveying this ground–where the Scotch and the Inniskillens may almost be [81] said to have decided the fate of the day, two officers, not in regimentals, came up. I think they were Prussians. Koster supposed them to be English. They asked the guide in French where the Emperor was during the battle, but he, in his plain honest sense of right and wrong, did not understand that they meant Buonaparte by that appellation, till they explained. When he pointed to the wood and said, "There it was that the fifteen thousand Prussians came out,"one of them answered in the most supercilious manner imaginable, "Trente-deux, s'il vous plait!" moving his moustachios to a sardonic smile.

The farm house at La Haye Sainte is well represented in the panoramic print. The house here and the stables had been full of wounded and the yard full of dead. It suffered something, but not much, and having changed its tenant since the battle, the holes in the wall have been repaired. La Belle Alliance is on the *chaussée*, in a line with this house, but we left the road here, and turning to the right, crost the fields to Hougomont.

Let me endeavour to describe the scene. It [82] is a wide, open country, in which the most conspicuous object is the Church of Braine le Leud. Standing on the *chaussée* by Mont St. Jean and looking to the field of battle, the forest is behind you; Papelot and Frechemont on its skirts to the left; La Haye Sainte, and farther on, La Belle Alliance, both straight forward, on the high road; the Observatory to the right at a greater distance, upon what we are told is the highest ground in the Low Countries; Hougomont farther to the right, but less remote; Braine la Leud more to the right still, and more distant, and thus looking round to the Forest of Soigny you compleat the circle. The ground would not appear strong to a person ignorant of the art of war. But there are dips and swells like those on our South Downs and Wiltshire hills (tho' the inequality is considerably less) which in wet weather and in this heavy soil would give great advantage to the troops defending the ascent. I suppose Lord Wellington looked to two advantages: the fair open field of battle, and the security which the forest afforded his rear.

The observatory is still upon the ground, and [88] the people here all agree in saying it was erected by the English.

Hougoumont was a gentleman's residence, and a fine one, with chapel, pigeon-house, out buildings, extensive gardens, orchard and grove. This is the only picturesque point in the whole field, and it is highly so a sort of oasis, or wood-island, having that beauty which a well-planted spot possesses in a bare and open country. There are avenues and covered-walks in the garden; at the end of that which faces the middle of the terrace before the house (where the ascent is by a few steps) a vile picture is placed upon a little eminence, representing another avenue, with a summer house at the end. In a country which abounds with fine pictures, such an instance of abominable taste was not to have been looked for.

Lord Wellington was here on the 17th, asking the names of all the places round, the distances, etc. When he went away he said to the Gardener that if he did not occupy this point the next day the French would. In consequence of what Mr. Werth had said, I asked [84] the Gardener if the French had at any time obtained possession of the place, and he assured me that they had not.

The garden wall, toward the grove, where the hottest attack was made, is substantially built of brick, nine feet high, and supported with buttresses. Our men made holes in it for musquetry; they broke the buttresses half-way down, and then laid planks along the truncated tops, so as to form a rampart, or rather platform; and when any of the French who attempted to scale the wall reached the top, they bayonetted

them from below. On the skirts of the grove, a little way from the entrance of the house, the bodies of six hundred French had been burnt, and the remains buried. A hole, like a rabbit's burrow, had been made in this heap; and the guide raked it with a stick, to prove the truth of his story, tho' no one would have disputed it. He scraped out some ashes and the calcined bone of a finger before we could make him desist; and a perceptible smell of ammonia came from the burnt animal remains which he disturbed. We had seen the place by La Haye Sainte (near a tree) where [85] General Picton fell. Here the spot was pointed out where Major Howard was killed; and in the garden the place where an officer, by name Crawford (I think) had been buried, till his father came from Ireland and removed the body. In one place the wall of the house, for about five feet in a perpendicular line, was covered with blood. Some poor fellow must have been knocked to pieces against it by a cannon ball.

A painter might have found many pleasing subjects here before the battle; the ruins now would afford him some of a very different kind. Beneath these ruins our wounded, who had been carried into the house, were at once crushed and buried. Part of the house still remains habitable, and to this the Gardener's wife and children have returned. The Chapel was only half ruined. There is a crucifix in it, large as life, which escaped any injury from the shot, but had been mutilated by some of our men. When I expressed my regret at this, the Gardener said it was ill done, but he said it mildly, and without any apparent feeling of anger or indignation. Perhaps the British character never was so highly esteemed in any part of the [86] world as it is at this time in this country. I have heard no other instance of misconduct in our troops, though I made the enquiry; and the people seem as much conciliated by their good discipline and inoffensive deportment e& they are astonished and awed by their courage. The pigeon house escaped all injury. As soon as the action began the pigeons took flight to the forest no doubt; and two or three days afterwards, when they saw that the mischief was over, they came back again.

The Prince of Orange has promised to repair all the damage which has been done here. The present owner of Hougoumont is a nobleman, who resides far off, and wishes to sell this property. One should think that he would now rather pride himself upon possessing it. We met his tenant, a respectable farmer in appearance, in a cart.

In the orchard, which is a large one (not less than four acres), and in the grove and garden, many trees have had their branches carried away or broken, and their trunks wounded; but except in these marks, neither the grounds or garden bore any vestiges of war. The flowers- [87] were in blossom and the fruit on the trees. Indeed over the whole field poppies and pansies were in bloom; you saw them where the footsteps of the cavalry were still uneffaced, and in some parts upon the very graves. I know not whether it were more melancholy or consolatory to observe how soon these lower creatures of nature recovered from the havoc which had been committed here. Between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte, where the Prince of Orange was wounded, 2000 bodies are buried. Hats from all which the lace has been stript, caps, shoes, belts, and such things, are still lying about in great numbers; but crows and vultures are not so active after a battle as the followers of an army. When Mr. Werth visited the field and saw it in its recent horrors, all the dead horses were lying on their backs, with their feet stiff up in the air, in the attitude wherein they had been placed by those who came for their shoes! One of our coachmen, who was there two days after the action, observed that it was more shocking to see the wounded horses than the wounded men, because, poor things, they had no will of their own or knowledge why [88] they were thus tormented. Colonel Miller in like manner spoke with shuddering of the horses running about on three legs and bleeding to death. But these are thoughts with which a soldier must not trust

himself; and he endeavoured to cover the feeling which it gave him with a forced laugh.

Edith and her mother each picked up a flint and a musquet ball, but relics of this kind have been diligently gleaned for sale. I bought a French pistol and two ornaments of the French infantry cap (like the leaden or tin ornaments of a coffin) for six franks, and an artillery badge with a grape shot, for one. Some of our party bought swords and other ornaments at about the same rate, the weapons so cheap as to render the supposition that they had been bought up at Brussels and brought hither for sale perfectly absurd. A boy on the preceding day had found a double Napoleon wrapt in paper. Our guide told us this more than once, and as often stooped to look among the stubble or grass in hope of the like good luck. He said also that an English General who was wounded near La Haye Sainte had hid in the sand bank a bag [89] containing 200 Napoleons, which had never been found. It may well be supposed how much search this idle story has occasioned. The people, he said, had suffered so much by the destruction of their crops that they were all ruined; but they had since been made rich by the English. Well indeed has it been for them that the field of Waterloo is within such easy reach of England.

The Prussians are as much detested here as the English are popular. The people give them their due as soldiers, and say that they came in time, for the English could not much longer have supported such a conflict; an easy error this, for persons who understood nothing of what was going on, except their own danger. But the behaviour of the Prussians toward the inhabitants is represented as abominable: nothing but insolence, violence and rapine. They threatened to kill our guide's father, an old man above seventy years of age, for not giving them what he had not to give. This guide was a man whose countenance, manner, and gestures were singularly impressive. His exclamations of astonishment at the courage of the allies were [90] as passionate as they were frequent. All fought well, he said. The French were like mad dogs, they raved and even foamed with fury when they were told to remember Jena and Wagram. The allies all fought well, and the English "Oh mon Dieu ! how they fought ! But especially the Scotchmen, those men without breeches; had it not been for them Mont St. Jean would have been burnt!" To him it was evident that the preservation of Mont St. Jean was the great object of the victory. He was very angry that Waterloo should give name to the battle; call it Hougoumont, he said, call it La Belle Alliance, or La Haye Sainte, or Papelot, or Mont St. Jean anything but Waterloo! When I told him that I would give it its proper name in England he seemed perfectly delighted, and again and again entreated me to remember this promise, and set the people in England right. Misnamed the battle certainly has been, but Waterloo is a word so well suited to English ears that it must needs prevail.

A wounded Frenchman who was placed under the surgeon's care at Mont St. Jean had his arm amputated; as soon as the operation was over [91] he asked for the arm, and taking the dead hand in the living one waved it over his head and cried "Vive Napoleon!" When the Guide told us this anecdote, he said he would have killed him if he had been present, for such a man was not fit to live. I was silent at this, knowing that if I attempted in my villainous French to modify his zeal, I should only have disturbed a just and natural feeling. For the feelings of this honest Brabanter were all straight-forward; he took them as they came, and troubled himself with none of those sophistries which make the worse appear the better reason; the road from his heart to his lips was short, and on a right line. More than once he exclaimed about the blood which had been shed, crying out, "And all for one man! ce coquin!" Very anxious he was to be assured that we had the tyrant safe; but he repeatedly said it would have been better to have put him to death that this ought to have been done, and that he himself would gladly with his own hand have performed that act of justice. And then he told us how his house had been filled with wounded men; that it was nothing but sawing [92] off legs, and sawing off arms. "*Oh mon Dieu!* and all for one man! Why did not you put him to death?" In this proper feeling it always ended. It was eight days before all the wounded were removed to Brussels.

I was glad to hear him speak with enthusiasm of the Prince of Orange, whose wound has been worth something, and has given him a place in the opinion of the people which may in no slight degree tend to establish an insecure crown. But mischievous spirits are at work here. The people here asked us if it were true that there was to be no more mass. We assured them that this was an abominable falsehood, circulated for wicked purposes, and that the intention was for every man to worship in his own way, leaving the old established religion of the country untouched. They believed us and said that this was as it ought to be. They were not French, they said; they never had been French; they were Brabanters; and now they belonged to Holland. "No," I replied, "you do not belong to Holland, Holland rather belongs to you; for the seat of Government is with you, and you are the richer and better [93] part. Singly you were each too weak; together you will be strong enough to stand." They observed that they were more English than French. I answered that they and the English were children of one stock; nations of the same family, who, by inclination and interest, ought to be allies and friends. This conversation past while we were crossing the open fields from Hougoumont to La Belle Alliance, whither the two carriages had proceeded along the high road.

La Belle Alliance, where Blucher and the Duke of Wellington met after the victory, is a poor farm house, almost as much worse than La Haye Sainte, as that dwelling of a substantial yeoman is inferior to the Chateau de Hougoumont. Since the action it has been converted into a public house, the owners having wisely profited by the opportunity which Fortune offered them. On the Sunday before our visit, the Emperor Alexander dined there, and threw Napoleons among the people, whereby he purchased much popularity at small cost. The woman of the house was near the hour of her delivery, when the approach of the two armies [94] drove her into the woods; she has since had twins. There is a well behind the house; twice I dropt stones into it,

and each time distinctly counted twelve before the sound reached the water. The water is said to be good, but it was not clear enough in the bucket for me to be induced to taste it. Behind the well, near a ruined outhouse, a Frenchman is buried in a dunghill, and the bone of one leg with the shoe on is lying above ground, as if it had been carried off by the shot which killed him, and left out when he was buried, either from negligence or perhaps as a slight! Here we had bread and cheese, wine and fruit. The cheese, called Bullets from their size and shape, rich and good tho' very odorous and strong. From hence to Genap is two short leagues, over an open and uninteresting country. We past by the remains of a few houses which, it was said, the enemy had burnt in their retreat. Burnt the houses certainly had been, but the French when they retreated were in too much haste to lose any time in making bonfires by the way. The mischief had probably been done before the action. [95]

Genap is a poor town, about the size of Keswick. We were in an Inn called Le Roy d'Espagne, from which appellation it may be inferred that the house was an Inn before the Succession War. But whatever may be it's age, it has now become a memorable place. Wellington had his headquarters here on the 17th, Buonaparte on the 18th, Blucher on the 19th. And to this house it was that the Duke of Brunswick's body was brought, and laid on a table in the room opposite to that which we occupied. They told us that the D. of Wellington embraced the body, which is not very likely, and that he wept over it and called the Duke his friend and his brother-in-arms. But these things are not according to the English character nor to that of the individual. The Brunswick officers knelt round the body and vowed vengeance. General Duhesme was cut down by a Brunswicker at the Inn-door, where the sabre has left some of its marks on the side posts, and the blood stains are not yet effaced. For fuller justice, the stroke should have come from a Catalan hand. It was in this town too that the Comte de Loban, General [96] Mouton, became a lost mutton. There are bullet holes over our parlour fire place, in our bedroom ceiling, and thro' our bedroom door. The Prussians were not in a humour that night for making prisoners, and there had been fighting in the houses as well as in the street.

The Inn is much better than would be found in England in so mean and inconsiderable a place. We had a comfortable wood fire. Here I should think coal must be the cheaper fuel; but there is probably a prejudice against it, or a pride in using the cleaner materials, as there long continued to be in London. The kitchen range was peculiar and excellently convenient. A round brazen stone holds the fire nearly in the middle of the room, and the funnel, which communicates with the wall, is broad enough for large dishes to stand on along its whole length, and has under it in one place a sort of square oven, or cupboard, suspended for what is here called roasting. The fire place in the bedroom was unlike anything I had seen of the kind; it is circular and concave, like an oven, and at the bottom of this circle is a small square grate with [97] perpendicular bars. Our sitting room is papered with a French paper, containing little landscapes in good taste, and a very rich border. The lower part was covered with a singular pattern, of tea and coffee services set out upon a table.

Wednesday, Oct. 4.

We had a dismal night; not from the recollections of the day, or the feelings which the house itself excited with its bullet-holes and bloodstains, and marks of the sabre we were fatigued enough to have slept soundly in spite of all this. But all night long we were disturbed by the almost continual passing of heavy coal waggons, rattling like fire engines in London, only with a slower and heavier sound. The whole artillery of an army could not more effectually have prevented sleep; and by way of lighter music in the intervals we had the cracking of the whips (every crack loud as a pistol shot) of all the posts who pass thro" this town to or from Brussels. The coachman told us yesterday that this was an *assez bonne* [98] *auberge*; but this morning he asked us if we had slept? and then told us that nobody ever slept at Genap; it was impossible to sleep there, because of the coal waggons and the posts.[80]

Our chance acquaintance with Mr. Nash having by this time been ripened by mutual good will into incipient intimacy, he offered to make some Waterloo sketches for my intended poem, and for that purpose we returned this day to the field of battle, leaving the Vardons to pass the day with their Brussels friends. We set out a little after seven, the two Ediths with Nash and myself in the open carriage, Koster and Miss Foreman on horseback.

The forest of Soigny is very striking. It has none of the beauty of a natural forest; but because it is an artificial one, it has a character of its own, not always becoming impressive where it is upon a large scale. The trees are so straight that they look as if they had grown [201] under the superintendence of a Drill Sergeant. An oak which stands on the verge of the forest, where it has room to spread its arms in natural growth, really appeared like a deformed and monstrous being, from its utter unlikeness to all the other trees. They stand in many parts so close that the interstices look only like straight lines of green light. The road is in many parts raised considerably above the level of the forest. Labouring men and boys were seated by the wayside at breakfast, and spreading their dark[1] brown bread with a white substance, which whether it be lard, or a sort of inferior butter, or curd, we have not yet learnt, tho' we have frequently seen it thus used. Saw one horse with a comb attached to the trappings of his neck; another with red tassels pendant over his face, which must be useful against the flies.

Breakfasted at Waterloo. Among other vessels in the kitchen there were to my no [202]small astonishment, six bright and shining pewter chamber-pots hanging up evidently for ornamental display when not on service. Edith May tells me there were similar ornaments in the kitchen at Tongres. The inner room, in which a noble wood fire was kindled for us, contained four beds, which no doubt has been sadly occupied after the battle. On the chimney piece was a tuft of artificial flowers, something of the same kind more artificial still, being an imitation of flowers made with feathers, and with gilt foil for the stamens, and two hyacinth glasses of blue and gold. There is generally a sort of vallance or little canopy about a quarter of a yard deep over the chimney piece in these countries. The ceiling of the room was of black boards, the floor of bricks and sanded; and under the window was a hole to let the water out when the room is washed. Knowing at what sort of house we should make our first halt, we took our own tea rather than trust to the chance of finding coffee there, toasted bread by help of a gridiron which the people of the house brought us for that purpose, and breakfasted well as well as merrily. [203]

After breakfast Nash made a sketch of the Church, and I copied the inscription over its portico interesting enough for its subject and its semi-pagan form.

D. O. M.
Et D. D. Josepho et Annoe,
Hoc Sacellum,
Pro Desideratâ Dominiis Catholicis
Caroli 2. Hisp. Ind. Regis, Belg. Principic Prosapia,
Fran. Ant. Agurto. Marchio de Castanaca
Belg. Guberntor.

Cause enough indeed had these poor countries to pray that that most pitiable poor king might leave issue to succeed him! There is a good portrait of this poor king in the *Acta S. Ferdinandi Regis*, which I bought yesterday; it is so truly characteristic that it alone would make the book valuable. I never saw a more compleat union of gentleness, melancholy, and imbecillity.

There are two monuments in the Church to the English Officers: one to those of the first foot guards, the other to those of the 15th hussars, both at the cost of their brother officers; they are of plain white marble with a [204] narrow black edge. I copied both inscriptions. The Church yard is a square

[1]This bread is dark enough to explain the Dutch word for a favourite child, or one cockered, as we should say, and brought up on dainties. It is wittebroodskind or kindje--a white bread child.

unadorned inclosure, between two and three hundred yards behind the Church, or rather Chapel. Several graves were shown us on the way between, on the edge of the forest, where men had been buried who died of their wounds. In the Church yard are two flat tombstones close together, and both on the ground. One to Col. de Langrehr of the Bremen corps; the other to Lt. Col. Richard Fitzgerald of the 2nd Life Guards. The children who acted as our guides here said his body had been buried on the field, but was removed hither by his widow; and that it was the trunk only, the head having been carried off by a cannon ball. I copied these epitaphs also. There was but one other tombstone in the cemetery: it was that of an inhabitant of the village; and this, tho' it has been made some years, is not yet fixed only laid upon some temporary supporters.

I enquired at the Inn if there were any remembrance in the village of an affair here in 1705, when the Duke of Marlborough gained [205] some advantage upon this very ground, but could not learn that there was any recollection of it. They are so used to such things in these countries that nothing short of a general action leaves any impression upon them; but I should add that the man of the house both speaks and understands French worse than any person whom we have met with who pretended to do either the one or the other.

Lord Uxbridge's leg, the most remarkable relic of modern times, is deposited in the garden of a house opposite the Inn, and on the same side of the road as the Chapel, the nearest house to it on the Brussels side. The owner of the house is as proud of possessing it as a true Catholic would be of an undoubted leg of his patron Saint. The figure, manner, and earnest enthusiasm of this Leg-worshipper were in the highest degree comic. I accosted him hat in hand, and with the best French I could muster (which is bad enough, Heaven knows), but as much courtesy as if I had been French by birth and breeding, requested permission to visit the spot. He led us to a little mound in his garden, which is in front of the [206] house. The mound is about three or four feet in diameter, and of proportionate elevation (sounding words should be used on great occasions), and in the centre of it is a tuft of Michaelmas daisies; at this time in blossom. The leg, he told us, had been at first interred behind the house; but the Wife of my Lord has requested him to plant a tree which should mark the spot; and he, considering that a tree behind the house, which was not private ground, might be very probably injured or destroyed by boys, had removed the leg into his own garden, and there deposited it in a proper box or coffin. The Michaelmas daisy was a mere temporary ornament. In November he should plant the tree, it was to be "*un saule* English *willow*" *Oui, Monsieur*, I replied -*j'entends*; –*l'arbre larmoyant; the weeping willow*. It will be very picturesque and pathetic the whole thing is so ridiculously comic that I hope no foolish person will hint to him that the laurel might be more appropriate. He had composed an epitaph for the leg, he said, which was then in the stone cutter's hands; but he had a copy of it. Of course I requested to be favoured with [207] the perusal, and having perused it with due gravity solicited permission to transcribe it also. Upon this he presented me with the copy, and I then perceived that he had several other copies ready to be disposed of in like manner. Here follows the Epitaph, being I believe unique in its kind:

C'est enterrée la Jambe de l'illustre brave et vaillant Comte Uxbridge, Lieutenant General, Commandant en Chef la Cavalerie Anglaise, Beige et Hollandoise; blessé le 18 Juin, 1815, en la memorable battaille de Waterloo: qui par son heroisme a concouru au triomphe de la cause de Genre humain, glorieusement decidée par l'eclatante victoire du dit jour.

I did not present him with my own Epitaph upon the same subject in return.

This is the Grave of Lord Uxbridge's leg:
Pray for the rest of his body, I beg.

He was too proud of having such a deposit in his garden, too happy, and too serious in his happiness, for such a jest to have been allowable. He took us into the house and shewed us the stain of blood upon two chairs, telling [208] us Lady Uxbridge had desired it might never be washed out. And he called for the boot, remarking as he displayed it, *Voilà quel petit pie pour si grand homme!* According to his account some dozen surgeons assisted at the operation, which I do not believe, because if the surgeons at hand had been fifty fold more numerous than they were, there would even then have been fifty times as much work as they could all have performed. It was amputated at eleven o'clock at night, and they were ten minutes about it, his Lordship never uttering an expression of pain.

The Forest extends farther on the East (that is the left) side of the road than on the West. To the end of the forest from Waterloo is a distance which we were thirteen minutes in driving at a regular jog-trot pace; from

that termination to Mont S. Jean fifteen more, and another fifteen from thence to the Belle Alliance, La Haye Sainte being about half way between the two latter places, as nearly as may be. There was therefore no fighting within two miles and a half of Waterloo.

At Mont S. Jean the wells are in some of [209] the houses, a door opening directly upon it. This must be for the double purpose of security and cleanliness. Our guide seemed delighted at recognizing us as we drove past, tho' his services were not needed on this second visit. We left the carriage and the two horses at La Belle Alliance and crost the fields to Hougoumont, taking a boy with us to carry our provisions. The Gardiner gladly bade us welcome here. Mr. Nash established himself by the house, to the left of the entrance, chusing a point of view in which the Chapel is the prominent object, with the adjoining ruins to the right; and while he was thus employed we reconnoitred the ground a second time at leisure.

I now discovered in the garden a sun-dial cut in box, but having been neglected and allowed to grow in its own way since the action. I should not have perceived what it had been if the wooden gnomon had not caught my eye and induced me to examine the circular bed in which it stood. It is surprizing to see how many small trees have been destroyed in the wood, and in a row beside the path, at the end [210] of the premises. There can be no better proof how thickly the shot must have fled. The owner of the estate, a man of eighty-six, who resides at Nivelles, has just sold the wood for felling, and wishes to dispose of the whole property. I wish it might be allowed to remain untouched, that the ruins themselves might remain as the best monument of the brave men who are buried underneath them.

Mr. Nash made a second sketch from the door of the Chapel, comprizing the interior of the ruins, and another of the Mansion looking at its entrance. When making this, his seat was placed on the mound where the burnt remains of the Frenchmen are covered, and the children who beg here with the most invincible pertinacity actually offered him for sale some calcined bones which they had raked out of a hole.

Leaving the ladies here, I walked with Koster to Papelote, which is a large inclosed farm and dwelling house like Hougoumont, and is perhaps the more picturesque place of the two, tho' it does not appear to have been so recently inhabited as the mansion of a wealthy owner. Had these short days permitted, I could very [211] much have wished that Mr. Nash should have made some sketches here also. They are rapidly rebuilding such parts as were destroyed. We spoke with the owner, a plain farmer he appeared to be. There had not been many men killed here, but a great many wounded Prussians had been carried into the stables, which escaped the fire; and tho' he made repeated applications at all the neighbouring places both for means of transport and for assistance, they had neither to give, and in this state of utter abandonment did Mr. Werth find these poor creatures five days after the battle.

At some little distance a fine plain stone pillar is lying on the ground, apparently from the ruins of some considerable edifice.

Hougoumont and Papelote were the extreme points of the British position. We were three quarters of an hour in walking from one to the other at a brisk pace; the distance therefore is three miles. The fighting extended no farther on the left than to the end of the Orchard, some two hundred yards. The French had possession of it for some quarter of an hour, and then abandoned it upon the appearance of the [212] Prussians. Papelote is not upon the Wavre road, but on a road that turns from it to the right. The road from La Haye Sainte to this turning is lined with graves, and here we saw more bones than in any other part of the field. More than once the air told us in how hasty and insufficient a manner the bodies had been covered. This labour, and an enormous labour it must have been, was left for the peasants to perform for their own sakes and at their own cost. It is no part of military business to bury the dead.

As we walked leisurely over the field on our return, the inequalities of the ground were considerable enough to make us take a little circuit for the sake of avoiding them. Certainly, therefore, in bad weather they would greatly impede the cavalry. It was an affecting circumstance to observe the oats which had been trodden down during the battle springing up here and there. The young corn was shewing itself in other places.

We conversed with Lacoste, who has obtained so much notoriety for having been involuntary guide to Buonaparte. He was with him during the whole day, and assured us that Buonaparte [213] never charged at the head of the cuirassiers, nor ever, in any part of the action, exposed himself. The Observatory, he says, was erected by the Belgian Government, and there are three or four such along the frontier between this place and Ghent.

Five or six parties of English arrived while we were here. We afterwards learnt that Dr. Ireland, the Dean of Westminster, was with one of them. Among the pertinacious children who infest this place, the most

pertinacious was a girl, drest in a good and apparently new upper dress, which was carefully pinned up to display a ragged under petticoat and present an appearance of poverty. It will be well if the habits of greedy mendicity, in which all these children have been encouraged by their parents and by the shoals of visitors, do not render them shameless and worthless thro' life. There is a noble dog at Hougoumont who remained there with the Gardener, his master, during the greater part of the action, barking at times bravely, as if he would willingly have taken part in it. But when the French got possession of the wood, General Maitland desired the man [214] to get off while he could, lest the enemy, if he fell into their hands, should put him to death as one who had given information to the English.

It was dark before we returned to Brussels . . . some apprehension was expressed as if there might be robbers in the forest (for whom it certainly affords fine cover), and at the gate we were questioned concerning our passports.

The women in this country take a much greater part in business than they do in England. Very commonly they keep their husbands' accounts; they are quite as active in the shops; and I am told that it is not uncommon for them to have the management of the concern. There must be advantages in this, as well as objections to it; and I am inclined to think the advantages predominate.

The houses very much resemble those in Spain and Portugal as to the entrance, doors, etc.; in fact, the Spanish fashion in building them still prevails. They are often coloured of a light green. Throughout Flanders the favourite colour for doors and window shutters (which all open outwards) is grass-green, and [215] nothing can give a more chearful appearance. The doors of good houses have generally a brazen knob or handle (which is a Bristol fashion) fixed in a brazen star. The stables are all without stalls, which makes them cooler and cleaner. Hooks are fixed on the roofs of the houses to secure ladders when laid there for the purpose of repairs. The form of the common saw here is like that of a turning saw.[81]

July 1815 James Simpson writes his account of the battle as part of a tour. Simpson's account probably represents the first formal English guide to the site. He writes:

On this road in one line are the villages of Waterloo and Mont St John and the farm houses of La Haye Sainte and La Belle Alliance and the only other place which requires to be referred to is the memorable Chateau of Hougomont advanced a short way in front of nearly the right of the British position. The road from Brussels to Nivelles which branches off at Waterloo from the great road already described passed the right of the army which last being thrown back into a curve crossed the angle formed by the two roads like the scale of a quadrant. A number of smaller roads and foot paths intersected the field in all directions none of them of any importance in the affair excepting always those which admitted the brave Prussians to their share of the glory of delivering the world.[68]

[. . .]

I had seen, as formerly mentioned, a young officer at Antwerp, who had received twenty-four sabre wounds. The 69th, his regiment, with another, was the square next on the right of General Halket's. In one of their formations the French cavalry was unfortunately too soon up for them, penetrated into the midst of them, and almost cut them to pieces. [109]

We saw the point where a Belgic corps was stationed on the right, where the French called out, "Brave Belgians, come over and join your old comrades." It is well known they did not comply with the invitation.

We next in our interesting round, arrived at the memorable post of Hougomont, forever associated with the name of the British foot guards and the warriors of Brunswick. To them exclusively belongs the glory of having foiled the persevering and desperate attacks of at least 30,000 of the enemy; and they were just the ***first***, ***second***, and ***third*** regiment of [102] guards, with a detachment of Brunswickers. Here again national feelings were not to be resisted, Lord Saltoun, Colonels Home and M^{c}Donnell being of the "North Countrie," a nation (says the sweetest of their bards,)

"Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms:
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms."

We were surprised to find Hougomont[1] (or more correctly Gomont, a mistake, it [110] is believed, of Lord Wellington's, destined now to perpetuity; and very naturally arising from hearing rapidly pronounced Le Château de Goumont,) a country seat with gardens neatly laid out in, the Dutch taste, and extensive Offices. A small wood was on the outside, a short distance from the high garden wall, which is of brick, perforated in two tiers for musketry, and shattered with the enemy's cannon balls. The light companies of the three regiments of guards were stationed in this wood, and were of course driven into the house.

The French officer's "**Relation**" admits that the place was not taken; that his countrymen suffered dreadfully in their unavailing attempts upon it, and at last endeavoured to shell it on fire. This they only partially effected; but they did leave the place a scorched and shattered inheritance, first to its brave defenders, and ultimately to its proprietor.

We could not resist picking up some small fragments even of the bricks and slates of this sacred spot; and we found [111] some pieces of the bombs by which the chief havoc was occasioned. For some time after the battle, the accumulation of dead in and around this post presented perhaps the most shocking spectacle in the whole field. When in the garden, where fruit-trees and shrubberies seemed as if they were blighted, and the neat alleys of holly and yew were much torn and deranged, we saw the poor gardener, who had remained in his garden all the time of the furious storm; because, as he candidly owned, after the battle was begun, he could not venture out of it. He confirmed the fact that the enemy never were within the premises; if we except occasional irruptions into the garden, out of which they were as often driven.

[1] The unimportant mistake, it is believed to originated in the memorable despatches; and very naturally arose from hearing a rapid pronunciation of the Chateau de Gomont. It is destined now to perpetuity.

It is said that two ladies, deeply interested for some relative, sat in a carriage during the greatest part of the action, on the great road; certainly repeatedly under fire. And an old woman remained in her cottage almost in the midst of the fight; as she said, to save her cows and pigs! We did not see this heroine. [112]

The natural idea of the indemnification of the owner of Hougomont occurred to us when we surveyed his roofless walls and desolate domain. One of the farmers of the field the progress of which to harvest had been so tremendously interrupted, asked is whether the British government was to pay him for his corn which had been trodden down. We told him that the said government has sometimes paid much less reasonable costs; and that he should at least make the trial by putting in his claim.

The wood on the outside had been choked-up with the French dead; and more wreck than here than on any other part of the plain.

We crossed diagonally to the hovel of Belle Alliance, a name of superstitious coincidence; on which it is the French custom more than ours to lay much stress.[82]

Omer, Lisle, and Tournay, to Brussels. We were very much struck with the excellent cultivation of the country we passed through, and with the appearance of prosperity and of an abundant population, which every where presented itself to our view, notwithstanding the long and destructive war in which France has been for so many years engaged. In almost all the towns we passed through, we saw the remains of the public rejoicings and illuminations, which had recently taken place for the restoration of the King to the throne of France. Brussels was crowded with English, great numbers of whom had crossed the sea from Margate and Ramsgate, and other watering places, that they might gratify their curiosity in gazing on the field where the battle of Waterloo was recently fought. Our road lay across it; for we were advised to take Namur in our way to Liege, and on the high road to Namur was the field of battle. The battered walls of a farm-house pierced with bullets and cannon-balls, and the remains of a villa consumed by fire, were the only vestiges of the late devastation which remained visible. At the little village of Genappe, where we slept, the shutters and the walls of the room we supped in were pierced with musket-balls; and at Namur, the next day, we saw everywhere the marks of the sanguinary battle which had been fought upon the bridge over the Sambre in the centre of the town. From Namur we passed, on the banks of the Meuse, which we crossed at Huy, to Liege. Nothing can exceed the beauty and variety of the scenery on both banks of the river.[83]

On the 18th the wind set down the valley from Hougoumont towards Ohain. I am told that the approach of the Prussians, above clouds of smoke which hid the ground, was one of the grandest sights imaginable. To our weary, hard-pressed troops they [173] had all the appearance of a celestial army. It was indeed a pity that they did not arrive sooner, for the battle would have sooner ended, and many valuable lives would have been spared. The Duke himself told me in Paris that the battle was won before the Prussians arrived.

I am told that, at Brussels, the firing on the 18th was not nearly so much heard as it had been on the 16th, although so much nearer.

Throughout the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon remained on a mound, within cannon shot, but beyond the range of musketry fire. He certainly was not in the observatory after the battle began; nor could he have from that spot directed the movements of his troops. That observatory was built for topographical reasons by a former Governor of the Netherlands, something like a century ago.

The Duke of Wellington told me that after the battle he gave orders to the peasantry to burn the dead left upon the field. The Duke of Richmond says that there was great difficult in persuading them to do so. In many instances, they preferred to cover the bodies lightly with earth, with the worst consequences. As he was passing along the forest of Soignies, the Duke saw a little dog scratching the ground. On his return he noticed that the dog had succeeded in removing the earth from a body, and was actually lying upon it!

A great part of the field of battle was ploughed up when I saw it. In other parts the green oats, now just cut, and the clover, had concealed much from the keen eye of the plunderer. The ground was covered with those freshly made graves, where French and English lie side by side. The burial-place of Sir William Ponsonby shows that his gallantry was not tempered by prudence. This recklessness was, I hear, too often the fault of our cavalry. Owing to a lack of discipline, or what the Duke called "massing," our [173] cavalry was often cut up after having effected its purpose. A new system — he thinks — is necessary. When the Emperor of Russia, at the cavalry review, drew the Duke's attention to this weakness, the Duke of Wellington agreed with him, and said that it had always prevented our cavalry from making the impression which it might have done.

In the garden of La Haye Sainte a deep trench has been dug; and here all those brave Highlanders are buried together.

The chapel of Hougoumont is the only portion of the farm which escaped the flames which enveloped it late in the day. The woman of the house gravely assured us that the foot of our Saviour on the Cross stopped the leaping flames, which rolled back the moment they touched it. I noticed that a small detached house had also escaped.

The farm — as it is called — of Hougoumont has more the appearance of having at one time been a fortified chateau. There is no trace of its history to be found. The thickness of its walls, and its valuable position, well merited its gallant defence. It is not too much to say that the fortunes of the day turned upon the fate of Hougoumont. Had we been driven from that farm our right would have remained completely uncovered.

We had just finished a minute inspection of that most interesting spot when a thunderstorm, which had long been threatening, burst upon us. We hastily [174] mounted our horses and galloped to our auberge at Waterloo, where we ate a cold dinner. [1]

I was much impressed by the attachment of our landlady to the Duke of Wellington. She showed us the room and the bed that he had slept in after that glorious day; and she presented me with the cup out of which he had drunk. The auberge is a very neat, small house. I fear one cannot hope that its hostess's affection for the Duke is altogether disinterested, as she will

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[1] This is noteworthy in connection with Colonel Quintin's trial. (Note by Lady Shelley.) — [In Captain Gronow's "Recollections and Anecdotes" (ed. 1877, p. 79), we are told that the Duke said: "The cavalry of other European armies have won victories for their generals, but mine have invariably got me into scrapes. It is true that they have always fought gallantly and bravely, and have generally got themselves out of their difficulties by sheer pluck." The Duke said to Lord Stanhope ("Notes of Conv." p. 220) : "The French cavalry is more often manageable and useful than the English, because it is always kept in hand, and may be stopped at the word of command. This partly results from our horses being better and kept in highest condition," — Ed.]

certainly make her fortune by his association with that house. She owns that she hid herself in the cellar during the battle. It is a remarkable fact that not one of the houses in the village was touched. One small cottage and garden was in the very centre of the firing, and yet it escaped entirely.

On our way home we passed through the forest in total darkness. Occasional flashes of lightning gave us glimpses of the narrow defile, and heightened the sublimity of the feelings excited by our experiences during the whole of this most interesting day.

On the following day we visited the Palace of Laeken, having ridden along the Allee Verte, by the side of the canal, where on Sunday evenings the whole population of Brussels assembles to smoke, eat, and drink.[84]

20 October 1815 Charles Cuthbert Southey writes to John May from Brussels:

My DEAR Friend,

I wrote to you from Liege, up to which time all had gone on well with us. Thank God, it is well with us at present; but your god-daughter has been so unwell, that we were detained six days at Aix-la-Chapelle in a state of anxiety which you may well imagine, and at a hotel where the Devil himself seemed to possess the mistress and the greater part of the domestics. Happily, I found a physician who had graduated at Edinburgh, who spoke English, and pursued a rational system; and happily, also, by this painful and expensive delay I was thrown into such society, that, now the evil is over, I am fully sensible of the good to which it has conduced. The day after my letter was written we reached Spa, and remained there Sunday and Monday — a pleasant and necessary pause, though the pleasure was somewhat interrupted by the state of my own health, which was somewhat disordered there — perhaps the effect of the thin Rhenish wines and the grapes. Tuesday we would have slept at Verones (the great clothing town) if we could have found beds. An English party had preoccupied them, and we proceeded to Herve, a little town half way between Liege and Aix-la-Chapelle, in the old principality of Limbourg.

When we arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle, your god-daughter was so ill that, after seeing her laid in bed (about one o'clock in the afternoon), I thought it necessary to go to the banker's, and request them to recommend me to a physician. You may imagine how painful a time we passed. It was necessary for her to gargle every hour, even if we waked her for it; but she never slept an hour continuously for the three first nights. Thank God, however, she seems thoroughly recovered, and I can estimate the good with calmness. While I acted as nurse and cook (for we were obliged to do every thing ourselves), our party dined at the table d'hote, and there, as the child grew better, I found myself in the company of some highly distinguished Prussian officers. One of these, a Major Dresky, is the very man who was with Blucher at Ligny, when he was ridden over by the French; the other.

Major Petry, is said by his brother officers to have won the battle of Donowitz for Blucher. Two more extraordinary men I never met with. You would have been delighted to hear how they spoke of the English, and to see how they treated us, as representatives of our country. Among the toasts which were given, I put this into French: "The Belle-alliance between Prussia and England — may it endure as long as the memory of the battle." I cannot describe to you the huzzaing, and hob-nobbing, and hand-shaking with which it was received. But the chief benefit which I have received was from meeting with a certain Henry de Forster, a major in the German Legion, a Pole by birth, whose father held one of the highest offices in Poland. Forster, one of the most interesting men I ever met with, has been marked for misfortune from his birth. Since the age of thirteen he has supported himself, and now supports a poor brother of eighteen, a youth of high principles and genius, who has for two years suffered with an abscess of the spleen. Forster entered the Prussian service when a boy, was taken prisoner and cruelly used in France, and escaped, almost miraculously, on foot into Poland. In 1809 he joined the Duke of Brunswick, and was one of those men who proved true to him through all dangers, and embarked with him. The duke was a true German in patriotism, but without conduct, without principle, without gratitude. Forster entered our German Legion, and was in all the hot work in the Peninsula, from the lines of Torres Vedras till the end of the war. The severe duty of an infantry officer proved too much for his constitution, and a fall of some eighty feet down a precipice in the Pyrenees brought on a haemorrhage of the liver, for which he obtained unlimited leave of absence, and came to Aix-la-Chapellle. I grieve to say that he had a relapse on the very day that we left him. I never saw a man whose feelings and opinions seemed to coincide more with my own. When we had become a little acquainted, he shook hands with me in a manner so unlike an ordinary greeting, that I immediately understood it to be (as really it was) a trial whether I was a Free-mason. This gave occasion to the following sonnet, which I put into his hands at parting:

The ties of secret brotherhood, made known
By secret signs, and pressure, of link'd hand
Significant, I neither understand Nor censure.
There are countries where the throne
And altar, singly, or with force combined,
Against the welfare of poor human kind
Direct their power perverse: in such a land
Such leagues may have their purpose; in my own,
Being needless, they are needs but mockery.
But to the wise and good there doth belong,
Ordained by God himself, a surer tie;
A sacred and unerring sympathy:
Which bindeth them in bonds of union strong
As time, and lasting as eternity.

He has promised me to employ this winter in writing his memoirs — a task he had once performed, but the paper was lost in a shipwreck. He has promised, also, to come with the MSS, (if he lives) to England next summer, when I hope and expect that the publication will be as beneficial to his immediate interests as it will be honorable to his memory.

We left Aix on Tuesday for Maestricht, slept the next night at St. Tron, Thursday at Louvaine, and arrived here to-day. To-morrow I go again with Nash to Waterloo, for the purpose of procuring drawings of Hougoumont. On Sunday we go for Antwerp, rejoin the Vardons on Monday night at Ghent, and then make the best of our way to Calais and London. God bless you, my dear friend !

Yours most affectionately,
R. S"[85]

The usual mode of proceeding is to take a barouche, for which you pay 25 francs, and unless a party unite, no cheaper conveyance is to be had. You are solicited also to take a guide, but that is unnecessary, as a peasant on the spot will answer the purpose equally well, or most likely better. As it is now become a sort of holy pilgrimage, there are regular stations, at which every patriot will stop to indulge in the warm feeling which rises in his bosom. Our party, which was fourteen in number, as usual, stopped at Waterloo village, opposite the church, about two miles from the field. We entered the church to view the monuments erected to the memory of the brave.

One, in Latin, was for Wm. Norman Ramsay. Another was sacred to the memory of

Lieut.-Col. Edward Stables;
Lieut.-Col. Sir Francis D'Oily, K. C B.
Lieut.-Col. Charles Thomas;
Lieut.-Col.- William Miller;
Lieut-Col. W. Henry Milner;
Capt. Robert Adair;
Capt Edward Grose; [89]
Capt. Thomas Brown;
Ensign Edward Pardoe;
Ensign James Lord Hay; all officers of the First Guards.

There is also another monument to the memory of Major Edward Griffin, Lieut. Isaac Sherwood, Lieut. Henry Buckley, and Lieut Wm. Livingston Robe. The next place to which we were conducted, was to a gentleman's garden, about one hundred yards from the church, to see the willow tree planted over the leg of the Marquis of Anglesea, and the monument and inscription near it, expressive of the same, and of the great event by which it was occasioned. On returning to the Inn, we were shown the Duke of Wellington's bed-room, and the bed on which they told us he slept the night before the battle. We then went forward to Mont St Jean, and were teazed by the people offering us to purchase relics of the field; and also by a peasant, in the usual dress of a blue smock frock and cotton night cap, insisting that he was La Coste who had been with the Emperor on the day of the battle. As la Coste was known to some of the party, he [90] did not succeed. Cuirasses, helmets, hats, swords, pistols, balls, bullets, ornaments and remnants of all sorts and descriptions, enabled every one to gratify his taste in the selection of objects as a memorial of the day. Cuirasses were 15 francs, swords were from 5 to 20.

We turned to the left, and went on towards Hougomond [sic]. On turning down the lane, which leads to it from the highway, we observed the trees all marked and notched by the musket-balls, many of which the peasantry had cut out for sale. The Chateau is still in ruins. The little chapel had also suffered; the roof was destroyed, and half the feet of the Crucifix of Jesus was burnt away. In the garden, the marks of the balls are to be seen on the trees, and there still remain the loop-holes-in the brick walls, from which the English guards sent out their destructive fire upon their assailants, five hundred of our countrymen here fell; but three thousand of the enemy perished to average their death. The place of their interment is pointed out.

We walked by a narrow path for a mile across the fields to the poor miserable Inn [91] of La Belle Alliance. We went to the place where Wellington and Blucher met on the evening of the day when the French were flying in disorder, and the brave Prussians had come up, and were joining in a pursuit which proved bo fatal to our foes. We entered the Inn and had some refreshments. We were told it had been purchased by an English gentleman, who intended to build there a Chateau.

The spot where the Emperor was, with La Coste beside him, is not to be seen. It is the best place from which to have a view of the field. This was an advantage clearly in favour of the enemy, and heightens therefore the merit of our army in gaining the victory. I may here observe, that it has been said La Coste was pinioned on horse-back. La Coste denies that He was retained against his will, but no personal insult of that sort was shewn him, and he still believes he would have been rewarded, if the event had turned out differently. The rewards he now reaps from private individuals, probably pay him better than all he would have received from Imperial gratitude. Our country, by pure valour [92] and main strength, beat the tyrant to the ground.

On the field of Waterloo we must scorn the aid of an unfounded report. From this place may be seen to advantage, that part of the wood from which the Prussians under Bulow came out on the evening of the day.

We walked along the road towards La Haye Sainte, and were shewn the place where the Imperial Guards made their last desperate but unsuccessful effort. In the great bam of La Haye Sainte the blood is still seen on the walls, and the balls in various parts of the wooden furniture The gate is bored in ten thousand places by the balls, like a sieve. It has been covered on one side with wood, to keep it from falling to pieces. A little memorial is erected, on the end of the house next the road, to the heroes of the German Legion, who there perished when their ammunition was spent. The marks of cannon-balls are seen in the walls, which are repaired with fresh lime.

Wellington's tree, which, was about the centre, is the best place in the English line to view the field. It is a fine elm, which overhangs the road, and has been called [93] *Wellington's tree*, from the Duke having been near it a great part of the day.

To have a more complete prospect from Hougomond [sic] to the farthest extent of the left wing, I climbed up; some of the branches had been shot off by cannon-balls, and the marks of leaden bullets are numerous. One, which a peasant boy who came with me pointed out, I cut out, Mid have preserved among many other things, as a precious relic from the field. I was here shewn the spot where General Ficton, and where the honorable Sir Alexander Gordon fell.

Close by this tree commences a little lane, with a small hedge on each side. In the middle of this lane the armies met at the point of the bayonet, about six o'clock in the evening. The British were victorious, and from that time, said La Coste,the efforts of the French were only to make good their retreat

Our emotions of mingled triumph and, regret on this day, I cannot describe. All now is silence and peace. Heavy crops of waving corn conceal from view the graves of the dead. Twice indeed we saw a piece [94] of the body of a horse, but nothing more. To this memorable field, where the fate of the world was decided, for ages to come the British traveller will resort.

For three days before we were there, the weather had been wet; on that day it was fine. Two other parties of our countrymen,were on the field. The Indian Jugglers also, who had been exhibiting at Brussels, came out on horseback. An American and his lady, though burning with envy at the glory of England, felt compelled to view the scene of her triumphs. On my second visit to Brussels, I found at the Hotel de Brabant a party of American captains, who had come in a post-chaise on purpose from Antwerp, and who went next day to Waterloo.

Having gratified our feelings, we returned to find our carriages to Mont St. Jean. The people of the Inn had expected, or pretended to have expected, that we had ordered dinner at Brussels, it was of course not in our power. Their insolence in consequence, and their extortion for what refreshments we had were only limited bv their fears. A party of peasantry [95] our army, particularly the Scotch. We are both citizens of the world, I shall therefore not obtrude any national or provincial feelings upon you, but they were often highly excited by the people of Belgium.

I am, Your's, &c &C.[86]

A HORTICULTURAL TOUR.

Forest of Soigné

The road from Brussels to Waterloo, as is well known, passes for a great way through the Forest of Soigné. On entering the forest, our observations were necessarily confined to remarking the species and quality of the trees, and the kinds of native plants which grew near the roadside. The tree which chiefly prevails in the forest, is the common beech; but elm, oak, and abele, are not unfrequent, and they seemed to abound according to the order of priority in which they are here mentioned. Some ash-trees also appeared, but they were all small or young. The light-coloured foliage of tall willows was here and there distinguishable. A few small hornbeam-trees also occasionally presented themselves; and, in the moist parts, alder was extremely abundant as underwood. In many places, along the sides of the road, were piles of billets, prepared for being sent to Brussels as fire-wood. Each billet is about three feet long, and perhaps a foot in circumference. We could not help feeling some regret to see the fine and clean stems of hundreds of large beeches thus [281] cut to pieces for such a purpose, — a feeling which may be pardoned in Scottish horticulturists. The woodmen live in small scattered cottages, sometimes having mud-walls, and deserving only the name of huts. The forest is traversed by narrow hunting roads; and, from the peep into the interior occasionally afforded by these, we could perceive that the surface is very unequal, sometimes rising into hillocks, and sometimes sinking into deep glens. Where the wood has recently been cut down, we remarked that a certain proportion of oak and beech standards had been left, to become large timber. Many of these reserved trees are tall: but, being at first naturally *drawn up,* by the closeness of the surrounding plants, and afterwards *pruned up,* so as to induce them to throw out numerous branches, with, we understand, are regularly lopped for fagots; the trunks have not swelled in proportion to the height attained. In other parts of the forest, where the wood has not lately been felled, it is evident that the same plan of leaving a fe standards had in former times been acted upon; for lofty trees, from 80 to 100 feet high, are now and then to be seen towering among those of more ordinary dimensions. These reserved trees of former days, however, owing to the circumstances already pointed out, are remarkable only for their height. Among the thousands of tall beeches, not one *patula fagus* is to be seen; and the largest Soigné oak conveys no idea of the grandeur of the specimens of that tree to be seen in many an English park. The sides of the rood resembled those often met with in Scotland; being in many places covered with brambles, lady-ferns, and foxgloves or dead-mens-bells (*Digitalis purpurea*); and large water-worn boulder-stones appearing here and there in the clayey banks.— In one place, however, we noticed the leaves of spotted lung-wort (*Pulmonaria maculata*); and elsewhere, in a glade of [282] the forest, those either *Helleborous viridis* or *Fœtidus*. These plants are considered as British natives, but are not characteristic of a Scottish road.

On emerging from the forest, we were regaled with the sight of some neat sequestered cottages, with small gardens and hop-plantations. The hops were by much the best we had seen, either in Kent or on the Continent; the plants being tall, and now completely covered with bunches of flowers. We here encountered a long range of heavy waggons, of various forms and sizes, some with five horses, others with eight. The greater part were loaded with coals from Charleroi (this sort of fuel not being entirely wanting at Brussels, though wood is more common), and two or three with large blocks of stone. On clearing the waggons, we got sight of the Church of *Waterloo* and soon after entered the village. Here we agreed for the attendance of a German soldier, Johann Witfisch, as our guide. He belonged to a Hanoverian corps, and was stationed at the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, from which (if we understood his narrative aright) he escaped wounded, at the moment of its bang carried by the enemy.

We knew before hand that the village of Waterloo was at some distance from the field of battle; but, till we made inquiry, we were not aware that it was still a mile and a half to Mount St John. Having got our guide mounted on the carriage, we desired our postillion to drive on to that village. We were now full of expectation; and it seemed as if we had come within hearing of some remains of the desperate strife; for we advanced in silence, as if listening,—each observing with curious eye, every object that presented itself. Our reverie was interrupted only by our coach stopping at the point where the road to Nivelles intersects that leading to Charleroi. We now pursued the [283] latter road on foot, and soon reached the farm-steading of Mont St Jean, where the walls shewed abundant marks of having been struck by bullets.

Field of Battle.

Although we may add little or nothing to the descriptions which have already been published, few readers, we presume, will be disinclined to accompany us in our walk over the field; our expectation of that indulgence depending wholly on the great interest conferred on the scene by the soldiers who there signalised themselves.

The first remarkable object which attracted our attention, was *The Wellington Tree*, situate dose by the highroad to Charleroi. This memorable tree is a large old Dutch Elm. It had suffered severely from the shot; but the fame it has acquired, from marking the principal position of the Commander-in-Chief, has since proved much more disastrous to it than the cannon-balls. No sooner does an English party appear at Mount St. John, than boys ascend the unfortunate tree, and break off, not only twigs, but whole branches, which they teaze the visitors to buy as relics. We tried to discourage this work of destruction, by reprobating the forwardness of the boys, and refusing to purchase. But unless a high rail be placed around the base of the tree, and a board denounce in legible characters the vengeance of the magistrate against offenders, the tree must inevitably perish. If the Sovereign of the Netherlands have not zeal enough to preserve this memorial of the station of the Prince of Waterloo, surely the English at Brussels might feel sufficient interest in their admiration of the hero, and of the valour of his soldiers, to induce them to ask permission of the Government to inclose the tree, and thus enable it to recover its injuries [284] and mark the spot to generations unborn.[1] Unless some such expedient be resorted to, it will speedily share the' fate of Wallace's Oak in the Tor Wood, and exist only in the shape of patriotic walking-sticks and snuff-boxes.

Close by, Sir Alexander Gordon fell; and a very neat monument, constructed of Tournay marble, has here been erected to his memory. Our guide mentioned to us, that the Duke remained at this spot during a great part of the day, constantly despatching aides-de-camp in different directions, and occasionally himself galloping towards different posts, which they were the objects of the enemy's attack, or seemed otherwise to require his presence. Our guide observed him, on two occasions, go as far to his right as a rising ground behind Chateau de Goumont.

In front of Wellington's portion, and at no great distance from it, is the farm-house, barm, and remains of the small orchard of La Haye Sainte where our conductor, according to his own account, was stationed as a sharp-shooter. The troops within formed numerous loop-holes in the walls, through which they *canarded* the enemy when they approached. Our guide mentioned, that during the early part of the engagement, he saw through the loop-holes bodies of the cuirassed cavalry pressing forward along the high-road, towards the Duke's station, in the most daring style. Both the loop-holes and the breaches occasioned by cannon-balls have been filled up; but the marks of mending are still very evident. Nearly opposite to this farm-house, on the other side of the high way, is a sort of hollow or old gravel-pit, into which, we were told, a [285] regiment of cuirassiers was tumbled pell-mell by a charge of the Horse Guards.

We proceeded along the high-road to La Bell Alliance a shabby and dirty cot-house now dignified with the title of "Hotel." Many shots appear to have struck the walls. From a neighbouring cottage, now wholly in ruins, Buonaparte for some time surveyed the progress of the dreadful struggle. Here the cross-road by which the Prussians from St. Lambert advanced, touches the high-road to Charieroi; and this was the scene of the meeting of Blucher and Wellington, about eight in the evening, when the French had

[1] Mr John Scott, in his "Paris revisited in 1815," we find celebrated this tree in a strain of lofty eloquence to which we have no pretensions. He did not once anticipate the fate which we haveit now seems destined.

given way and were flying! What must have been the sensations of our great Commander at such a moment, when intense anxiety was giving place to honourable exultation, and when this feeling had to struggle with irrepressible grief (or the dismal carnage of the day! After mutual congratulations, the two generals entered the cottage and some refreshments were procured for them like thousands of our countrymen, we wished to see the apartment thus incidentally raised to celebrity. We accordingly entered; wine was speedily produced, and we filled bumpers to the healths of the two heroes[1]: the memory of the Scots who fell at Waterloo was not forgotten; nor did we omit to pledge our brother-gardeners, probably then met at Oman's in Edinburgh, to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the Caledonian Horticultural Society.

From this point we passed over the fields towards Hougomont, a –a new name which the Duke, by a slight mistake in his dispatches, bestowed on the *Château de Gomont*. The ploughmen were now peaceably at work: the scene [286] was deserted, except by straggling parties of curious visitors like ourselves; we relapsed into cultivators, and examined the form of the plough, and the quality of the land. The soil is a soft sandy loam, of a light colour like that near Brussels. A few water-worn stones are interspersed; we broke one of the largest, and it appeared to be siliceous limestone. In approaching the ruins of the mansion, we passed through the remains of a grove of large forest-trees, with what had been an orchard on our right hand. The trees which had suffered most severely from the shot have lately been cut down. But many of those left are terribly shattered. The beeches seem to be recovering most slowly from the effects of the balls: some ash-trees and oaks have also been sorely wounded, but appear to sustain such injuries better. A large and aged chestnut-tree (Castanea vulgaris) has been literally riddled with grape and musket shot; yet it is recovering, and may witness the passing away of some succeeding generations. The trees in the grove and in the orchard of Hougomont, it may be remarked, did not merely suffer by being perforated by being of all descriptions, poured in upon them, in opposite directions, from both armies; but, for months after the battle was over, they were subjected to injuries more extensive and severe through the zeal of English visitors to possess some relic from a spot so distinguished. The peasantry soon learned the value of a ball scooped out from a tree in which it had been lodged; they were ready, with chisels and hammers to perform the operation in the presence of the purchaser, and, in removing a musket-bullet, an opening was generously made that would admit a six-pounder.— As we were about to enter the outer-gate of the chateau, two or three little fellows, pointing to a circular heap of earth mixed with ashes, resembling the remains of a great bon fire, called [287] to us, "Voyez, Messieurs les Anglais, là, six cents Français furent brulés tous ensemble." Having thus secured our attention, they set to scraping most actively, like so many terriers, and soon dug up fragments of human ribs and skulls, which they presented, with eager expectant countenances, shewing that these were marketable commodities to some persons, — and lisping in broken English, "De French-mans bone." — The chateau is now a scorched ruin. The adjoining domestic chapel still retains its roof, over which the cross appears aloft and uninjured. On one side of these buildings is a kind of farm-yard; on the other is a garden, inclosed on the south by a long brickwall. The dwelling-house and offices were set on fire by the bombs; and while the flames were raging, the French fearlessly tried to enter the court-yard. At the period, between forty and fifty of the English Guards threw themselves into the chapel. The enemy even attempted to force this sanctuary, by burning the door; and they partly succeeded. Over the back of the door is a large wooden crucifix; and at the farther extremity of the chapel, next the altar, and inclosed in a glass-case, is a Mariola, decked in tawdry silks. Our soldiers naturally tried to extinguish the fire, and they had prevented it from extending far into the chapel. A middle-aged woman, who appeared to be the mother of the children above mentioned, now hastily joined us, and proceeded to give an exposition of a miracle. "Mais voici," she began, with no little volubility and emphasis, – "Mais voici, Messieurs, un *vrais* miracle, et ce qui vient à l'appui de l'Ecriture sainte; le talon de notre Seigneur est froissé, –c'est à dire, – (la même chose)," with a nod, "brulé,–tandis que Notre Dame ici, la Mère de Dieu," with a courtesy, "reste tout-à-fait saine et sauve." We perceived by the glances of [288] our matronly expositor, that the drift of her interference with to enhance the gratuity about to be given to her youngsters; and having satisfied them, or tried to do so (for they were not more poor than importunate, and had evidently benefited by the lessons of our lavish

[1]General Blüchier died two yean after the date of our our visit to Waterloo.

countrymen), we made our way into the garden. Here the Coldstream Guards were posted, and maintained themselves throughout the bloody day. In the course of the night previous to the battle, two rows of loop-holes, were formed along the wall, and a sort of scaffold was erected for those who were to fire through the upper tier. To each loop-hole, six soldiers were assigned, three continually discharging their pieces, while other three were loading. By these means the Guards harassed the approaching enemy in the most galling manner. The French, however, boldly forced their way through the grove and orchard already mentioned, till they came to the edge of a ditch on the outside of this fatal wall, where of course they fell in hundreds, or even thousands, till the ditch was literally filled. Such was the report of our guide; and we believe he was pretty correct — The garden had been neatly laid out in the Flemish style, with clipped hedges, berceau walks, and fancy parterres; and some of the plants which still survive in the borders, afford evidence that a select collection of rarities had once existed here. We noticed a large tuft of the double purple Dame Violet (*Hesperis matronalis, var.*), which is a rare garden-flower; and a well established stool of one of the less common species of Peony (perhaps *Paeonia hybrida* of Pallas), of which the leaves only presented themselves at this season of the year.

Leaving Hougomont, we returned towards Mount St John, by the right of the British position, and nearly in a line with the Nivelles road. Here a symptom of the slaughter, rather of a disgusting kind, presented itself,— a human [289] skull, still containing the brain, in a black and putrescent state. This remnant of humanity lay in the track of a farm-road, and had been left to be kicked about by the feet of the cart-horses; so indifferent had the common people come to such vestiges of the carnage. At no great distance from the spot, and just where the battle raged the hottest in the early part of the day, a solitary, peasant, in his blue frock, was now mowing oats with the Hainault scythe. This Flemish instrument of reaping is furnished with three upright wooden forks, calculated to collect the stems of the grain as they are cut. By making the sweeps of one uniform length, the reaper lays what is cut, in very straight and regular parcels. Both Mr Hay and Mr Macdonald tried to use this implement and were of opinion, that a little practice only would be required to render it easy, and that it might be advantageously, employed on some of our Scottish farms, especially where *shearers* are not easily procured. At the end of the handle b a piece of squared wood, which is used for giving edge to the scythe.

Arriving again at the Wellington Tree, we now crossed towards the left of the British line, and walked along a by-road leading to the village of Ohain. By the side of this road is the hawthorn hedge the literal *haye sainte,* behind which the Highland Regiments were posted on the day of trial, and through which, they often burst to encounter and repel their daring antagonists, pursuing them across the rising ground, into hollows next to their own lines. The hedge and its low mud embankment are now completely in ruins; but when at their best; the protection afforded must have been very, slender indeed. Several squadrons of British cavalry, including the Scots Greys, were stationed in hollow ground a short distance back from the hedge. At [291]this position they could not be seen by the advancing columns of the French; and thousands of balls passed over their heads without doing injury. While waiting for orders to attack, they suffered only two casualties; one common soldier had his head carried off, and a serjeant had his thigh fractured, by cannon-balls. At the proper moment, the cavalry advanced, passed between the Soots Regiments, leaped the hedge, or brushed through gaps, and fell on the astounded French. In this daring charge, they were at first commanded by Colonel Ponsonby, and, on his being mortally wounded, they were guided with no less skill and courage by Colonel Stratton of the Enniskillen Dragoons.-— Having proceeded in this direction till we approached the farm-house of Papelotte and La Haye, the extremity of the British left, we returned along the sloping ground in front of the hedge, where some of the deadliest conflicts took place, and where our countrymen, both cavalry and infantry, suffered the most Here the Scots Greys captured a French eagle, and here the 42d and 98d raiments flanked the French infantry, when making one of their most formidable and daring charges.

On revisiting the bam and offices of the farm of Mount St John, we remarked (what had before escaped our notice, our eyes having then been eagerly turned towards the interesting prospect which was opening in front,) that the south sides of the walls of those offices were clothed with fruit-trees, chiefly pears; and that these, having suffered little injury from the war which raged in their neighbourhood, were now loaded with fruit.

All the cabarets at Mount St John were this day full. [291] After having procured a room, and ordered our dinner, we were obliged to share both with an unprovided party from Scotland. There had been, we believe, five parses traversing the field, besides our own. Yet, such is the resort of visitants, chiefly English, that the villagers considered this as only a day of ordinary business.

On our way home we stopped for a short time at Waterloo, and entered the church. The walls of this small building are now covered with monumental tablets, sacred to the memory, not of Flemish churchmen or devotees, but of British soldiers. The liberality of sentiment displayed by the Roman Catholic clergy, in sanctioning these erections, is not undeserving of praise.— In a small garden behind a cottage in the village, we noticed a tombstone which had been lately erected: it covers the remains of Lieutenant-Colonel Stables, who fell distinguished by his soldier's blessings, and his comrades tears. We saw likewise the little garden in which the Marquis of Anglesea's limb is buried: over the spot is planted a weeping willow, and a painted board explains in French the purport of this drooping emblem,— attractive conceits, which have doubtless proved very profitable to the domestics of the house: we were invited to enter and see the General's boot, and a rush-bottomed chair, which was stained during the amputation.

Soon after sunset we regained the gates of Brussels, highly gratified with our day's excursion. We had witnessed the arena on which the most momentous and decisive battle of modem times was decided, and on which in the presence of brave friends and foes, the glory of Caledonia was nobly maintained by her sons; and we felt double satisfaction from being well assured, that our countrymen were here held in high estimation, not only for courage and [293] constancy in the field, but for general propriety of conduct when in quarters.[87]

April 1816 Sir John Burgoyne returns to the field of battle and records his impressions:

Remarks made on a Visit to the Ground. 1816.

The field of Waterloo, in front of Mont St. Jean, is frequently accounted as no position, and does not show to very much advantage, even on Craan's plan, although that appears to be an accurate survey. On inspection, however, without which it is impossible to have a perfect idea of ground, it is certainly favourable for giving battle on, and if a little work could have been done on it, might have been made excellent.

It was not that commanding kind of position that is sometimes found, and which strikes the eye at once; on the contrary, the ridge occupied by our army is lower than the heights a mile or two in front, from whence the French army advanced. But it still had many of the essentials of a good fighting position. The flanks were on commanding points, that discovered the ground well all round them, at a fair distance from the main road by which the enemy approached, and would have required him to make a considerable detour across the country to have turned them.

The real left of the position, at a turning of the cross road, was not more than three-quarters of a mile from the Genappe chaussee in the centre, the right resting immediately above Goumont; the whole being about a mile and a half or two miles in extent; it was, therefore, very compact. In front of the left the ground WHS well discovered, and with no very favourable points for the enemy's artillery. A road ran along the line in this part with thin hedges along it, and a very slight bank, affording some little cover to the infantry if they laid down. This road continued along the centre and right of the position, out of sight of the enemy in those parts, but not affording any cover. The ground in front of the centre and right was more broken, but the hollows were well looked into by the chateau of Goumont in front of the right, and the farm [328] of the Haye Sainte on the high road. The whole line was on a ridge, which, rounding back to the rear, covered the troops from the sight and from the direct fire of the enemy.

The chateau of Goumont and the Haye Sainte were strong buildings, not too far in front of the line, and situated in hollows, so as not to be much exposed to be cannonaded severely. They were both of very great consequence as posts. The first was occupied and defended so well as to be retained through the whole day, in spite of all the efforts of the enemy.

The troops were put into the Haye Sainte only a short time before the action commenced. The approach to it from the position was very much exposed indeed. The men in it became a kind of forlorn hope; they fired all their ammunition away, and then, for want of communication and support, were overpowered. When the French were in possession of this point an extensive hollow was open to them, which could not be seen from any part of our line, and under favour of which, their great mass of cavalry remained for some hours within 400 yards of our line, from whence they advanced, and made charges at their pleasure.

Such was the nature of our ground. Even a single company of Sappers with their tools might, in a very few hours, have rendered most essential service in improving it, by preparing the two buildings for defence, and throwing up traverses for guns across the two chaussees. The Guards did to the chateau what was necessary for its defence. Had the Haye Sainte been loopholed, all its doors and approaches towards the front and flanks been strongly barricaded, and a communication made to the rear, it would probably have been held through the whole day. The traverse across the Genappe chaussee would have given our artillery the command of that road by which the enemy brought down his troops to many of the most serious attacks, and still more so had the eighteen-pounders been up, which had been prepared for the field.

Had there been opportunity and means for more work, the points are clearly marked out where four or six detached works might have been placed to advantage, besides the cover that might be thrown up for the line. The duke did not wish to have any ground entrenched beforehand which might give any [329] clue lo his intentions, but would have been glad to have had anything which could ho thrown up at the time. Two companies of Sappers and 3000 men might, on the night of the 17th, in addition to the above-mentioned posts, have thrown up such a line as would have afforded great cover to our infantry and guns, have brought them more to the ridge of the hill, and would have considerably checked and broken the advances of cavalry.

The French attacks do not appear to have been well judged, for want of union or combination. At one time, they made a great attack on Goumont on the right; at another, and for a considerable period, the great mass of cavalry were acting without support; at another, a powerful attack. of infantry on our left; and last of all, when the cavalry was nearly annihilated and great part of the infantry of the line beaten, the infantry of the Imperial Guard, who had been in reserve, were brought up, and shared the same fate. Each of these efforts appear to have been so powerful, that if united, in the style of the Duke of Wellington's attacks at Salamanca and Vittoria, certainly there would have been a better chance of success.

Had the Prussians and British, even on the morning of the 18th, been under one general, it is probable that many of the former, who marched by Obain, might have been brought up regiment by regiment much earlier in the day; and they were much wanted in our line. As it was, it is probable that Blucher rather preferred bringing up his own army in mass together, as the Prussian army, than have portions of them falling in and beating the enemy off, under the duke. As we were able to maintain our ground, the victory was more complete as it was, and Blucher gained great credit for acting so decisively respecting Grouchy's corps. Had the enemy turned our left to separate us from the Prussians, the position would have been altered, with the left on the Forest of Soignies, the right probably where the left was in the battle, and the army would still have held a very good position.

J. F. B.[88]

1 & 16 May 1816 Lord Byron arrives at Brussels, tours the field of battle and later writes to John Cam Hobhouse:

My dear H[obhouse]e–You will be surprized that we are not more "en avant" and so am I–but Mr. Baxter's wheels and springs have not done their duty[1]– for which I beg that you will abuse him like a pickpocket (that is–*He*– the *Baxter* being the *pickpocket*) and say that I expect a deduction–having been obliged to come out of the way to this place–which was not in my route– for repairs–which however I hope to have accomplished so as to put us in motion in a day or two. –We passed through Ghent–Antwerp–and Mechlin–& thence diverged here– having seen all the sights–pictures–docks–basins–& having climbed up steeples &c. & so forth – – the first thing – after the flatness & fertility of the country which struck me– was the beauty of the towns–Bruges first–where you may tell Doublas Kinnaird – entering at Sunset–I overtook a crew of beggarly looking gentlemen not unlike Oxberry[2] [. . .]

16 May 1816

My dear Hobhouse/– We are this far by the Rhenish route on our way to Switzerland – where I shall wait to hear of your intentions as to junction before I go ti Italy. – – I have written to you three times and mention the number–in case of any non-arrival of epistles. –We were obliged to diverge from Anvers & Mechlin to Brussels– for some wheel repairs– & in course seized the opportunity to visit Mont St. Jean &c. where I had a gallop over the field on a Cossac horse (left by some of the Don gentlemen at Brussels) and after a tolerably minute investigation–returned by Soignies–having purchased a quantity of helmets sabres &c all of which are consigned to the care of a Mr. Gordon at B[russe]ls (an old acquaintance) who desired to forward them to Mr. Murray–in whose keeping I hope to find them safe some day or other. – – Our route by the Rhine has been very beautiful–&much surpassing my expectation–though very much answering in it's outlines to my previous conceptions. – – The Plain at Waterloo is a fine one– but not much after Marathon & Troy–Cheronea & Platea.– – Perhaps therre is something of prejudice in this– but I detest the cause & the victors– & the victory – including Blucher & the Bourbons. – – From Bonn to Coblenz –& Coblenz again to Beingen & Mayence–nothing can exceed the prospects at every point[.][89]

[1] Byron had ordered from Baxter the coachmaker a huge Napoleonic travelling coach before he left England at a cost of £500 [of which only a portion was paid KWR].

[2]William Oxberry (1784-1824) was an actor who had made his debut at Covent Garden and was for some time manager of the Olympic Theatre. In 1816 he played the part of Moses in Sheridan's *School for Scandal* at Drury Lane.

9 May 1817 Sir Walter Scott writes to Robert Southey from Selkirk of his response to the battlefield:

My dear Southey,

I have been a strangely negligent correspondent for some months past, more especially as I have had you rarely out of my thoughts, for I think you will hardly doubt of my sincere sympathy in events which have happened since I have written. I shed sincere tears over the Pilgrimage to Waterloo. But in the crucible of human life, the purest gold is tried by the strongest heat, and I can only hope for the continuance of your present family blessings to one so well formed to enjoy the pure happiness they afford. My health has, of late, been very indifferent. I was very nearly succumbing under a violent inflammatory attack, and still feel the effects of the necessary treatment. I believe they took one-third of the blood of my system, and blistered in proportion; so that both my flesh and my blood have been in a wofully reduced state. I got out here some weeks since, where, by dint of the insensible exercise which one takes in the country, I feel myself gathering strength daily, but am still obliged to observe a severe regimen. It was not to croak about myself, however, that I took up the pen, but to wish you joy of your triumphant answer to that coarse- minded William Smith. He deserved all he has got, and, to say the truth, you do not spare him, and have no cause. His attack seems to have proceeded from the vulgar insolence of a low mind desirous of attacking genius at disadvantage. It is the ancient and eternal strife of which the witch speaks in Thalaba. Such a man as he feels he has no alliance with such as you, and his evil instincts lead him to treat as hostile whatever he cannot comprehend. I met Smith once during his stay in Edinburgh,[1] and had, what I seldom have with any one in society, a high quarrel with him. His mode of travelling had been from one gentleman's seat to another, abusing the well-known hospitality of the Highland lairds by taking possession of their houses, even during their absence, domineering in them when they were present, and not only eating the dinner of to-day, but requiring that the dinner of to-morrow should also be made ready and carried forward with him, to save the expense of inns. All this was no business of mine, but when, in the middle of a company consisting of those to whom he had owed his hospitality, he abused the country, of which he knew little the language, of which he knew nothing — and the people, who have their faults, but are a much more harmless, moral, and at the same time high-spirited population than, I venture to say, he ever lived amongst — I thought it was really too bad, and so e'en took up the debate, and gave it him over the knuckles as smartly as I could. Your pamphlet, therefore, fed fat my ancient grudge against him as well as the modern one, for you cannot doubt that my blood boiled at reading the report of his speech. Enough of this gentleman, who, I think, will not walk out of the round in a hurry again, to slander the conduct of individuals.

I am at present writing at our head-court of freeholders — a set of quiet, unpretending, but sound-judging country gentlemen, and whose opinions may be very well taken as a fair specimen of those men of sense and honour, who are not likely to be dazzled by literary talent, which lies out of their beat, and who, therefore, cannot be of partial counsel in the cause; and I never heard an opinion more generally, and even warmly expressed, than that your triumphant vindication brands Smith as a slanderer in all time coming. I think you may not be displeased to know this, because what men of keen feelings and literary pursuits must have felt [44] cannot be unknown to you, and you may not have the same access to know the impression made upon the general class of society.

[1]Scott's meeting with this Mr. Smith occurred at the table of his friend and colleague, Hector Macdonald Buchanan. The company, except Scott and Smith, were all, like their hospitable landlord, Highlanders.

I have to thank you for the continuation of the History of Brazil — one of your gigantic labours; the fruit of a mind so active, yet so patient of labour. I am not yet far advanced in the second volume, reserving it usually for my hour's amusement in the evening, as children keep their dainties for Bonne bouche: but as far as I have come, it possesses all the interest of the commencement, though a more faithless and worthless set than both Dutch and Portuguese I have never read of; and it requires your knowledge of the springs of human action, and your lively description of ' hair-breadth 'scapes,' to make one care whether the hog bites the dog, or the dog bites the hog. Both nations were in rapid declension from their short-lived age of heroism, and in the act of experiencing all those retrograde movements which are the natural consequence of selfishness on the one hand, and bigotry on the other.

I am glad to see you are turning your mind to the state of the poor. Should you enter into details on the subject of the best mode of assisting them, I would be happy to tell you the few observations I have made — not on a very small scale neither, considering my fortune, for I have kept about thirty of the labourers in my neighbourhood in constant employment this winter. This I do not call charity, because they executed some extensive plantations and other works, which I could never have got done so cheaply, and which I always intended one day to do. But neither was it altogether selfish on my part, because I was putting myself to inconvenience in incurring the expense of several years at once, and certainly would not have done so, but to serve mine honest neighbours, who were likely to want work but for such exertion. From my observation, I am inclined greatly to doubt the salutary effect of the scheme generally adopted in Edinburgh and elsewhere for relieving the poor. At Edinburgh, they are employed on public works at so much a-day — tenpence, I believe, or one shilling, with an advance to those who have families. This rate is fixed below that of ordinary wages, in order that no person may be employed but those who really cannot find work elsewhere. But it is attended with this bad effect, that the people regard it partly as charity, which is humiliating, — and partly as an imposition, in taking their labour below its usual saleable value; to which many add a third view of the subject — namely, that this sort of half-pay is not given them for the purpose of working, but to prevent their rising in rebellion. None of these misconceptions are favourable to hard labour, and the consequence is, that I never have seen such a set of idle faineants as those employed on this system in the public works, and I am sure that, notwithstanding the very laudable intention of those who subscribed to form the fund, and the yet more praiseworthy, because more difficult, exertions of those who superintend it, the issue of the scheme will occasion full as much mischief as good to the people engaged in it. Private gentlemen, acting on something like a similar system, may make it answer better, because they have not the lazy dross of a metropolis to contend with — because they have fewer hands to manage — and above all, because an individual always manages his own concerns better than those of the country can be managed. Yet all who have employed those who were distressed for want of work at under wages, have had, less or more, similar complaints to make. I think I have avoided this in my own case, by inviting the country-people to do piece-work by the contract. Two things only are necessary — one is, that the nature of the work should be such as will admit of its being ascertained, when finished, to have been substantially executed. All sort of spade-work and hoe-work, with many other kinds of country labour, tall under this description, and the employer can hardly be cheated in the execution, if he keeps a reasonable look-out. The other point is to take care that the undertakers, in their anxiety for employment, do not take the job too cheap. A little acquaintance with country labour will enable one to regulate this; but it is an essential point, for if you do not keep them to their bargain, it is making a jest of the thing, and forfeiting the very advantage you have in view — that, namely, of inducing the labourer to bring his heart and spirit to his work. But this he will do where he has a fair bargain, which is to prove a good or bad one according to his own exertions. In this case you make the poor man his own friend, for the profits of his good conduct are all his own. It is astonishing how partial the people are to this species of contract, and how [45] diligently they labour, acquiring or maintaining all the while those habits which render them honourable and useful members of society. I mention this to you, because the rich, much to their honour, do not, in general, require to be so much stimulated to benevolence, as to be directed in the most useful way to exert it.

I have still a word to say about the poor of our own parish of Parnassus. I have been applied to by a very worthy friend, Mr. Scott of Kinton, in behalf of an unfortunate Mr. Gilmour, who, it seems, has expended a little fortune in printing upon his own account, poems which, from the sample I saw, seem exactly to answer the description of Dean Swift's country house —

"Too bad for a blessing, too good for a curse,

I wish from my soul they were better or worse."

But you are the dean of our corporation, and, I am informed, take some interest in this poor gentleman. If you can point out any way in which I can serve him, I am sure my inclination is not wanting, but it looks like a very hopeless case. I beg my kindest respects to Mrs. Southey, and am always sincerely and affectionately yours,

Walter Scott[90]

25 May, 1816 Henry Fox Talbot visits and later reports his observations:

Castleford,
November 14. 1816

My Dear Trevelyan,
I returned here nearly five months ago, after a very short tour on the Continent, for I was absent from London, only a little more than six weeks – four of which I spent at Paris – I had frequent opportunities of seeing the Botanical Garden there, & was very much pleased with it – They The plants are distributed according to the method of Jussieu, which is much the best for such an establishment – They are exceedingly neat, & free from weeds, & most of them growing finely – the houses are tolerably good – I saw a fine Banana Tree in flower & fruit – Josephine's ci-devant garden at Malmaison, is one of the prettiest spots I ever saw – On the 25th of May I had the pleasure of taking a walk over the Field of Battle at Waterloo – Although 11 months after the Battle, it was still highly interesting – I even saw blood on the wall, where a cannon ball had killed seven men – The deserted garden at Hougomont was flourishing in all the verdure of Spring – In the forest of Soignies, I saw Phyteuma spicatum, not a native of England, growing plentifully. It is very like our English *Phyteuma orbiculare*, only taller & handsomer with a longer spike of flowers – The blossom is dark blue, but I found a white variety also – In the same place I saw a little of *Convallaria multiflora* – which is sometimes met with in England – *Carex pallescens* (which also grows at Castleford) & *Rhamnus Frangula* grew in the same spot – This was not more than three miles from Brussels – Nearer Brussels I met with *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, & a species of Cyathea which I could not determine, tho' it was common in the Hedges – I could not decide whether *Cynoglossum omphalodes* which I met with in the grounds of the Prince of Orange at Laeken, was wild there or not – The voyage on the Canal from Ghent to Ostend was quite delightful – *Menyanthes nymphæoides* abounded on the surface of the water, but was not in blossom yet – *Nymphæa alba* was in flower, & looked beautiful – Coming home I saw several rare plants in England – viz – Salvia pratensis by the roadside near Rochester – *Carex pendula* – Five miles from Canterbury [towards] Ramsgate, plentiful – the rest I have forgotten but I recollect an umbelliferous plant was plentiful by the roadside, I think it was Apium graveolens – The Roadsides in France are bordered with Apple Trees, which were all in blossom, & had a very pleasing effect – In Josephine's garden at Malmaison I saw Salvia pratensis very abundant on the lawns, where it must be a great weed, tho' a very pretty one – With it grew Veronica Teucrium of Linnæus (not British) & Salvia Saxifraga granulata in plenty – In the Bois de Boulogne near Paris, which must have been an excellent field for botanizing, till the Allies cut it down) I saw the same *Saxifraga granulata* and *Convallaria Polygonatum*, a rarer species (at least in England) than the multiflora – In the same place grew the pretty Pulmonaria officinalis in flower, and *Ajuga pyramidalis* of the Paris botanists, which I conceive to be Ajuga alpina of Eng. Botany. *Euphorbia Cyparissias* is extremely abundant by roadsides & in woods near Paris – (I have lately found it at Scarthingwell, ten miles from this place –) *Potentilla verna*, a pretty little early flower, was also plentiful in similar situations – & *Eryngium campestre*, which was not in flower, & might easily have been overlooked for a Thistle – *Sambucus Ebulus* is frequent by the roadsides on the Continent – I also saw many other plants, which were not sufficiently advanced to be made out – One of these was I think, *Astragalus glycyphyllos* – Of Cryptogamic vegetables I saw but few, *Polypodium calcareum* (I believe) grew on the edge of a fountain at St Cloud, & I saw *Encalypta vulgaris* & *Bryum cuspidatum* in good fruit –

Yrs sincerely
W. H. F. Talbot

Pray keep some specimens of the Fossil Bark you mentioned some time ago, for a fair mineralogical friend of mine, who is dying to have some – The Botanic Garden at Brussels was not very good – & in great disorder – Answer this soon, for I have much to tell, & I hope, much to hear – I am not going to Oxford, but to Trinity Coll. Cambridge –
I am all anxiety to see the eclipse of the Sun next Tuesday, tell me in your next if you saw it at Oxford –

W. C. Trevelyan Esqr
University Coll – Oxford[91]

17-24 June 1816 Edward and Elizabeth Stanley visit Waterloo, as part of continental tour. The Stanley's write of their experience to members of their family, and record the views in a sketchbook:

Mrs. E. Stanley to Lady Maria J. Stanley.

Brussels, June 18, 1816.

On the 18th of June, how can I begin with any other subject than Waterloo. [. . .] At 8 this morning we mounted our Cabriolets for Waterloo. Donald put on his Waterloo medal for the first time, and a French shirt he got in the spoils, and a cravat of an officer who was killed, and I wrapped myself in his Waterloo cloak, and we all felt the additional sensation which the anniversary of the day produced on everybody. It brought the comparison of the past and present day more perfectly home. Donald was [260] ready with his recollections every minute of the day, what had been his occupation or his feeling. The forest of Soignies is a fine approach to the field of battle — dark, damp, and melancholy. If you had heard nothing about it, you could hardly help feeling, in passing through it, that you would not like to cross it alone. There are no fine trees, but the extent and depth of wood gives it all the effect of a fine one, and an effect particularly suited to the associations connected with it. The road — a narrow pavement in the middle with black mud on each side — looks as if it had never felt a ray of sun, and from its state to-day gave me a good idea of what it must have been. Sometimes the road is raised thro' a deep hollow, and it was not possible to look down without shuddering at the idea of the horses and carriages and men which had been overturned one upon another; in some parts the trees are a la Ralph Leycester, and you see the dark black of shade of the distant wood through them; but in other parts it is so choked with brushwood and inequalities of ground, that you could not see two yards before you, and no gorge was ever so good a cover for foxes as this for all evil-disposed persons. At Waterloo we stopped to see the Church, or rather the monuments in it, put up by the different regiments over their fallen officers. They are all badly designed and executed but one Latin one — not half so good as the epitaph on Lord Anglesey's leg which the man had buried with the utmost veneration in his garden and planted a tree [261] over it; and he shows as a relic almost as precious as a Catholic bit of bone or blood, the blood upon a chair in the room when the leg was cut off, which he had promised my lord "de ne jamais effacer."

At Mont St. Jean Donald began to know where he was. Here he found the well where he had got some water for his horse; here the green pond he had fixed upon as the last resource for his troop; here the cottage where he had slept on the 17th; here the breach he had made in the hedge for his horses to get into the field to bivouac; here the spot where he had fired the first gun; here the hole in which he sat for the surgeon to dress his wound. He had never been on the field since the day of the battle, and his interest in seeing it again and discovering every spot under its altered circumstances was fully as great as ours.

After all that John Scott or Walter Scott or anybody can describe or even draw, how much more clear and satisfactory is the conception which one single glance over the reality gives you in an instant, than any you can form from the best and most elaborate description that can be given! To see it in perfection would be to have an officer of every regiment to give you an account just of everything he saw and did on the particular spot where he was stationed.

Donald scarcely knew as much as Edward did or as the people about of what passed anywhere but just at his own station. [. . .] [262] It is sufficient to ask the inhabitants where they were and what they saw, to obtain interesting information.

Every plan I have seen makes it much too irregular, rough ground; it is all undulating, smooth ups and downs, so gradual that you must look some time before you discover all the irregularity there is. Hougoumont is the only interesting point, and that by having an air of peace and retirement about it most opposite to what took place in it.

It is a respectable, picturesque farmhouse, with pretty trees and sweet fields all around it; the ravages are not repaired and many of the trees cut down. We left our carriages in the road and walked all over the British position, and henceforward I shall have a clearer idea, not only of Waterloo, but of what a military position and military plan is like.

At La Belle Alliance we sat upon a bench where Lord Wellington and Blucher perhaps met, and drank to their healths in Vin de Bordeaux. In spite of the corn, there are still bits of leather caps and bullets and bones scattered about in the fields, and you are pestered with children innumerable with relics of all sorts. We had heard magnificent accounts on our road here of all that was to be done on the field, balls, fetes, sham fights, processions, and I do not know what, but they have all dwindled to a dinner given here to the Belgian soldiers and a Mass to be said for the souls of the [263] dead to-morrow. However, we saw what we wished as we wished, and the impression is perhaps clearer than if it had been disturbed and mixed with other sights.

And now, being near 12, and I having walked about 8 miles, and been up since 6, must go to bed, though I feel neither sleepy nor tired.

To Lucy Stanley.

June 24, 1816.

. . . Away with me to Waterloo!

We arrived at Brussels on the evening of the 17th, and at seven o'clock started for the scene of action. From Brussels a paved road, with a carriage track on each side, passes for nine miles to the village of Waterloo.

The Forest (of Soignies) is, without exception, one of the most cut-throat-looking spots I ever beheld, . . and for some days after the battle deserters and stragglers, chiefly Prussians, took up their abode in this appropriate place, and sallying forth, robbed, plundered, and often shot those who were unfortunate enough to travel alone or in small defenceless parties.

After traversing this gloomy avenue for about four miles, the first symptoms of war met our eyes in the shape of a dead horse, whose ribs glared like a cheval-de-frise from a tumulus of mud. If the ghosts of the dead haunt these sepulchral groves, we must have passed through an army of spirits, as [264] our driver, who had visited the scene three days after the battle, described the last four miles as a continued pavement of men and horses dying and dead.

At length a dome appears at the termination of the avenue. It is the church of Waterloo. They were preparing for a mass and procession, and the houses were most of them adorned with festoons of flowers or branches of trees. [. . .]

We turned to the right down the Nivelle road, for it was there Donald's gun was placed, and some labourers who were ploughing on the spot brought us some iron shot and fragments of shell which they had just turned up. The hedges were still tolerably sprinkled with bits of cartridge-paper, and remnants of hats, caps, straps, and shoes were discernible all over the plains. Hougoumont was a heap of ruins, for it had taken fire during the action, and presented a very perfect idea of the fracas which had taken place that day year. How different now! A large flock of sheep, with their shepherd, were browsing at the gate, and the larks were singing over its ruins on one of the sweetest days we could have chosen for the visit. As I was taking a sketch in a quiet corner I heard a vociferation so loud, so vehement, and so varied, that I really thought two or three people were quarrelling close to me. In a moment the vociferator (for it was but one) appeared at my elbow with an explosion of French oaths and gesticulations equal to any discharge of grape-shot on the day of attack. "Comment, Monsieur," said [265] I, "What is the matter?" "Oh, les coquins! les sacrés coquins" and away he went, abusing the coquins in so ambiguous a style that I doubted whether his wrath was venting against Napoleon or against his opponents. "Oui," remarked I, "ils sont coquins; et Buonaparte, que pensez-vous de lui?" This was a sort of opening which I trusted would bring him to the point without a previous committal of myself. It certainly did bring him to the point, for he gave a bounce and a jump and his tongue came out, and his mouth foamed, and his eyes rolled, as with a jerk he ejaculated, "Napoleon! qu'est-ce que je pense de lui ?" It was well for poor Napoleon that he was quiet and comfortable in St. Helena, for had he been at Hougoumont, I am perfectly convinced that my communicant would have sent him to moulder with his brethren in arms. Having vented his rage, I asked him if the French had ever got within the walls. "Yes," he said, "three times; but they were always repulsed"; he assured me he had been there during the attack and that he saw them within; but added, "How they came in at that door" (pointing to the gate by which we were standing and which was drilled with bullets), "or when they came in, or how or where they got out I cannot tell you, for what with the noise, and the fire, and the smoke, I scarcely knew where I was myself.

One of the farm servants begged me to observe the chapel, which he hinted had been indebted to a miracle for its safety, and certainly as a good [266] Catholic he had a fair foundation for his belief, as the flames had merely burnt about a yard of the floor, having been checked, as he conceived, by the presence of the crucifix suspended over the door, which had received no other injury than the loss of part of its feet. He had remained there till morning, when, seeing the French advance and guessing their drift, he contrived to make good his escape, but returned the following day. What he then saw you may guess when I tell you that at the very door I stood upon a mound composed of earth and ashes upon which 800 bodies had been burnt. Every tree bore marks of death, and every ditch was one continued grave.

From Hougoumont we walked to La Belle Alliance, crossing the neutral ground between the armies; a few days ago a couple of gold watches had been found, and I daresay many a similar treasure yet remains. At La Belle Alliance, a squalid farm house, we rested to take some refreshment. For a few biscuits and a bottle of common wine the woman asked us five francs, which being paid, I followed her into the house. Not perceiving me at the door, she met her husband, and bursting into a loud laugh, with a fly-up of

arms and legs (for nothing in this country is done without gesticulation), she exclaimed, “Only think! ces gens-là m'ont donné cinq francs.” In this miserable pothouse did the possessor find 280 wounded wretches [267] jammed together and weltering in blood when he returned on Monday morning. If I proceed to more particulars I foresee I should fill folios.

I must carry you at once to La Haye Sainte. It was along a hedge that the severest work took place; it made me shudder to think that upon a space of fifty square yards 4,000 bodies were found dead. The ditches and the field formed one great grave. The earth told in very visible terms what occasioned its elasticity; upon forcing a stick down and turning up a clod, human bodies in an offensive state of decay immediately presented themselves. I found four Belgian peasants commenting upon one figure which was scarcely interred, and on walking under the outer wall of La Haye Sainte a hole was tenanted by myriads of maggots feasting upon a corpse.

Here stands the Wellington tree, peppered with shot and stripped as high as a man can jump of its twigs and leaves, for every passenger jumps up for a relic. We stood upon the road where Buonaparte (defended by high banks) sent on, but didn't lead, 6,000 of his old Imperial Guard. They charged along the road up to La Haye Sainte, dwindling as they went by the incessant fire of 80 pieces of [268] Artillery, many of them within a few yards, till their number did not exceed 300. Then Napoleon turned round to Bertrand, lifted his hand, cried out, "C'est tout perdu, c'est tout fini," and galloped off with La Corte and Bertrand, quitting most probably for ever a field of battle.

A continued sheet of corn or fallowed fields occupy the whole plain. The crops are indifferent and the reason assigned is curious. The whole being trampled down last year, became the food of mice, which in consequence repaired thither from all quarters and increased and multiplied to such a degree that the soil is quite infested by them.

Upon the heights where the British squares received the shock of the French Cavalry, we found an English officer's cocked hat, much injured apparently by a cannon shot, with its oilskin rotting away, and showing by its texture, shape, and quality that it had been manufactured by a fashionable hatter, and most probably graced the wearer's head in Bond Street and St. James's. Wherever we went we were surrounded by boys and beggars offering Eagles from Frenchmen's helmets, cockades, pistols, swords, cuirasses, and other fragments.

At Brussels they gave the Belgian troops a dinner in a long, shady avenue, which was more [270] than they deserved, and in the evening the Town was illuminated. In the Newspaper I daresay there will be a splendid account of it, but it was a wretched display in the proportion of one tallow candle to 50 windows stuck up to glimmer and go out without the slightest taste or regularity.

From Brussels we started in a nice open Barouche Landau on Thursday, the 20th. We again crossed the Field of Waterloo and proceeded towards Genappes, a road along which we jogged merrily and peaceably, but which had last year on this same day been one continued scene of carnage and confusion: Prussians cutting off French heads, arms and legs by hundreds; Englishmen in the rear going in chase, cheering the Prussians and urging them in pursuit; the French, exhausted with fatigue and vexation, making off in all directions with the utmost speed.

At Genappes we changed horses in the very courtyard where Napoleon's carriage was taken . . . and were shown the spot where the Brunswick Hussars cut down the French General as a retaliation for the life of the Duke. The Postmaster told us what he could, which was not much; the only curious part was that in his narrative he never called the Highland Regiments “Les Écossais,” but “Les Sans Culottes.” The setting sun found us all covered with dust, rather tired and very hungry, and driving up, with some misgivings from what we had heard and from what we saw, to our Inn at Charleroi. “This is an abominable-looking house,” [270] said Donald. “Oh, jump out before we drive in and ask what we can get to eat.” “Well, Donald, what success?” we all cried like young birds upon the return of the old one to the gaping, craving mouths in their nest. “The Landlady says she has nothing at all in the house, but if you will come in thinks something may be killed which will suffice for supper.” This was a bad prospect. . . .

We three went on in quest of better accommodation, and drove first to enquire at the Post House. The first question the Postmaster asked was. What could induce us to come to a place from which there was no exit.” We told him we wished to go to Maubeuge. Had you seen his shoulders elevate themselves above his ears. “To Maubeuge! Why, it is utterly impossible.” “Well, then,” we said, “to Mons.” "Le chemin est Execrable.” “To Phillippeville.” “Encore plus mauvais.” As a proof of which he told us that a government courier had two days before insisted upon being forwarded thither, that they had sent him off at 2 in the morning, to insure him time before daylight, that at 9 in the morning he was brought back, having

proceeded with the utmost difficulty 2 leagues, and then being deposited in a rut by the fracture of his carriage. After a great deal of pro and con it was agreed that with more horses and great caution and stock of patience the road to Mons should be attempted, and we were directed to "Le Grand Monarque," a good name for these times, applicable to Buonaparte or Louis XVIII. [271]

It was worth while to lose our way and encounter these unexpected difficulties for the amusement the landlady afforded us. We seemed almost at the end of the world. I am sure we felt so, for the people were so odd. Dinner she promised, and in half an hour proved by a procession of half a dozen capital dishes how wonderfully these people understand the art of cookery, in a place which in England would be considered upon a par with the "Eagle and Child." We asked her about the road in hopes of hearing a more satisfactory account. With a nod and a shrug, and an enlargement of the mouth and projection of lip, she replied, "Messieurs, je ne voudrais pas être un oiseau de mauvais augure, mais, pour les chemins il faut avouer qu'ils sont effroyables."

I will venture to say such a "oiseau" as our speaker has never before been seen or heard of by any naturalist or ornithologist. Her figure and cloak were both inimitable. She gave such a tragicomic account of her sufferings last year, during the time of the retreat, and in 1814 when the Russians were there, that while she laughed with one eye and cried with the other, we were almost inclined to do the same. She had been pillaged by a French officer in a manner which surpassed any idea we could have formed of French oppression and barbarity. At one time the Cossacks caught her, and on some dispute about a horse, 4 of them took her each by an arm and leg and laying her upon her [272] "Ventre" flat as a pancake, a fifth cracked his knout (whip) most fearfully over her head, and prepared himself to apply the said whip upon our poor landlady. By good fortune an officer rescued her from their clutches, but she shivered like a jelly when she described her feelings in her awkward position, like a boat upon the shore bottom upwards. Then she told us how her husband died of fright, or something very near it. Her account of him was capital, "Il étoit," said she, "un bon papa du temps passé," by which perhaps you may imagine she was young and handsome. She was very old and as ugly as Hecate.

Well, my sheet is at an end, and my hand quite knocked up. We did get to Mons, but the roads were "effroyable." At one moment (luckily we were not in it) the carriage stuck in the mud and paused. "Shall I go? or shall I not go?" Luckily it preferred the latter, and returned to its position on 4 wheels instead of 2.

E. Stanley.[92]

Mrs. E. Stanley writing to Lady Maria Satnley

We left Brussels yesterday morning in a Barouche and three, which is to take us to Paris. It holds us four in the inside and John on the box as nicely as we could wish and is perfectly easy. We suit each other as well in other respects as in the carriage. Donald is an excellent *compagnon de voyage* — full of liveliness, good humour, and curiosity, enjoying everything in the right way. He and Edward Leycester are my *beaux,* while E.S. does the business; which makes it much pleasanter to me than if I had only one gentleman with me. In short, we had not a difficulty till yesterday. We came by Waterloo again and picked up Lacoite to get what we could from him, and then to Charleroi, being told the road by Nivelles was impassable. The road to Charleroi was bad, and we did not arrive till 9, having had no eatable but biscuit and wine. Donald entered the hotel to enquire what we could have for dinner, and returned with the melancholy report that the woman had literally nothing, and did not know where any were to be procured, but that she would kill a hen and dress it if we liked! We sent Donald and Edward, as a forlorn hope, to see if there was another inn, and after a long search [276] they found one, whereupon the postillion found out that he had no drag-chain and could not properly descend the montagne. However, after some arguments, and my descent from the carriage, and Donald and John walking on each side the wheels with large stones ready to place before them in case they were disposed to run too fast, we arrived at the Inn at the foot of the Hill, from which issued an old woman who might have sat for Gil Bias' or Caleb Williams' old woman. When she heard where we were going, she shook her head and said she did not like to be un oiseau de mauvais augure but that the only road we could go was very nearly impassable. The people and the children in the street crowded round the carriage as if they had never seen one before, and, in short, we found that we had got into a cul-de-sac.

However, our adventures for the night finished by the old woman giving us so good a dinner and so many good stories of herself and the Cossacks, that we did not regret having been round, especially now when we are safely landed at Valenciennes without either carriage or bones broke — over certainly the very worst road I ever saw.

We shall be at Paris on Monday or Tuesday, I think. Adieu.

Rev. E. Stanley to his niece, Rianette Stanley.

. . . Before leaving Brussels for ever, it is impossible not to speak about the dogs. What would [277] you say, what would you think, and how would you laugh at some of these wondrous equipages. You meet them in all directions carrying every species of load. They were only surpassed by one vehicle we met on the road drawn by nine, and as luck would have it, just as we passed, the five leaders fell to fighting and ran their carriage over some high stones. Then the women within began to scream and the driver without began to whip, which caused an inevitable scene of bustle and perplexity. . . .

At Quiverain we passed the line of separation between France and Belgium and were subjected to a close inspection by the Custom House Officers, during which some Bandana handkerchiefs of Edward's were for a time in great jeopardy, but they were finally returned and “nous voila” in “la belle France.” The change was perceptible in more ways than one. Before we had travelled a mile we beheld a proof of this subjugated state in the person of a Cossack “en plein costume,” with two narrow, horizontal eyes placed at the top of his forehead, bespeaking his Tartar origin. Upon a log of timber twenty more were sitting smoking. The Russian headquarters are at Maubeuge, but the Cossacks are scattered all over the frontier villages and are seen everywhere. We fell in with at least a hundred. They are very quiet and much liked by the people. The Duke of Wellington, when returning to Valenciennes a few days ago from Maubeuge, was escorted by a party of these gipsy guards.

On approaching Valenciennes other tokens of [278] conquest appeared. A clean-looking inn, with a smart garden in Islington style, presented itself, bearing a sign with an English name containing the additional intelligence that London Porter and Rum, Gin, and Brandy were all there, and to be had.

Over many a window we saw a good John Bull board with “Spirituous Liquors Sold Here” inscribed thereon in broad British characters, unlike the “Spiritual Lickers " in the miserable letters upon the signboards at Ostend. As to Valenciennes, nothing was French but the houses and Inns. The visible population were red-coated soldiers, and it was impossible not to fancy that our journey was a dream, and that we had in fact re-opened our eyes in England.

Of hornworks, demi-lunes, and ravelines I shall speak to your Papa when I fight my battle once again in the Armchair at the Park or at Winnington; enough for you to know that we all breakfasted with Sir

Thomas Brisbane, a very superior man and a great astronomer, and tho' brave as a lion, seems to prefer looking at la Pleine lune in the heavens than the host of demi-lunes with which he is surrounded in his present quarters. At Cambray Sir George Scovell[1] had most kindly secured us lodgings at Sir Lowry Cole's[2] house, [279] which we had all to ourselves, as the General was in England. Where the French people live it is not easy to guess, for all the best houses are taken by British Officers. They receive a billet which entitles them to certain rooms, and generally they induce the possessor to decamp altogether by giving him a small rent for the remainder. We found Colonel Egerton, who married a Miss Tomkinson, in the garrison. We dined with them and the Scovell, and were received with the utmost kindness and attention by all. Colonel Prince and Colonel Abercromby (you know both, I believe) also dined there two days we remained.

On Sunday there was a Procession. The most curious circumstance was that a troop of British cavalry attended to clear the way and do the honours, for the National Guard had been disarmed three days before in consequence of an order from the Duke of Wellington (nobody knows why). They gave up their arms without a murmur; some few, I believe, expressed by a "Bah !" and a shrug of the shoulders that it was not quite agreeable to their feelings, but "voila tout." "I say, Jack," said a Grenadier of the Guards to his Companion, by whom I was standing as the procession came out of the Church, "who is that fellow with a gold coat and gridiron?" " Why, that's St. Lawrence," and so it was. [280] St. Lawrence led the way, followed by a brass St. Andrew as stiff as a poker and as much resembling St. Andrew as I conceive; but my companion the Grenadier thought differently, for he pronounced him to be a Chef d'oeuvre." Well now, Jack, that's quite natural." . . .

I must hurry you on to Compiègne, merely saying that we traversed a country fringed with immense forests in which wolves are born and live and die without much interruption, tho we were told at one of the Inns that a peasant had, a day or two before, captured seven juvenile individuals of the species and carried them off uneaten by their disconsolate parents.

Our chief reason for visiting Compiègne was that we might see a Palace fitted up for Marie Louise by Bonaparte in a style of splendour surpassing, in my opinion, any Palace I have seen in France.[93]

[1]Sir George Scovell, 1774-1861, General. He fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo.

[2]Sir Lowry Cole, second son of first Earl of Enniskillen, General of 4th Division at the Battle of Salamanca. He received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for his gallant services in the Peninsula. Commanded 6th Division at Waterloo.

9 July1816 Samuel Butler visits Waterloo and writes in his diary:

From Brussels through Waterloo to the field of battle, about fourteen miles, through the Forest of Soignies, almost all the way a most detestable path full of holes. Waterloo is a miserable village of about twenty houses; its small red brick church, designed in segments of ellipses, is about [117] twenty-five or possibly thirty feet in diameter. Here are monumental inscriptions to the memory of many of our brave country men. In about half a mile from Waterloo we quit the Forest of Soignies, and the ground becomes an elevated plain with some moderate undulations. In about two miles more we come to a place where a bye-road crosses the principal road. Here is an elm of moderate size on the right-hand side of the road, some of whose branches have been torn off by cannon balls; this is the famous Wellington tree, where the Duke was posted during the greater part of the battle, and is somewhat nearer the left wing than the centre of the battle. Close to the cross-road opposite this runs La Haye Sainte, a broken stumpy hedge. Directly opposite this tree, on the road-side, lay the skeleton of an unburied horse, and near the tree itself I picked up a human rib. The whole field of battle is now covered with crops of wheat and rye, which grow with a rank and peculiar green over the graves of the slain and mark them readily. About one hundred and fifty yards below the Wellington tree, which itself stands on the top of Mount St. Jean, in the hollow, is the little farm of La Haye Sainte, where the dreadful slaughter of the German Legion took place; they defended the place till they had spent all their ammunition, and were then massacred to a man, but not till they had taken a bloody revenge. The house and walls, the barn doors and gates, are full of marks from cannon and musket balls. In the barn are innumerable shot holes, and the plaster is still covered with blood, and the holes which the bayonets made through their bodies into it are still to be seen."

"In a hollow near this scene of carnage lie the bodies of two thousand French Cuirassiers in one grave, and about twenty yards farther is the spot to which Bonaparte advanced to cheer the Imperial Guard for their last charge; it is scarcely possible but that he must have exposed himself greatly in so doing. The little valley between the undulation of Mount St. Jean, where the British were posted, and that of La Belle Alliance, which was occupied by the French, is not more than about a quarter of a mile across; the Duke of Wellington and Bonaparte, whose general station was on this hill, cannot have been more than that distance, or a very little more, from each other. On going to the station of Bonaparte we had a fine view of the whole field, and, though quite ignorant of military affairs, could not but see the superiority of the British position. The undulation on their side being a little more abrupt than that of the French, they were themselves protected in some measure, and their force considerably concealed, while that of the French was perfectly distinguishable. The right wing of the British was at Hougoumont [rather Goumont], a chateau of great importance and of very considerable strength. Their left wing was at the end of La Haye, about a short half-mile or less from the farm of St. Jean, which was [118] almost of the same importance for its protection as Hougoumont for that of the right. The whole line could not extend more than a mile and a quarter. The French were posted on the opposite eminence, and here in this small space three hundred cannon, independent of all other weapons, were doing the work of death all day. Our guide, a very intelligent peasant, told us that the whole ground was literally covered with carcasses, and that about five days after the stench began to be so horrid that it was hardly possible to bury them on the left of the British, and of course on the right of the French position. At less than a mile and a half is the wood from which the Prussians made their appearance. La Belle Alliance is about half a mile or a little less from Mount St. Jean; here we turned off to see the chateau of Hougoumont, which was most important to secure the British right and French left wing, and was therefore eagerly contested; four thousand British were posted here, and withstood with only the bayonet and musketry all the attacks of an immense body of French with cannon. The French were posted in a wood, now a good deal cut down, close to the wall of the garden at Hougoumont. The British had made holes in the wall to fire through, and the French aimed at these holes. The whole wall is so battered by bullets that it looks as if thousands of pickaxes had been

employed to pick the bricks. The trees are torn by cannon balls, and some not above eight inches in diameter, being half shot away on one side, still flourish."

"Passing round the garden wall to the gates, the scene of devastation is yet more striking. The front gates communicate with the chateau, a plain gentleman's house, the back ones (which are directly opposite) with the farmer's residence. This was occupied three times by the French, who were thrice repulsed; but the English were never driven from the chateau."

The tower, or rather dovecote, of the chateau was burnt down, but a chapel near it, about twenty feet long, was preserved in the midst of the fire; the flames had caught the crucifix and had burnt one foot of the image, and then went out. This was of course considered a great miracle. From the chapel we went into the garden. Its repose and gaiety of flowers, together with the neatness of its cultivation, formed a striking contrast with the ruined mansion, the blackened, torn, and in some parts blood-stained walls, and the charred timbers about it. In a corner of this garden is the spot where Captain Crawford and eight men were killed by one cannon ball, which entered opposite them by a hole still there and went through the house and lodged in another wall; I have seen the ball in the Waterloo Museum. Going along the green alleys of the garden, quite overarched with hornbeam, we see the different holes broken by the English to fire on their enemies, and a gap on the northeast angle of the garden is the gap made by the French, who [119] attempted to enter there, but were repulsed. Had they gained entrance the slaughter would have been dreadful, as we had four thousand men in the garden, which from its thick hedges has many strongholds, and they were greatly more numerous. The English also lined a strong hedge opposite the wood in which the French were, which they could not force, but the trees are terribly torn by cannon. The loss of Hougoumont would probably have been fatal to us. From the gap above mentioned, looking up to the line of the British on Mount St. Jean, is one small bush; here Major Howard was killed.

"Leaving Hougoumont, we returned to La Belle Alliance, where we once more reviewed the field of battle, and found some bullets and fragments of accoutrements among the ploughed soil. The crop is not so thriving on the French side, but it was still more richly watered with blood; in fact the soil, which on the British position is rather a light sand, is here a stiffish clay. From La Belle Alliance we proceeded to Genappe, another post, passing by a burnt house called la maison du rot; here Napoleon slept on the eventful eve of the battle. Following the course of the French in their retreat, we proceeded to another post, to Quatre Bras. Here was the famous [stand ?] made by the Highlanders against the whole French Army on the 16th. It is a field a little to the left at the turning to Namur. Hence we proceeded, having Fleurus on our right, to Sombreffe, where was the severe battle of the Prussians on the 16th, and thence to Namur, where the French continued their retreat. At Genappe, which is a straggling village, with narrow streets, dreadful slaughter was made by the Prussians on the night of the 16th; here Bonaparte's carriage was taken, and he narrowly escaped himself. From hence to Namur the road was strewed with dead, the Prussians having killed, it is thought, not less than twenty thousand in the pursuit. Nothing can be more detestable than the paved roads, more miserable than the villages, or more uninteresting in the natural appearance of the country than the whole course from Brussels to Namur, about forty-seven miles, the scene of all these great historical events in the present and past ages."[94]

13 July1816

Hugh William Williams with George Basevi walk the field of Waterloo, recording their visit by sketches. Williams writes to William Douglas of their visit:

Diary Entry:
We entered the dark + thick forest of Soignèe abt. 2 o'clock, every foot of which was interesting as a scene of sufferings. It is wholly of tall Beech, the tops of which nearly meet + throw a gloom on the approach to Waterloo . . . till at the outlet of the wood we saw the Church of Waterloo - I have a little drawing to show you which represents it accurately.[95]

From their published diary:

Cologne, July 1816

We left Brussels on the 11th, and arrived her on the 13th, after having visited the awful field of Waterloo. The forest of Soigne has nothing remarkable in its appearance. The road from Brussels, as you well now, passes through it. After the battle it became a burial place for upwards of two thousand horses. They were interred along the sides of the road, and partly in the wood. Their bones are now shooting through the earth, and the air is much infected. Waterloo is a pretty little village, and the church, which for a considerable time appeared a pleasing vista from the road, is very picturesque. Service was performing when we arrived, and it was pleasing and affecting to see the peasantry peacefully engaged in their religious duties, after the scourge of war and battle. The tablets to the memory of many of our countrymen caught our eye, and failed not to excite our deepest interest. From Waterloo we went to visit the field of battle. We saw the shattered tree near which our immortal hero stood, at the happy moment [15] when he saw the Prussians advancing, led on by Bulow. The barn, farm and fields of La Haye Sainte, exhibited striking memorials of the horrors of the dreadful day; especially the barn, the walls of which are frightfully splashed with blood, and well they might, for the floor, which is of great extent, was ancle deep" The field of burial would affect the hardest heart: although under crop, the graves are quite perceptible by the rank dark green corn which waves over them. The heros were buried at various distances, according to the havoc and destruction on the spot. Some of the graves were six, eight, ten, and twelve feet asunder, but they thinned as they receded from the point where the battle raged in its greatest fury, –as the thunder of artillery, which bursts at first in one rending peal upon the ear, gradually dies away in faint and distant echoes. One poor Frenchman was yet unburied" we found him lying a prey for the hungry dogs." What could be more horrible than this mouldering body in its uniform." What a more emphatic satire on the ferocity and the

weakess of man." I will not shock you with the various accounts which we have heard of the dead, the wounded, and the dying; even to think of them is distressing.

The track by which Napoleon slunk away, after crying "*sauve qui peut*," is just above the inn at Genappe, upon a rising ground. Bones of men [16] and horses are lying here and there, and the ravens may still find food upon them. At Quatre Bras, the natives were eloquent in praise of the gallant Highlandmen. The appearance of battle is every where: not a house but is completely riddled by bullets and by cannon shot. I looked at them till my fancy was so engaged in the tumult of battle, that I thought my head was hardly safe upon my shoulders.

Namur, on the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse, was the next place of any consequences that we visited. On approaching it, we found it seated on a plain surrounded by swelling hills at no great distance. These hills, although not lofty, were a pleasing variety, from the monotonous country through which we have passed. . . .[96]

At Brussels Thursday July 25th 1816

This morning we set out to see the Church wich in this country must always be the first objects of interest and curriosity. The great Church dedicated to St. Gudule is very magnificent and contains many fine tombs & monuments of black & white marble.

In the nave of this Church, as in all the other Catholic churches stands the pulpit which is constructed of Oak, and is very beautifully carved. The subject is the expulstion of Adam & Eve from Paradise birds, fruits, & animals, are exquisitly carve, ornamenting the ascent to the pulpit, the figures of Adam & Eve are below, and together with the Angel are as large as life.

There are in the choir six very beautiful pieces of Tapestry, manufactured at Brussels, & hang as pictures, ephasing different subjects in the history of the Jews, these are as clar and delicate as the finest painting and the colours are more rich & glowing. There isn in the church a grat quantity of fine painted glass. The pillars on each side of the Nave are enriched by fine statues of Christ, the Virgin, and the twelve aposles: the whole. [*f* 2 *v*]

Friday July 26th 1816

After breakfasting early, we set off to visit the spot whcih the important battle of the 18th of June 1815, has for ever remained interesting to every English heart. We arrived at the village of Waterloo early in the day, and our first object was to see the Church. It is a very small one, but it will now hear after be regarded with veneration. It contains four tablets, sacred to the memory of several of the Officers who fell in the field of battle these memorials were places in this church by the Brother Officers of those who had so gallentrly fallen in their country's cause their bodies he scattered in various spots near this place, and are [ ] with those of the multitudes who fell in the battles; but their names are recorded, & their memory will be venerated by every person who has the privilage of visiting the place. The body of Lt. Col. Richard FitzGerald is interred in the village-burying -ground, & the tomb-stone which covers the grave, records his name & his virtues – I gathered a spring of oak-leaves, near the spot, which I [*f* 3] [serves] as a little memoprial of the reflections and emotions which it excited. - We then proceeded towards the field of Battle. At mont St. Jean we found a very intelligent Man, who accompanied us, and pointed out every point & station of interest and importance – The whole face of the plain which was so lately the scene of blood-shed, was already covered with the most flourishing crops of grain. Opposite to the farm of La Haye Sainte, just in front of which a little way beyond our guide pointed out to us the spot where General Picton fell, the crops were particularly luxuriant, and patches were seen of a darker & richer colour then the rest. It was with a very uncomfortable sensation, taht we remarked this circumstance for we were well aware that all these patches pointed out the places in which pits had been oped for the internment of the slain. It was o[ ] near La Haye Sainte that the Tree [*f* 4] which is called Wellington's Tree stands. It bears the marks of many a ball, and is situated at the road side, just where the battle was the hottest, and near to the spot where the Prince of Orange received a wound. We had not yet passed the lines occupied by the British troops; but as we advanced we soon arrived at the spot which Napoleon occupied during almost the whole of the day; it was a little height wich commanded a view of the allied army opposite; & on the same side of the high road to Charleroi, as the farm of La Haye Sainte. A little way beyond, we came to the farm of La Belle Alliance a good deal of the buildings were knocked to pieces by the fire of Artillery. - A wretched littl cabaret remains, and in this poor dwelling we went into the room where Wellington and Blucher met after the victory, and hailed each otehr as conquerors. We had come So far in the carriage, but we quitted it here, and set out on foot to go to the Chateau of Hougoumont – As we proceeded [*f* 5 *r*] in our walk, we were followed by some of the Peasants, offering us various little relics which had been picked up on the field of Battle. We purchased some of these; and in the course of our walk, musquet-balls, military buttons, and a cannon-ball were found on the earth by some of

the party. These added a fresh interest to our inquiries, and served to heighten our sympathies, and to identify them with the circumstances by which they were excited, giving a character of deeper solemnity to the ground over which we walked. – as we approached Hougoumont there was not a tree which did not sustain marks of the heavy fire of musketry which was directed against it. Genl Maitland & Col. Macdonnel occupied the interior with 1100 Men, and we saw the holes in the garden walls through which they fired upon the enemy. The spot was pointed out to us in the garden, where Capt. Crawfurd fell; and that also in which Major Howard was slain. After several ineffectual attempts, some of the French troops succeeded in entering the court yard; [*f* 6 *r*] on this taking place the gates were hut upon them, and the buildings being set fire to by the British Soldiers, they all perished in the flames. –The only part of the premisses which escaped, was the Chapeland when here the fire had taken place, and the feet of Chist, on a crucifix above the door, are nearly burt to a cinder No one knows how the progress of the fire was arrested. The Chapel was afterward used as a surgery, and many a limb was amputated there.

During a great part of our walk the rain fell in torrents, and the ground was wet soft and slippery, as it was during the period of the battle. We none of use regretted this. For myself, I was better pleased to visit the graves of our buried countrymen under a cloudy and weeping sky, then I could have been, had a brilliant sunshine appeared to mock the solemn circumstanes & associations by which the whole scene was characterised. – [*f* 7]

After having sheltered ourselves a little while in the Chpael, and written our names on its walls, we walked back by the road to Nivelles, and took a hasty dinner at Mont St. Jean. We felt very much gratified at having accomplished our desire of walking over the ground in this most interesting circuit, and returned to Brussels highly satisfied with all the occurrences of the day; each of us bring back some trifle by which to remember our visit to Waterloo.

Saturday July 27th

This morning we went to see the picturesat the Museum which is situated verynear the Place Thoyale, where on Hotelstands. . . [97]

Summer 1816

Pryse Lockhart GORDON. Personal Memoirs or Reminiscences of men and manners at home and abroad during the last half century (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830) vol II.

As we had but little sleep the previous night, we were stepping into bed at rather an earlier hour than usual, when a thundering rap at my door announced a stranger. I looked from the window, and found the visitor to be my friend Colonel Rooke of the Guards in search of his family, whom he had a few days before left under my protection. "Open your doors and your cellar, my friend," said the gallant soldier, "I have glorious news for you!" I flew to the door in my shirt, and had the pleasure of finding him "hale of limb and lith," but famishing of hunger, and faint with fatigue; for he had been eighteen hours on horseback, during which he had but little refreshment. As soon as he had satisfied the cravings of nature by frequent attacks on a buttock of beef and a flask of my best Bourdeaux, he [274] dropped his head on a sofa, and I allowed him to sleep three hours. The colonel was on the staff, in the quarter-master-general's department, and had got a *congé* of a few hours to see his family; but I had sent them off the preceding day to Antwerp. During the intervals of his hasty meal, I collected from him many interesting details of the bloody conflict, and he gave me a list of the brave heroes who had fallen, in which I had to lament many of my friends. The enemy had left the whole of their artillery on the field, and when the colonel quitted it at nine o'clock, our troops had given up the pursuit, leaving the savage Prussians to complete the work, and to take vengeance on their hated foes; and never had such an opportunity occurred. No quarter I believe was given to them; and the pursuit being hot, with fresh troops, the massacre must have been immense, though the numbers have never been accurately ascertained. If any excuse can be made for such a sanguinary and unmerciful proceeding among Christian nations in the nineteenth century, it must be admitted that the Prussians were justified in some measure in punishing a vindictive and lawless enemy, who had so often ravaged and plundered their country — oppressed, insulted, and humiliated them to such a pitch of degradation, sparing neither age nor sex when in their power; but now the fate of war had turned the tables [275] and vengeance became the general cry. A party of the fugitives had taken possession of an old chateau a few miles beyond the field, near the ***Chaussée,*** from which they could not be dislodged without loss of time. The Prussians set fire to it, and it was said that three hundred were burnt or buried in its ruins.

I had promised the Marquis of Huntly, who had set out for Ghent the preceding day, to furnish him with the news of the battle which was about to take place; his lordship having determined to wait a day at that place for the result. His lordship had arrived at Brussels, *en passant*, from Switzerland, accompanied by the marchioness, whose nerves, it may be supposed, were not equal to remain so near the scene of war. I despatched a bulletin by a police office *estaffette*, at an early hour on Monday to Ghent, which was received before noon. Lord H. lost not a moment to wait on *Louis Dix-huit,* to congratulate his majesty on the glorious victory, at the same time relating the intelligence I had sent him, which proved highly gratifying to the king; for though his majesty had known the result in the course of the night, many of the details in my hasty letter were news to him.[98]

Pryse Gordon continues:

In the various accounts of the battle of Waterloo the French writers are anxious to libel and calumniate the British army: there is no end to their sneers, sarcasms, revilings, and misrepresentations, which have their origin in envy, jealousy, and hatred, and the bitterness of disappointment and defeat. They neither can forgive the English for their unquestioned military superiority, nor bring themselves to allow that they possess a single quality as troops, which ought to have entitled them to the victory. Bravery they cannot deny them; but they contend that their courage and sangfroid are passive — a brute power of resistance, which made them stand in their squares on Mont [291] St. Jean, like wooden posts, to be mowed down by bullets or hewed to pieces by sabres, without thinking of retreat far less of flight — mere *automata*, which move in obedience to the master spring, without any inherent power of thinking or acting.

But these machines overpowered every species of force that was opposed to them in the Peninsula; and, on the plain of Waterloo, extinguished by one decisive blow the dynasty of Napoleon. Happily this cannot be denied: yet General Foy, after admitting the fact, seeks every opportunity, in his posthumous work, to impress his readers with the belief that it ought to have been otherwise; and Napoleon contended that the blunders of Wellington procured him the victory. A Frenchman cannot doubt such authorities, and many continue to insist that the battle was lost by chance: while Foy would deny the British troops the military qualities that so eminently distinguish them, he constantly admits enough, and more than enough, to serve as an answer to all his own statements and insinuations. Of this nature is the following remarkable passage: "On the day of the disaster (Waterloo) we saw those sons of Albion (says he) formed in square battalions on the plain between the wood of Goumont and the village of Mont St. Jean. To effect this compact formation they doubled and redoubled their ranks several times. The cavalry which supported them was [292] cut to pieces, and the fire of their artillery completely silenced. The general and staff-officers were galloping from one square to another, not knowing where to take shelter. Carriages, wounded men, parks of reserve, and auxiliary troops, were al] flying in disorder to Brussels. Death was before them in their ranks and disgrace in their rear. In this terrible situation neither the bullets of the imperial guard, discharged almost point-blank, nor the victorious cavalry of France, could make the least impression on the immovable British infantry. One might have been almost tempted to fancy that it had rooted itself to the ground, but for the majestic movements which its battalions commenced some minutes after sunset, when the approach of the Prussian army apprised Wellington that — thanks to numbers, thanks to the force of inert resistance, and as a reward for having contrived to draw up brave fellows in battle — he had just achieved the most decisive victory of our age. Yes! doubtless, the instinctive determination which, even when it *errs,* is better than skilful hesitation; the strength of mind which no danger can appal, the tenacity which carries off the prey by sticking to it to the last — these are rare and sublime qualities; and when these are sufficient to secure the triumph of national interests, it is but justice to load with honors the privileged possessors of them !" (Then comes a passage, French all over, and deeply [293] impregnated with prejudices of this author.)[99]

By the good offices of a brother-officer, he obtained employment with a civil engineer, who paid him liberally for his labours, and he soon became in a fair way to make himself independent, when the cry of war again changed his fate. The officer under whose orders he had formerly served, held out such temptations of emolument and promotion by his joining the standard of the emperor, that his arguments were irresistible; and though he hated the sound of a cannon he voluntarily went into its mouth.

He had only joined his post a few days before the affair of Ligny; so that the last week had been to him a stormy one, and put an end for ever to his military career.

This little piece of biography I had from him at different interviews. Meantime I proposed to him to make a sketch of the field of battle, (now an object of such immense interest to the public,) which, if immediately engraved, would have a rapid sale; and that no time might be lost, I accompanied him to Waterloo before the week expired. I had procured from several English officers who had been in the battle a good deal of information as to the positions of the British troops, which I marked on the spot, while Salucci [304] made his memorandums of the French lines, &c., and having brought materials with him, he took a hasty sketch of the whole field, which he afterwards finished on a second visit. This being accomplished, we proceeded to *Chateau Goumont* of which he made an accurate and spirited drawing.

In ten days a very pretty circular map was engraved from the

drawing by an artist of Brussels, and published by Salucci at three francs; it anticipated many others which afterwards appeared, and had a most rapid sale.

Meantime he laboured hard in making larger and more accurate drawings of the battle, with explanatory notes. The first he finished I sent to the Duke of Richmond, with whom I had the honor to be acquainted. It was much admired by his grace and family; and when I related the history of the poor artist, the duchess expressed a desire to see him. This was the commencement of his good fortune; he was presented by her grace to the Duke of Wellington, and had orders to continue his occupations in drawing maps of various sizes, which were purchased by his kind patrons at liberal prices. They were sent to England as fast as they could be finished; and such was his industry, that in three months he realized above two hundred Napoleons exclusive of a considerable sum he had got for his prints. The kindness of the Duke of Wellington and the [305] Richmond family in patronising this deserving man, did great honor to their humanity.[100]

I MUST not omit, in my recollections, to mention the high gratification I had in passing a few days in the society of the illustrious Byron. In his passage to Italy in August 1816, he visited Brussels (where I was residing) accompanied by Dr. Polidori. The moment I heard of his arrival, I waited on him, and was received with the greatest cordiality and kindness. "He had no pleasure," he said, "equal to that of meeting a friend of his mother's, and of his early age." I had not seen him for fourteen years, when he was at Harrow, at the age of fifteen. I found much less change in his appearance than there generally is from youth to manhood; the general expression of his [319] countenance had become very like his mother's — a beautiful, mild, and intelligent eye, fringed with long and dark lashes; an expansive and noble forehead, over which hung in thick clusters his rich dark natural curls. What a living representation of Beattie's minstrel! He looked the inspired poet! None of the many prints I have seen of him are either like, or do him justice.

In our conversation of three hours, he went over the pranks and adventures of his boyish days. He had lived at Banff with his mother for a short time, when he was about seven or eight years of age. My eldest son, of nearly the same age, was his schoolfellow, and he was frequently invited by my brother, the pastor of the town, with whom Day boy was living, to pass a holiday at the parsonage: all this he perfectly recollected, and of a tumble he got from a plum-tree, into which he had climbed to get at some pears on a wall. "The minister's wife," said he, "blabbed to my mother, thinking I might have been hurt; and the old red-nosed doctor, whose name I have forgotten, was sent for, who insisted on bleeding me in spite of screams and tears, which I had at command; for I was a complete spoiled child, as I dare say you know. At last he produced the lancets, of which I had a great horror, having seen them used to bleed my nurse, and I declared if he touched me I would pull his nose. This, it seems, was a tender point with the doctor, and he gave the [321] bleeding up, condemning me to be fed on watergruel, and to be put to bed: these orders I disposed of by throwing the medicine out of the window, and as soon as the doctor had taken his departure, I got out of bed and made my appearance in the parlour. My mother, finding that there was nothing the matter with me, gave me tea and bread-and-butter, which I preferred to *brochan*: — you see I have not forgot all my Scotch."

He put me in mind of what he called my kindness in lending him a pretty pony, and of my accompanying him to ride in Hyde Park. "That," said his lordship, "was fourteen years ago, when I came to town to spend the holidays with my poor mother. I remember your pony was very handsome, and a fast galloper, and that we raced, and that I beat you, of which I was not a little proud. I have a wonderful recollection of the little events of my early days, and a warm feeling for the friends of my youth."

He told me that he was desperately in love with Miss Mary Duff when he was nine years old, "and we met," he said, "at the dancing-school." He made many inquiries about her, and if she was still as handsome. "She is a year older than I am; I have never seen her since I left Aberdeen. Some of the first verses I ever wrote were in praise of her beauty. I know she is happily [321] married, which I rejoice at." All this he said with much feeling.

As he proposed visiting Waterloo on the following morning, I offered my services as his *cicerone*, which were graciously accepted, and we set out at an early hour, accompanied by his *compagnon de voyage*. The weather was propitious, but the poet's spirits seemed depressed, and we passed through the gloomy forest of Soignies without much conversation. As the plan of the inspection of the field had been left to me, I ordered our postillion to drive to Mont St. Jean without stopping at Waterloo. We got out at the Monuments. Lord Byron gazed about for five minutes without uttering a syllable; at last, turning to me, he said — "I am not disappointed. I have seen the plains of Marathon, and these are as fine. Can you tell me," he continued, "where Picton fell? because I have heard that my friend Howard was killed at his side, and nearly at the same moment."

The spot was well known, and I pointed with my finger to some trees near it, at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards: we walked to the spot. "Howard," said his lordship with a sigh, "was my relation and dear friend; but we quarrelled, and I was in the wrong: we were, however, reconciled, at which I now rejoice." He spoke these words with great feeling, and we returned to examine the monument of Sir Alexander [322] Gordon, a broken column, on which he made some criticisms, bestowing great praise on the fraternal affection of his brother, who had erected it. He did not seem much interested about the positions of the troops, which I pointed out to him; and we got into our carriage and drove to the Chateau Goumont, the poet remaining silent, pensive, and in a musing mood, which I took care not to interrupt.

The gallant defence of this post seemed to interest him more, and I recapitulated all the particulars I knew of the attack. From the bravery displayed by the handful of troops (the Guards) who defended it, it has acquired its reputation. Though they were reinforced more than once, the number never exceeded twelve hundred; and notwithstanding the enemy had, by battering down the gate of the farm-yard, and setting fire to the straw in it, got possession of the outer works in the evening attack, they could make no impression on the strong-hold the garden —

"Whose close pleach'd walks and bowers have been
The deadly marksman's lurking screen."

They reaped no advantage by these assaults; on the contrary they sacrificed a great many brave [323] men without any purpose. It was a most important post; for had they succeeded in getting possession of it, and driving out our troops, their guns would have enfiladed us, and we should have been obliged to change our front. The pompous title of Chateau gives a little additional importance to this position, though it is only a miserable dwelling of two stories, somewhat resembling the habitations of our bonnet lairds about the beginning of the last century. The area of the house is about two Scotch acres, including the garden. The clipped and shady walks have been long since cut down, which takes away much interest from it; and the stupid Fleming to whom it belonged cut down the young trees in front of it, because they had been wounded by the bullets, which he was informed "would cause them to bleed to death!" The nobleman who now possesses it has, with better taste, repaired the Chateau, and will not permit any alteration in its appearance.

On our return in the evening, I pressed his lordship to dinner, which he declined, saying — "I have long abandoned the pleasures of the table." He, however, promised to take his coffee with my wife, provided there was no party. He came at nine o'clock, and greeted her most cordially, again expressing the pleasure he felt in meeting the friend of his mother.

Notwithstanding the interdiction, I had invited two accomplished gentlemen to meet him: one of [325] them, a Hanoverian in our service, had travelled in Greece, and being extremely intelligent, a most interesting conversation took place on that classical country, which has since so long struggled for its liberties. The poet was in high spirits and good humour, and he charmed us with anecdotes and descriptions of the various countries in the Archipelago and Albania, which he had visited. He neither ate nor drank, and the only refreshment he could be persuaded to take was an ice; but he remained with us till two hours past midnight. My wife exhibited her scrap-book, in which Sir W. Scott had a few months before written a few stanzas on the battle. She begged his lordship to do her a similar honor, to which he readily consented, saying, "if she would trust him with her book, he would insert a verse in it before he slept." He marched off with it under his arm, and next morning returned with the two beautiful stanzas which were soon after published in his Third Canto of "Childe Harold," with a little variation:

"Stop, for thy tread is on an Empire's dust."

I consider these as being highly valuable, being the *primi pensieri* of the splendid stanzas on Waterloo.

I asked Byron what he thought of Mr. Scott's "Field of Waterloo" just published — if it was [325] fair to ask one poet his opinion of a living contemporary. "Oh," said he, "quite fair; besides, there is not much subject for criticism in this hasty sketch. The reviewers call it falling off; but I am sure there is no poet living who could have written so many good lines on so meagre a subject in so short a time. Scott," he added, "is a fine poet, and a most amiable man. We are great friends. As a prose writer, he has no rival; and has not been approached, since Cervantes, in depicting manners. His tales are my constant companions. It is highly absurd his denying, what every one that knows him believes, his being the author of these admirable works. Yet no man is obliged to give his name to the public except he chooses so to do; and Scott is not likely to be compelled by the law, for he does not

write libels, nor a line of which he need be ashamed. "He said a great deal more in praise of his friend, for whom he had the highest respect and regard. "I wish," added the poet with feeling, "it had been my good fortune to have had such a Mentor. No author," he observed, "had deserved more from the public, or has been so liberally rewarded."

Lord Byron, in reading aloud the stanzas of Mr. Scott,

"or high, and deathless is the name.
Oh Hougomont, thy ruins claim ! [326]

The sound of Cressy none shall own.
And Agicourt shall be unknown.
And Blenheim be a nameless spot
Long ere thy glories are forgot," &c.

exclaimed, striking the page with his hand, "I'll be d—d if they will, Mr. Scott, be forgot!"

There is a curious circumstance relative to his own verses written in this scrap-book, which exhibits the poet's modesty and good humour. A few weeks after he had written them, the well known artist R. R. Reinagle, a friend of mine, arrived in Brussels, when I invited him to dine with me and showed him the lines, requesting him to embellish them with an appropriate vignette to the following passage: —

"Here his last flight the haughty eagle flew,
Then tore, with bloody beak, the fatal plain;
Pierced with the shafts of banded nations through.
Ambition's life, and labours, all were vain —
He wears the shatter'd links of the world's broken chain."

Mr. Reinagle sketched with a pencil a spirited chained eagle, grasping the earth with his talons. I had occasion to write to his lordship, and mentioned having got this clever artist to draw a vignette to his beautiful lines, and the liberty he had taken by altering the action of the eagle. In reply to this, he wrote to me — "Reinagle is a better poet and a better ornithologist than I am; eagles and all birds of prey attack with their [327] talons, and not with their beaks, and I have altered the line thus —

'Then tore, with bloody talon, the rent plain.'

This is, I think, a better line, besides its poetical justice."

I happened to have a copy of the "Novelle Amorose" of Casti, a severe satire on the monks, which Lord Byron had never seen. I presented him with it, and in his letter to me from Geneva he writes, "I cannot tell you what a treat your gift of Casti has been to me; I have almost got him by heart. I had read his 'Animali Parlanti,' but I think these 'Novelle' much better. I long to go to Venice to see the manners so admirably described."

A year afterwards he published "Beppo," which certainly looks like an imitation of the "Novelle Amorose;" though I have heard that the perusal of Mr. Frere's "Monks and Giants" gave birth to this lively *jeu d'esprit*.

Lord Byron travelled in a huge coach copied from the celebrated one of Napoleon, faken at Genappe, with additions. Besides a *lit de repos*, it contained a library, a plate-chest, and every apparatus for dining. I have forgotten by whom it was built, but he told me it had cost him six hundred guineas; it was most ingeniously contrived. It was not, however, found sufficiently spacious for his baggage and suite; and he [328] purchased a *calèche* at Brussels for his servants. It broke down going to Waterloo, and I advised him to return it, as it seemed to be a crazy machine; but as he had made a deposit of forty Napoleons (certainly double its value), the honest Fleming would not consent to restore the cash, or take back his packing-case, except under a forfeiture of thirty Napoleons. As his lordship was to set out the following day, he begged me to make the best arrangement I could in the affair. He had no sooner taken his departure, than the worthy seller inserted a paragraph in "The Brussels Oracle" stating, "that the noble milor Anglais had absconded with his caliche value 1800 francs!" [101]

1817 Charlotte Anne Waldie, Mrs Eaton, publishes here *Narrative of a Residence in Belgium During the Campaign of 1815*. Mrs Eaton must have seen the field of battle within weeks of the conflict. She vividly describes a tour:

Thus the **road** between Waterloo and Brussels was one long uninterrupted charnel-house: the smell, the whole way through the Forest, was extremely offensive, and in some places scarcely bearable. Deep stagnant pools of red putrid water, mingled with mortal remains, betrayed the spot where the bodies of men and horses had mingled together in death. We passed a large cross on the left side of the road, which had been erected in ancient times to mark the place where one human being had been [256] murdered. How many had now sunk around it in agony, and breathed, unnoticed and unpitied, their dying groans! It was surrounded by many a fresh-made, melancholy mound, which had served for the soldier's humble grave; but no monument points out to future times the bloody spot where they expired, no cross stands to implore from the passenger the tribute of a tear, or call forth a pious prayer for the repose of the departed spirits who here perished for their country!

The melancholy vestiges of death and destruction became more frequent, the pools of putrid water more deep, and the smell more offensive, as we approached Waterloo, which is situated at the distance of about three leagues,[1] or scarcely nine [257] miles, from Brussels. Before we left the forest, the Church of Waterloo appeared in view, at the end of the avenue of trees. It is a singular building, much in the form of a Chinese temple, and built of red brick. On leaving the wood, we passed the trampled and deep-marked bivouac, where the heavy baggage-waggons, tilted carts, and tumbrils had been stationed during the battle, and from which they had taken flight with such precipitation.

Even here, cannon-balls had lodged in the trees, but had passed over the roofs of the cottages. We entered the village which has given its name to the most glorious battle ever recorded in the annals of history. It was the Head-quarters of the British army on the nights preceding and following the battle. It was here the dispositions for the action were made on Saturday afternoon. [258]

It was here on Monday morning the dispatches were written, which perhaps contain the most brief and unassuming account a conqueror ever penned, of the most glorious victory that a conqueror ever won.[2] Waterloo consists of a sort of long, irregular street of white-washed cottages, through which the road runs. Some of them are detached, and some built in rows. A small house, with a neat, little, square flower-garden before it, on the right hand, was pointed out to us as the quarters of Lord Uxbridge, and the place where he remained after the amputation of his leg, until well enough to bear removal. His name, and those of “His Grace the Duke of Wellington,” “ His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange,” and other pompous [259] titles, were written on the doors of these little thatched cottages. We also read the lamented names of Sir Thomas Picton, Sir Alexander Gordon, Sir William De Lancey, Sir William Ponsonby, and many others who now sleep in the bed of honour.

Volumes of sermons and homilies upon the instability of human life could not have spoken such affecting and convincing eloquence to our hearts as the sight of these names, thus traced in chalk, which had been more durable than the lives of these gallant men.

After leaving Waterloo, the ground rises: the wood, which had opened, again surrounded us, though in a more straggling and irregular manner — and it was not till we arrived at the little village of Mont St. Jean, more than a mile beyond Waterloo, that we finally quitted the shade of the [260] forest, and entered upon the open field where the battle had been fought. During the whole of the action the rear of the left wing of our army rested upon this little village, from which the French named the battle. We gazed with particular interest at a farm-house, at the farthest extremity of the village nearest the field, on the left side of the road, — with its walls and gates and roofs still bearing the vestiges of the cannon-balls that had pierced

[1] A French league is something less than three English miles. It measures two English miles and three quarters.

[2] Caesar's celebrated bulletin, " veni, vidi, vici” was more concise, but not quite so unassuming.

them. Every part of this house and offices was filled with wounded British officers; and here the Major was conveyed in excruciating agony, upon an old blanket, supported by the bayonets of four of his soldiers.

On the right we saw at some distance the church of Braine la Leude, which was in the rear of the extremity of the right wing of our army. From the top of the [261] steeple of this church the battle might have been seen more distinctly than from any other place, if any one had possessed coolness and hardihood sufficient to have stood the calm spectator of such a scene; and if some cannon-ball had not stopped his observations by carrying off his head.

Alighting from the carriage, which we sent back to the barrier of **Mont St. Jean**, we walked past the place where the beaten down corn, and the whole appearance of the ground, would alone have been sufficient to have indicated that it had been the bivouac of the British army on the tempestuous night before the battle, when, after marching and fighting all day beneath a burning sun, they lay all night in this swampy piece of ground, under torrents of rain. We rapidly hurried on, until our progress was arrested by a long line of [262] immense fresh-made graves. We suddenly stopped — we stood rooted to the spot — we gazed around us in silence; for the emotions that at this moment swelled our hearts were too deep for utterance — we felt that we stood on the field of battle !

"And these then are the graves of the brave!" at length mournfully exclaimed one of the party, after a silence of some minutes, hastily wiping away some" natural tears "Look how they extend all along in front of this broken beaten down hedge—what tremendous slaughter!" "This is, or rather was said an officer who was our conductor," the hedge of **La Haye Sainte**;[1] the ground in front of it, and the narrow [263] lane that runs behind it, were occupied by Sir Thomas Picton's division, which formed the left wing of the army; and it was in leading forward his men to a glorious and successful charge against a furious attack made by an immense force of the enemy, that this gallant and lamented officer fell. He was shot through the head, and died instantly without uttering a word or a groan!" We gazed at the opposite height, or rather bank, upon which the French army was posted. We thought of the feelings with which our gallant soldiers must have viewed it, before the action commenced, when it was covered with the innumerable legions of France, ranged in arms against them. The solemn and portentous stillness which precedes the bursting of the tempest, is nothing to the awful sublimity of a moment such as this. The [264] threatening columns of that immense army, which their valour had now destroyed and scattered, were then ready to pour down upon them. The cannon taken in the action, which now stood in the field before us under the guard of a single British soldier, were then turned against them.

The field-pieces taken by the Prussians in the pursuit were not here. But 130 pieces of cannon belonging to the British, and taken by them on the field of battle, still remained here. We went to examine them; they were beautiful pieces of ordnance, inscribed with very whimsical names, and some of them with the revolutionary words of *Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite*! Our own artillery, which was admirably served, had been principally placed in two lines upon the ridge of the
gentle slope on which our army was stationed. About four o'clock in the after [265] noon the first line of guns advanced, and the second took the place which the first had before occupied; it was also placed upon every little eminence over the field, and it did great execution amongst the enemy's ranks.[2] [266]

The ground occupied by Sir Thomas Picton's division, on the left of the road from Brussels, is lower than any other part of the British position. It

[1]La Haye Sainte, (the holy hedge). It gives its name to the farm-house of La Haye Sainte. I could not hear from any of the country-people why it was distinguished by the epithet " Sainte." They did not seem to have any tradition respecting it.

[2]An order had been issued not to fire at the enemy's field-pieces, but at the troops. However, during the latter part of the action, a young officer of artillery, out of patience with the destruction caused among his men, and particularly with the loss of Captain Bolton, his friend and brother officer, from the fire of some guns opposite, levelled his cannon at them, and had the satisfaction to see the French artillery-men, and officers who commanded them, fall in their turn. At that moment he was accosted suddenly by the Duke of Wellington, whom he had no idea was near, — " What are you firing at there?" The artillery officer confessed what he was about. Keep a good look out to your left," said the Duke, "you will see a large body of the enemy advancing just now — fire at them." They soon perceived a tremendous number of the Imperial Guards, the elite of the army, advancing with great order and steadiness to attack the British. The moment they appeared in view, the officer to whom the Duke had spoken, directed against them such a tremendous and effective fire, that they were mowed down by ranks. This gallant young officer had volunteered his services, and was one of the brigade attached to the second division of our army.

is divided from the more elevated ridge where the French were posted by a very gentle declivity. To the right the ground rises, and the hollow irregularly increases, until at Chateau Hougoumont it becomes a sort of small dell or ravine, and the banks are both high and steep. But the ground occupied by the French is uniformly higher and decidedly a stronger position than ours.

Nothing struck me with more surprize than the confined space in which this tremendous battle had been fought; and this, perhaps, in some measure contributed to [267] its sanguinary result. The space which divided the two armies from the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, which was occupied by our troops, to La Belle Alliance, which was occupied by theirs, I scarcely think would measure three furlongs. Not more than half a mile could have intervened between the main body of the French and English armies: and from the extremity of the right to that of the left wing of our army, I should suppose to be little more than a mile.

The hedge along which Sir Thomas Picton's division was stationed, and through which the Scots Greys made their glorious and decisive charge at the close of the action, is almost the only one in the field of battle. The ground is occasionally divided by some shallow ditches, and in one place there is a sort of low mud dyke, which was very much broken and beaten [268] down. This was not on the ground our troops occupied, but rather below the French position; and excepting this, the whole field of battle is unenclosed. The ground is, however, very uneven and broken, and the soil a strong clay. It belongs to different farmers, and bore crops of different kinds of corn; but it is entirely arable land, and excepting a very small piece on the French side, none of it was in grass.

Against the left wing of our army the attacks of the French were furious and incessant. Buonaparte had stationed opposite to it the chief body of his Corps de Reserve, and fresh columns of troops continually poured down, without being able to make the smallest impression upon the firm and impenetrable squares which the British regiments formed to receive them. It was Buonaparte's object to turn the left wing of our army, and cut it off from the [269] Prussians, with whom a communication was maintained through Ohain, and who were known (by the Commanders of the British army at least) to be advancing.[1] The Duke expected them to have joined before one o'clock, but it was seven before they made their appearance.

On the top of the ridge in front of the British position, on the left of the road, we traced a long line of tremendous graves, or rather pits, into which hundreds of dead had been thrown as they had fallen in their ranks, without yielding an inch of ground. The effluvia which arose from them, even beneath the open canopy of heaven, [270] was horrible; and the pure west wind of summer, as it passed us, seemed pestiferous, so deadly was the smell that in many places pervaded the field. The new turned clay which covered those pits betrayed how recent had been their formation. From one of them the scanty clods of earth which had covered it, had in one place fallen, and the skeleton of a human face was visible. I turned from the spot in indescribable horror, and with a sensation of deadly faintness which I could scarcely overcome.

On the opposite side of the road we scrambled up a perpendicular bank, through which the road had evidently been cut. It was upon this eminence that the Duke of Wellington stood at the commencement of the action, surrounded by his staff. It was here, we were told, that in the most critical part of it, he rallied [271] the different regiments, and led them on again in person to renew the shock of battle. Here we stood some time to survey the field.

Immediately before us, nearly in the hollow, was the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, surrounded by a quadrangular wall, full of holes for musketry. At the commencement of the action it was occupied by the British, and it formed the most advanced post of the left centre of our army. It was gallantly and successfully defended by a detachment of the light battalion of the German Legion, until their ammunition was exhausted; it was impossible to send them a supply, as all communication with them was cut off by the enemy, who at length succeeded in carrying it, after a most obstinate resistance; but its brave defenders only resigned its possession with their lives. [272]

On the opposite side of the road, a little behind La Haye Sainte, and

[1] It is, however, a remarkable fact, and does additional honour to the resolute, invincible constancy of British soldiers, that the greatest part of the officers, and nearly the whole of the privates of the British army, were wholly ignorant that there was any expectation of the arrival of the Prussians. Many of them never knew till after the battle was over, that they had joined.

immediately below the ground occupied by Sir Thomas Picton's division, is a quarry which was surrounded by British artillery at the commencement of the battle. Towards the close of the action it was filled with the wounded, who had taken refuge in it as a shelter from the storm of shot and shells, and from the charge of the cavalry, — when, horrible to relate! a body of French cuirassiers were completely overthrown into this quarry by a furious charge of the British, and horses and riders were rolled in death upon these unfortunate sufferers. The ghastly spectacle which it exhibited next morning was described to me by an eye-witness of this scene of horror. On the left, in the hollow between the two armies, we saw the hamlet of Ter la Haye, which was occupied by British troops: [273] — its possession was never disputed by the enemy, although it was close advanced upon their position. Beyond it, still farther to the left, were the woods of Frischermont, from which the Prussians issued through a narrow defile, and advanced to attack the right flank of the French.

These woods bounded the prospect on that side. On the right stood the ruins of Chateau Hougoumont, (or Chateau Goumont, as the country-people called it,) concealed from view by a small wood which crowns the hill. It formed the most advanced post of the right centre of our army, and it was defended to the last with efforts of successful valour almost more than human, against the overpowering numbers and furious attacks of the enemy. The battle commenced here before eleven o'clock. The French, suddenly uncovering a masked battery, opened a tremendous [274] fire upon this part of our position, and advanced to the attack with astonishing impetuosity, led on, it is said, by Jerome Buonaparte in person, while Napoleon viewed it from his station near the Observatory on the opposite height. They were completely repulsed by the bravery of General Byng's brigade of Guards, but they succeeded in carrying the wood which was occupied by the Belgic troops. The French, however, after a dreadful struggle, were driven out of the wood again by the Coldstream and the third regiment of Guards, and never afterwards were able to regain possession of it. The Black Brunswickers behaved most gallantly. In retrieving the consequences of the misconduct of the Belgic troops, and in defending the Chateau and the garden, the British Guards performed prodigies of valour; though they suffered most severely, [275] Lieutenant-General Cooke, Major-General Byng, Lord Saltoun, the lamented Colonel Miller, who died as he had lived— a brave and honourable soldier; Captain Adair, Captains Evelyn and Ellis; Colonels Askew, Dashwood, and D'Oyley, with many others, particularly distinguished themselves by their steady gallantry and personal valour. The house was consumed by fire, and numbers of the wounded perished in the flames; yet the British maintained possession of it to the last, in spite of the incessant and desperate attacks of the enemy, who directed against it a furious fire of shot and shells, under cover of which large bodies of troops advanced continually to the assault, and were driven back again and again with tremendous slaughter. Without the possession of this important post, the right flank of our army could not be attacked; it formed what is called the [276] key of the position; from its elevation it commanded the whole of the ground occupied by our army, and had it been lost, the victory to the French would scarcely have been doubtful.

Opposite, but divided from it by a deep hollow, were the heights occupied by the French, upon which, at some distance, and secure from the storm of war, stands the Observatory, where Buonaparte stationed himself at the beginning of the action, and whence he issued his orders, and commanded column after column to advance to the charge, and rush upon destruction. His " invincible" legions, his invulnerable Cuirassiers, in vain assaulted the position of the British, with the most furious and undaunted resolution. In vain the vast tide of battle rolled on — like the rocks of their native land, they repelled its rage.— [277] Squares of infantry received the onset of the French columns, directed against them a steady and uninterrupted fire of musketry, and stood unshaken, and unterrified, beneath the most tremendous showers of shot and shell. Every vacancy caused by death was instantly filled up: the enemy vainly sought for an opening through which they might penetrate the indestructible phalanx; and when at last they receded from the ineffectual attack, the British rushed forward, charged them with the bayonet, and, notwithstanding their superiority of numbers, invariably drove them back with immense slaughter. But I am relating the history of the battle, forgetful that I am only describing the field.

From the spot where we now stood I cast my eyes on every side, and saw nothing but the dreadful and recent [278] traces of death and devastation. The rich harvests of standing corn,[1] which had covered the scene

[1]In this part of Belgium, wheat generally grows to full five feet in height, and rye upwards of six feet: great quantities of the latter are grown, for it answers to the liberal definition of oats by Dr. Johnson, and is the food of men in England, and of horses in Flanders; nay it is actually baked into bread for their use, and regularly given them at the inns where they stop to bait. Several soldiers of the Highland regiments

of action we were contemplating, had been beaten into the earth, and the withered and broken stalks dried in the sun, now presented the appearance of stubble, though blacker and far more bare than any stubble land.

In many places the excavations made by the shells had thrown up the earth all around them; the marks of horses' hoofs, that had plunged ancle deep in clay, were hardened in the sun; and the feet of men, [279] deeply stamped into the ground, left traces where many a deadly struggle had been. The ground was ploughed up in several places with the charge of the cavalry, and the whole field was literally covered with soldiers' caps, shoes, gloves, belts, and scabbards, broken feathers battered into the mud, remnants of tattered scarlet cloth, bits of fur and leather, black stocks and havresacs, belonging to the French soldiers, buckles, packs of cards, books, and innumerable papers of every description. I picked up a volume of Candide; a few sheets of sentimental love-letters, evidently belonging to some French novel; and many other pages of the same publication were flying over the field in much too muddy a state to be touched. One German Testament, not quite so dirty as many that were lying about, I carried with me nearly the whole day;— [280] printed French military returns, muster rolls, love letters and washing bills; illegible songs, scattered sheets of military music, epistles without number in praise of "L'Empereur, le Grand Napoleon" and filled with the most confident anticipations of victory under his command, were strewed over the field which had been the scene of his defeat. The quantities of letters and of blank sheets of dirty writing paper were so great that they literally whitened the surface of the earth.

The road to Genappe, descending from the front of the British position, where we were now standing, passes the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, and ascends the opposite height, on the summit of which stands "La Belle Alliance," which was occupied by the French. We walked down the hill to La Haye Sainte — its walls and slated roofs were shattered and pierced through [281] in every direction with cannon shot. We could not get admittance into it, for it was completely deserted by its inhabitants. Three wounded officers of the 42d and 92d regiments were standing here to survey the scene: they had all of them been wounded in the battle of the 16th. One of them had lost an arm, another was on crutches, and the third seemed to be very ill. Their carriage waited for them, as they were unable to walk. After some conversation with them, we proceeded up the hill to the hamlet of La Belle Alliance. The principal house on the left side of the road was pierced through and through with cannon balls, and the offices behind it were a heap of dust from the fire of the British artillery. Notwithstanding the ruinous state of the house, it was filled with inhabitants. Its broken walls, "its looped and windowed wretchedness," might indeed defend them [282] sufficiently well "from seasons such as these" when the soft breezes and the bright beams of summer played around it — but against "the pelting of the storm" it would afford them but a sorry shelter. It was immediately to be repaired; but I rejoiced that it yet remained in its dilapidated state. The house was filled with vestiges of the battle. Cuirasses, helmets, swords, bayonets, feathers, brass eagles, and crosses of the Legion of Honour, were to be purchased here. The house consisted of three rooms, two in front, and a very small one behind. On the opposite side of the road is a little cottage, forming part of the hamlet of La Belle Alliance; and at a short distance, by the way side, is another low-roofed cottage, which was pointed out to us as the place where Buonaparte breakfasted on the morning of the battle. Farther along this road, but not in sight, [283] was the village of Planchenoit, which was the head-quarters of the French on the night of the 17th[1]. We crossed the field from this place to Chateau Hougoumont, descending to the bottom of the hill, and again ascending the opposite side. Part of our way lay through clover; but I observed, that the corn on the French position was not nearly so much beaten down as on the English, which might naturally be expected, as they attacked us incessantly, and we acted on the defensive, until that last, general, and decisive charge of our whole army was made, before which their's fled in confusion. In some places patches of corn nearly as high as myself were standing. Among them I discovered many a forgotten grave, strewed round with melancholy [284] remnants of military attire. While I loitered behind the rest of the party, searching among the corn for some relics worthy of preservation, I beheld a human hand, almost reduced to a skeleton, outstretched above the ground, as if it had raised itself from the grave. My blood ran cold with horror, and for some moments I stood rooted to the spot, unable to take my eyes from this dreadful object, or to move away: as soon as I recovered myself, I hastened after my companions, who were far before me,

who had got into a field of this gigantic rye on the 16th, were shot without even being able to see their enemy.

[1]Buonaparte slept at the farm of Caillon near Planchenoit.

and overtook them just as they entered the wood of Hougoumont.

Never shall I forget the dreadful scene of death and destruction which it presented. The broken branches were strewed around, the green beech leaves fallen before their time, and stripped by the storm of war, not by the storm of [285] nature, were scattered over the surface of the ground, emblematical of the fate of the thousands who had fallen on the same spot in the summer of their days. The return of spring will dress the **wood of Hougoumont** once more in vernal beauty, and succeeding years will see it flourish:

"But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn,
Oh ! when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!"

The trunks of the trees had been pierced in every direction with cannon-balls. In some of them, I counted the holes where upwards of thirty had lodged: yet they still lived, they still bore their verdant foliage, and the birds still sang amidst their boughs. Beneath their shade, the hare-bell and violet were waving their slender heads; and the wild raspberry at their roots was ripening its fruit. I gathered some of it with the bitter [286] reflexion, that amidst the destruction of human life these worthless weeds and flowers had escaped uninjured.

Melancholy were the vestiges of death that continually met our eyes. The carnage here had indeed been dreadful. Amongst the long grass lay remains of broken arms, shreds of gold lace, torn epaulets, and pieces of cartridges-boxes; and upon the tangled branches of the brambles fluttered many a tattered remnant of a soldier's coat. At the outskirts of the wood, and around the ruined walls of the Château, huge piles of human ashes, were heaped up, some of which were still smoking. The countrymen told us, that so great were the numbers of the slain, that it was impossible entirely to consume them. Pits had been dug, into which they had been thrown, but they were obliged to be raised far above the surface of the ground. [287] These dreadful heaps were covered with piles of wood, which were set on fire, so that underneath the ashes lay numbers of human bodies unconsumed.

The Château itself, the beautiful seat of a Belgic gentleman, had been set on fire by the explosion of shells during the action, which had completed the destruction occasioned by a most furious cannonade. Its broken walls and falling roofs presented a most melancholy spectacle: not melancholy merely from its being a pile of ruins, but from the vestiges it presented of that tremendous and recent warfare by which those ruins had been caused. Its huge blackened beams had fallen in every direction upon the crumbling heaps of stone and plaster, which were intermixed with broken pieces of the marble flags, the carved cornices, and the gilded mirrors* that once ornamented it. [288]

We went into the garden, which had sustained comparatively little injury, while every thing around it was laid waste. Its gay parterres and summer flowers made it look like an island in the desert. A berçeau, or covered walk, ran round it, shaded with creeping plants, amongst which honey-suckles and jessamines were intermixed, en treillage. The trees were loaded with fruit; the myrtles and fig trees were flourishing in luxuriance, and the scarlet geraniums, July flowers, and orange trees, were in full blow. My native country can boast of no such beauty as bloomed at Château Hougoumont: its rugged clime produces no fruitful fig trees, no flowers rich in the fragrance of orange blossom: — but it is the land of heroes!

Man is the nobler growth our realms supply,
And souls are ripened in our northern sky."

I saw the pure and polished leaves of [289] the laurel shining in the sun, and I could not restrain my tears at the thought that the laurels, the everlasting laurels which England had won upon this spot, were steeped in the heart-blood of thousands of her brave, her lamented sons. But if not immortal in their lives, they will be so in their fame. — Their laurels will never wither; and no British heart, henceforward, will ever visit this hallowed spot without paying a tribute of veneration and regret to those gallant spirits who here fought and fell for their country.

At the garden gate I found the holster of a British officer, entire, but deluged with blood. In the inside was the maker's name, — Beazley and Hetse, No. 4, Parliament-street. All around were strewed torn epaulets, broken scabbards, and sabretashes stained and stiffened with blood — proofs how dreadfully the battle had [290]raged. The garden and courts were lined during the engagement with Nassau troops, as sharpshooters, who did great execution. A poor countryman, with his wife and children, inhabited a miserable shed amongst these deserted ruins. This unfortunate family had only fled from the spot on the morning of the battle. Their little dwelling had been burnt, and all their property had perished in the flames. They had scarcely clothes to cover them, and were destitute of every thing. Yet the poor woman, as she told me the story of their distresses, and wept over the baby

that she clasped to her breast, blessed heaven that she had preserved her children. She seemed most grateful for a little assistance, took me into her miserable habitation, and gave me the broken sword of a British officer of infantry, (most probably of the Guards,) which was the only [291] thing she had left; and which, with some other relics before collected, I preserved as carefully as if they had been the most valuable treasures.

It is a remarkable circumstance that amidst this scene of destruction, and surrounded on all sides by the shattered walls and smoking piles of "this ruined and roofless abode," the little chapel belonging to the Château stood uninjured. Its preservation appeared to these simple peasants an unquestionable miracle; and we felt more inclined to respect than to wonder at the superstitious veneration with which they regarded it. No shot nor shell had penetrated its consecrated walls; no sacrilegious hand had dared to violate its humble altar, which was still adorned with its ancient ornaments and its customary care. A type of that blessed religion to which it was consecrated, it stood alone [292] unchanged, amidst the wreck of earthly greatness, — as if to speak to our hearts, amidst the horrors of the tomb, the promises of immortality; and to recall our thoughts from the crimes and sorrows of earth to the hopes and happiness of heaven. The voice of the Divinity himself within his holy temple seemed to tell us, that those whom we lamented here, and who in the discharge of their last and noblest duty to their country, had met on the field of honour "the death that best becomes the brave" — should receive in another and a better world their great reward! Blackened piles of human ashes surrounded us; but I felt that though "the dust returns to the earth, the spirit returns unto Him that gave it."

The countryman led me to one of these piles within the gates of the court belonging to the Château, where, he said, the [293] bodies of the British Guardsmen who had so gallantly defended it, had been burnt as they had been found, heaped in death. I took some of the ashes and wrapped them up in one of the many sheets of paper that were strewed around me; perhaps those heaps that then blackened the surface of this scene of desolation are already scattered by the winds of winter, and mingled unnoticed with the dust of the field; perhaps the few sacred ashes which I then gathered at Château Hougoumont are all that is now to be found upon earth of the thousands who fell upon this fatal field!

It was not without regret that we left this ever-memorable spot, surrounded as it was by horrors that shocked the mind, and vestiges that were revolting to the senses. Still we lingered around it, till at length, after gazing for the last time at its ruined [294] archways and desolated courts, we struck into the **wood,** and lost sight forever of the Chateau **Hougoumont**. The road to Nivelles, which strikes off to the right from the high road to Genappe at the village of Mont St. Jean, passes the Château on the other side. The right wing of the British army crossed this road, and in the deep ditches on each side of it we were told that human remains still lay uninterred. Some of the party returned to Mont St. Jean by this road, which is considerably nearer; but my brother, my sister, and myself, once more crossed the field in order to pay another visit to "La Belle Alliance."

I could not be persuaded to go to see the skeleton of a calf which had been burnt in one of the outhouses of Hougoumont, and over which one of the ladies of our party uttered the most pathetic lamentations. [295] It seemed to fill her mind with more concern than any thing else. At another time I might have been sorry for the calf; but when I remembered how many poor wounded men had been burnt alive in these ruins, it was impossible to bestow a single thought upon its fate. Finding that her sensibility obtained no sympathy from me, the lady turned to S, and began to bewail the calf anew, till at last wearied out with her folly, "out of her brief and her impatience," S— — exclaimed, "that she did not care if all the calves in the world were burnt."

As we passed again through the wood of Hougoumont, I gathered some seeds of the wild broom, with the intention of planting them at, and with the hope that I should one day see the broom of Hougoumont blooming on the banks of the Tweed. In leaving the wood I was struck [296] with the sight of the scarlet poppy flaunting in full bloom upon some new-made graves, as if in mockery of the dead. In many parts of the field these flowers were growing in profusion: they had probably been protected from injury by the tall and thick corn amongst which they grew; and their slender roots had adhered to the clods of clay which had been carelessly thrown upon the graves. From one of these graves I gathered the little wild blue flower known by the sentimental name of "Forget me not!" which to a romantic imagination might have furnished a fruitful subject for poetic reverie or pensive reflection.

While S---- was taking a view, and I was overlooking and guarding her, I entered the cottage of "La Belle Alliance," and began to talk to Baptiste la Coste, Buonaparte's guide, whom I [297] found there. He is a sturdy, honest-looking countryman, and gave an interesting account of Buonaparte's behaviour during the battle. He said that he issued his orders with great vehemence, and even impatience. He took snuff incessantly — but in a

hurried manner, and apparently from habit, and without being conscious that he was doing so: he talked a great deal and very rapidly; his manner of speaking was abrupt, quick, and hurried: he was extremely nervous and agitated at times, though his anticipations of victory were most confident. He frequently expressed his astonishment, rather angrily, that the British held out so long — at the same time he could not repress his admiration of their gallantry, and often broke out into exclamations of amazement and approbation of their courage and conduct.

He particularly admired the Scotch Greys [298] — "*Voilà ces chevaux gris — ah! ce sont beaux cavaliers — très beaux*" — and then he said they would all be cut to pieces. He said, — "These English certainly fight well, but they must soon give way and he asked Soult, who was near him, "if he did not think so?" Soult replied, "He was afraid not" "And why?" said Napoleon, turning round to him quickly. "Because," said Soult, "I believe they will first be cut to pieces." Soults opinion of the British army, which was founded on experience, coincided with that of the Duke of Wellington. "It will take a great many hours to cut them in pieces," said the Duke, in answer to something that was said to him during the action; "and I know they will never give way."

Buonaparte, however, who knew less of them, and whose head always ran upon the idea of the English flying to their [299] ships, had never dreamt that with a force so inferior they would think of giving him battle; but imagined that they would continue their retreat during the night, and that he should have to pursue them. It is said that he expressed great satisfaction when the morning broke and he saw them still there; and that he exclaimed — "*Ah! pour le coup — je les tiens don--ces Anglais!*"

Before the engagement began he harangued the army, promising them the plunder of Brussels and Ghent. Once, towards the close of the battle, he addressed himself to the Imperial Guard, leading them on to the brink of the hill, and telling them, "that was the road to Brussels." Regardless of the waste of human life, he incessantly ordered his battalions to advance — to bear down upon the enemy — to carry every thing before them. He [300] inflamed their ardour by the remembrance of past, as well as the prospect of present victory, and the promise of future reward: but he never led them on to battle himself — he never once braved the shock of British arms. It is not true that he was ever near Lord Uxbridge, or in any danger of being taken prisoner by the English. Indeed he exposed himself to very little personal risk; a proof of which is, that not one of those who attended him the whole day was wounded.

La Coste said, that at first, when he was told that the Prussians were advancing, he obstinately and angrily refused to believe it, declaring it was the French corps under Marshal Grouchy.[1] He then commanded [301] this news to be spread amongst the army, and ordered Marshal Ney, at the head of four chosen regiments of the Guards, to charge, and to penetrate the centre of the British.[2] He stood to witness the complete failure of this desperate effort to retrieve the fortune of the day; but when he perceived his troops give way and retreat in confusion before the grand simultaneous charge of the British army, he turned pale, his perturbation became extreme — and exclaiming, "All is lost — let us save ourselves," (*Tout est perdu — sauvons nous*,) or words to that effect, — he put spurs to his horse, and message from the Emperor, brought by General Labedoyere, to inform him "that the French corps under Marshal Grouchy had arrived in the field, and attacked the left wing of the British and Prussians united. General Labedoyere rode along the lines, spreading this intelligence through the whole army" [302] galloped from the field. La Coste expressly said, that he was among the first of the officers to set the example of flight.[3] His own old Imperial Guard still remained — disputed every foot of ground — fought desperately to the last, and at length, overpowered by numbers, fell gloriously — as their leader should have fallen.

But he! — not even despair could prompt him to one noble thought, or rouse him to one deed of desperate valour. He fled, — as at Egypt, at Moscow, and at Leipsic [i.e. Leipzig] he had fled, — while his faithful veterans were still fighting with enthusiastic [303] gallantry, and shedding the last drop of their blood in his cause!

Was this the conduct of a hero ? Was this the conduct of a general?

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[1]That Buonaparte either did believe those troops to be French, or that he pretended to believe it, (which is perhaps more probable,) is unquestionably true.

[2]Vide Marshal Ney's Letter.

[3]This statement too is confirmed by Marshal Ney, who said, "that Buonaparte had entirely disappeared before the end of the battle." Let it be remembered that Ney's letter was written exactly a week after the battle, while Napoleon was still Emperor, and still in Paris, and which, if his statement was not true, a thousand witnesses could have contradicted it.

Was this the conduct of a great mind? No! — He had set his "life upon a cast and he should have stood the hazard of the die." — And for what did he abandon his army, and basely fly in the hour of danger? — that he might be humiliated, pursued and taken — that he might become a suppliant to that hated enemy, whose ruin he had pursued with implacable hostility, and be indebted to their faith and generosity for life and safety — that he might live to hear his name execrated, and linger out a few years of miserable existence in obscurity and degradation!

It has been said by his advocates and admirers, that he was not only a great man, but the greatest man who ever lived — [304] and that his only fault was ambition. Yes! — Napoleon Buonaparte had indeed ambition — but it was for power, not for glory; for unbounded empire and unlimited dominion, not for the welfare of his subjects and the prosperity of his country.

He used the talents, the opportunities, and the power, with which he was gifted, and such as perhaps no mortal ever before enjoyed, not to save, but to destroy, not to bless, but to desolate, the world.

The conduct of the leaders of the contending armies was as opposite as the cause for which they fought. While Napoleon kept aloof from the action, Lord Wellington exposed himself to the hottest fire, threw himself into the thickest of the fight, and braved every danger of the battle. He issued every order, he directed0 every movement, he seemed to be every where present, he encouraged his troops, he rallied his regiments, [305] he led them on against the tremendous forces of the enemy, charged at their head, and defeated their most formidable attacks. No private soldier in his army was exposed to half the personal danger that he encountered. All who surrounded him fell by his side, wounded and dying. All his personal staff, with scarcely an exception, were either killed or wounded. In the battle's most terrible moment, and most hopeless crisis, when our gallant army, weakened by immense losses, and by more than seven hours of unequal combat, were scarcely able to stand against the overwhelming number of fresh troops which the enemy poured down against them, when the Belgians fled, when every British soldier was in action, when no reserve remained, and no prospect of succour from our allies appeared, Lord Wellington himself rallied the troops, charged at [306] their head, and once more drove back the enemy.[1]

Nor was the conduct of the two generals on this day more opposite than that of the armies which they commanded, and the motives by which they were actuated. The French fought to obtain plunder and aggrandisement — the British to fulfil their duty to their country. Well did their generals know this essential difference! Buonaparte held out to his troops the spoils of Belgium and Holland. When he wished to animate them to the greatest exertions, he led them forward, and told them, "That was the road to Brussels" Lord Wellington, in the most critical moment of the battle, held another language. [307] "We must not be beaten" he said to his soldiers; "what will they say of us in England!" After the battle their conduct was equally different. The French had murdered numbers of their prisoners, and those whose lives they spared they robbed, insulted, and treated with the utmost cruelty, shutting them up without food, without dressing their wounds and subjecting them to every hardship and privation. The British, on the contrary, though irritated by the knowledge of these barbarities, protected the wounded French from the rage of the Prussians, who would have gladly revenged the cruelties with which they had been treated by them. Our wounded soldiers, who were able to move, employed themselves in assisting their suffering enemies, binding up their wounds, and giving them food and water — but the brave are always merciful. [308]

A countryman, who belonged either to La Belle Alliance, or to some of the neighbouring cottages, told me, that when he came here early on the morning after the battle, the house was surrounded with the wounded and dying of the French army, many of whom implored him, for God's sake, to put an end to their sufferings.

But the agonizing scenes which had so recently taken place here, and the images of horror which every object in and around La Belle Alliance was irresistibly calculated to suggest to the mind, were almost too dreadful for reflection. More pleasing was the remembrance, that it was here Napoleon Buonaparte stood when he dispatched a courier to Paris with the news that he had won the day; and that it was here the Duke of Wellington

[1]It was past six o'clock when this circumstance happened. The Prussians had not appeared. The regiments which he led to the charge were the 52d and the 95th. He also repeatedly rallied the Belgic regiments, and sometimes vainly exerted himself to make them face the enemy.

and Marshal Blücher accidentally met a few hours after, in the very moment of victory, [309] when Buonaparte was flying before their triumphant armies, himself the bearer of the news of his own defeat.

The interview between the Duke of Wellington and Marshal Blucher was short, but it will be for ever memorable in the annals of history. They did not enter the house, but remained together a few minutes in earnest conversation. It is well known that Blucher and the Prussians continued the pursuit during the night. The remains of the British army rested from their toils on the ground, surrounded by the bleeding and dying French, on the very spot which they had occupied the preceding night, — and Lord Wellington returned to Waterloo.

"As he crossed again the fatal field, on which the silence of death had now succeeded to the storm of battle, the moon, breaking from dark clouds, shed an [310] uncertain light upon this wide scene of carnage, covered with mangled thousands of that gallant army whose heroic valour had won for him the brightest wreath of victory, and left to future times an imperishable monument of their country's fame. He saw himself surrounded by the bloody corpses of his veteran soldiers, who had followed him through distant lands, of his friends, his associates in arms, his companions through many an eventful year of danger and of glory: in that awful pause, which follows the mortal conflict of man with man, emotions, unknown or stifled in the heat of battle, forced their way — the feelings of the man triumphed over those of the general, and in the very hour of victory Lord Wellington burst into tears"[1]

The state of the wounded during this [311] dreadful night may be conceived. Not even a drop of water was to be had on the field to relieve their thirst, and none was to be procured nearer than Waterloo. Late as it was, and exhausted as our officers must have been with the fatigue of such unremitting exertions, many of them mounted their horses, slung over their shoulders as many canteens as they could carry, galloped to Waterloo, a distance of more than two miles from almost every part of the field, filled them with water, and returned with it for the relief of the wounded men.

I did not leave a corner of La Belle Alliance unrummaged, but I cannot say that I saw anything particularly worthy of notice: I ate a bit of intolerably bad rye-cake, as sour as vinegar, and as black as the bread of Sparta, which nothing but the consideration of its having been in La [312] Belle Alliance during the battle (which the woman assured me was the case) could have induced me to swallow: — but I need not stop to relate my own follies. Bought from the people of the house the feather of a French officer, and a cuirass which had belonged to a French cuirassier, who, they said, had died here the day after the battle. Loaded with my spoils, I traversed the whole extent of the field, thinking, as I toiled along beneath the burning sun, under the weight of the heavy cuirass, that the poor man to whom it had belonged, when he brought it into the field, in all the pride of martial ardour, and all the confidence of victory, little dreamed who would carry it off. If he had known that it was to be an English lady, he would have been more surprized than pleased.

I did not stop till I got to the old tree [313] now known by the name of Lord Wellington's tree,[2] near which he stood for a length of time during the battle; and beneath which I now sat myself down to rest. Its massy trunk and broken branches were pierced with a number of cannon-balls, but its foliage still afforded me a grateful shade from the rays of the sun.

It was between this part of the field and Hougoumont, that the lamented Sir William Ponsonby gloriously fell in the prime of life and honour, after repeatedly leading the most gallant and successful charges against the enemy, in which he took upwards of 2000 prisoners and two French eagles. The particulars of his death are well known. In the heat of the action he was unfortunately separated from [314] his brigade, his horse stuck fast in the deep wet clay of some newly-ploughed land, and he saw a large body of Polish Lancers bearing down against him. In this dreadful situation he awaited the inevitable fate that approached him with the composure of a hero: he calmly turned to his aide-de-camp, who was still by his side, and it is said that he was in the act of giving him a picture and a last message to his wife, when he was pierced at once with the pikes of seven of the Polish Lancers, and fell covered with wounds. England never lost a better soldier, nor society a brighter ornament. He was deservedly beloved by his friends and companions, adored by his family, and lamented and honoured by his country.

'Numbers of country-people were employed in what might be called

[1]Circumstantial Details relative to the battle of Waterloo, by a near Observer.

[2]It is on the left of the road in going towards Waterloo, behind the farm-house of La Haye Sainte.

the gleanings of the harvest of spoil. The muskets, [315] the swords, the helmets, the cuirasses, — all the large and unbroken arms, had been immediately carried off; and now the eagles that had emblazoned the caps of the French infantry, — the fragments of broken swords, &c. were rarely to be found; though there was great abundance upon sale. But there was still plenty of rubbish to be picked up upon the field, for those who had a taste for it like me—though the greatest part of it was in a most horrible state.

It was astonishing with what dreadful haste the bodies of the dead had been pillaged. The work of plunder was carried on even during the battle; and those hardened and abandoned wretches who follow the camp, like vultures, to prey upon the corpses of the dead, had the temerity to press forward beneath a heavy fire to rifle the pockets of the officers who fell, of their[316] watches and money. The most daring and atrocious of these marauders were women.[1] [317]

The description I heard of the field the morning after the battle from those who had visited it, I cannot yet recal without horror. Horses were galloping about in every direction without their riders: some of them, bleeding with their wounds and frantic with pain, were tearing up the ground, and plunging over the bodies of the dead and the dying, —and many of them were lying on the ground in the agonies of death.

Over the whole field the bodies of the innumerable dead, already stripped of every covering, were lying in heaps upon each other; the wounded in many instances beneath them. Some, faint and bleeding, were slowly attempting to make their way towards Brussels; others were crawling upon their hands and knees from this scene of misery; and many, unable to move, lay on the ground in agony.[318] For four days and nights, some of these unfortunate men were exposed to the beams of the sun by day, and to the dews by night; for notwithstanding the most praiseworthy and indefatigable exertions, the last of the wounded were not removed from the field until the Thursday after the battle; and if we consider that there were at least 8000 British, besides the Belgic, Brunswick, arid Prussian wounded soldiers, and an incalculable number of wounded French, —we shall find cause for surprize and admiration, that they could be removed in so short a time. Their conveyance, too, was rendered extremely difficult, as well as inconceivably painful to the poor sufferers, by the dreadful and almost impassable state of the roads.

The Belgic peasantry shewed the most active and attentive humanity to these [319] poor wounded men. They brought them the best food they could procure; they gave them water to drink — they ministered to all their wants — complied with all their wishes, — and treated them as if they had been their own children.

An officer, with whom I am acquainted, went over the field on the morning of the battle, and examined the ghastly heaps of dead in search of the body of a near relation; and after all the corpses were buried or burnt — in the same melancholy and fruitless search, many an Englishwoman, whom this day of glory had bereft of husband or son, wandered over this fatal field, wildly calling upon the names of those who were now no more. The very day before we visited it, the widow and the sister of a brave and lamented British officer had been here, harrowing up the souls of the beholders with their wild lamentations, [320] vainly demanding where the remains of him they loved reposed, and accusing heaven for denying them the consolation of weeping over his grave. I was myself, afterwards, a sorrowful witness of the dreadful effects of the unrestrained indulgence of this passionate and heartbreaking grief. In the instance to which I allude, sorrow had nearly driven reason from her seat, and melancholy verged upon madness.

I have forced myself to dwell upon these scenes of horror, with whatever pain to my own feelings, because in this favoured country, which the mercy of heaven has hitherto preserved from being the theatre of war, and from experiencing the calamities which have visited other nations, I have

[1] Some soldiers's wives were, however, actuated by better motives, and, like the matrons of Hensberg, in times of old, seemed to think their best treasures were their husbands. Many of them rushed forward and carried their wounded husbands off the field at the hazard of their own lives. The wife of a Serjeant in the 28th was severely wounded in two places by a shell, which struck her as she was carrying off her wounded husband. This anecdote was related to me by an eye-witness of the circumstance. The woman (respecting whom I inquired since my return to England) has, I understand, been allowed a pension from Chelsea Hospital. I heard of several similar instances of heroic conjugal affection; and I myself saw one poor woman, the wife of a private in the 27th, whose leg was dreadfully fractured by a musket-ball in rescuing her husband. When struck by the ball she fell to the ground with her husband, who was supposed to be mortally wounded, but she still refused to leave him, and they were removed together to the rear and afterwards sent to Antwerp. The poor man survived the amputation of both his arms, and is still alive. The woman, who was then in a state of pregnancy, has, since her return to this country, given birth to a child, to which the Duke of York stood godfather.

sometimes thought that the blessings of that exemption are but imperfectly felt, and that the sufferings and the dangers of those [321] whose valour and whose blood have been its security and glory, are but faintly understood and coldly commiserated. I wished that those who had suffered in the cause of their country should be repaid by her gratitude, and that she should learn more justly to estimate " the price of victory/' But it is impossible for me to describe, or for imagination to conceive, the horrors of Waterloo!

How gladly would I dwell upon the individual merits of those who fell upon this glorious field, had I but the power to snatch from oblivion one of the many names which ought to be enrolled in the proud list of their country's heroes! In the heat of such a battle, probably thousands have fallen, whose untold deeds surpass all that from childhood our hearts have worshipped. But that heroic valour and devoted patriotism, which in other days were[322] confined to individuals and signalised their conduct — at Waterloo pervaded every breast. Every private soldier acted like a hero, and thus individual merit was lost in the general excellence, as the beams of the stars are undistinguished in the universal blaze of day.

But it is not only the unrivalled glory of my countrymen in arms, of which I am proud, it is the noble use which they have made of their triumph. It is not only their irresistible valour in battle, but their unexampled mercy and moderation in victory which exalts them above all other nations.

It has been justly said by those whom they conquered, that no other army than the British could have won the battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo: and no other army but the British, after such a battle and such a victory, after a long course of incessant warfare, after recent insults and [324] wanton cruelties, and after ages of inveterate hostility and national animosity, —no other army but the British, in such circumstances, would have marched through the heart of that enemy's country, and entered that enemy's capital, as the British army marched through France and entered Paris.

We have only to remember what has invariably been the conduct of the French armies in their march through the countries they have conquered. We have only to picture to ourselves what would have been their conduct, if they had triumphantly marched through England, and we shall then be able to appreciate the meritorious moderation of the British army — no plundered towns, no burning villages, no ruined houses marked their course, no outrage, no cruelty nor violence disgraced their triumphant progress.[324]

. . .

It was with difficulty I could tear myself from the spot — but after casting one long and lingering look upon the wood-crowned hill of Hougoumont, the shattered walls of La Haye Sainte, the hamlet of La Belle Alliance, the woods of Frischermont, the broken hedge in front of which Sir Thomas Picton's division had been stationed, and which was doubly interesting to me from the remembrance that it was there that the Major had fought and fallen; and after giving one last glance at the tree beneath which I stood, I joined my brother and sister, who had been taking sketches at a little distance, and set off with them to Mont St. Jean, — lightened of the load of my cuirass, which a little girl, who before the battle had been one of the [329] inhabitants of La Haye Sainte, joyfully carried to the village for half a franc.

On our return we entered the farm-house where Major ------- had been conveyed when wounded. The farm-house and offices inclose a court into which the windows of the house look. It is only one story high, and consists of three rooms, one through another. Not only these rooms, but the barns, out-houses, and byres were filled with wounded British officers, many of whom died here before morning.

In that last tremendous attack which took place towards the close of the day, before the arrival of the Prussians, (but which, thanks to British valour, was wholly unsuccessful,) the battle extended even here. The French suddenly turned the fire of nearly the whole of their artillery against this part of our position, in front [330] of Mont St. Jean, and a general charge of their infantry and cavalry advanced, under cover of this tremendous cannonade, to the attack. Weakened as our army had been in this quarter with the immense loss it had sustained, they expected it to give way instantly, and that they should be able to force their way to Brussels. The Belgians fled at this tremendous onset. The British stood firm and undaunted, contesting every inch of ground. Every little rise was taken and retaken. The French and English, intermingled with each other, fought man to man, and sword to sword, around these walls, and in this court, while cannon-shot thundered against the walls of the house, and shells broke in at the windows of the rooms crowded with wounded. Such of the officers as it was possible to remove were carried out beneath[331] a shower of musketry. But our troops maintained their ground in spite of the immense numbers of the enemy, and of a most tremendous and incessant fire; and after a long and desperate contest, the French were completely repulsed and driven back. They never for a moment gained possession even of this farm-house, much less of the village of Mont St. Jean, to which indeed the battle never extended. Some cannon-balls indeed lodged themselves in the walls of the cottages, but the

action took place entirely in front of the village, and its possession was never therefore disputed.

The farmer's wife had actually remained in this farm-house during the whole of this tremendous battle, quite alone, shut up in her own room, or rather garret. There she sat the whole day, listening to the roar [332] of the cannon, in solitude and silence, unable to see any thing, or to hear any account of what was passing. It seemed to me that the utmost ingenuity of man could not have devised a more terrible punishment than this woman voluntarily inflicted upon herself. When I asked her what could been her motives for remaining in such a dreadful situation, she said that she staid to take care of her property, — that all she had in the world consisted in cows and calves, in poultry and pigs, — and she thought if she went away and left them, she should lose them all, — and perhaps have her house and furniture burnt. She seemed to applaud herself not a little for her foresight. If the French, however, had been victorious instead of the English, the woman, as well as her hens and chickens, would have been in rather an awkward predicament. [333]

Her husband first told me this story, which I could scarcely credit till she herself confirmed it. But he, honest man! had wisely run away before the battle had begun, leaving his wife, his pigs and poultry, to take care of themselves. She said she staid in her room all that night, and never came down till the following morning, when all the surviving wounded officers had been removed, but the bodies of those who had expired during the night still remained, and the floors of all the rooms were stained with blood. She seemed very callous to their fate, and to the sufferings of the wounded; and very indifferent about every thing except her hens and chickens. She led me to a little miserable dark cow-house, where General Cooke (or Cock, as she called him) had remained a considerable time when wounded, and it seemed to be a sort of gratification [334] to her, that a British general had been in her cow-house.

Leaving this farm-house, we walked through the village of Mont St. Jean, and stopped at the little inn, where we found the rest of the party busily employed upon every kind of eatable the house afforded, which consisted of brown bread, and butter and cheese, — small beer, and still smaller wine. Although I had rejected with abhorrence at Château Hougoumont a proposal of eating, which some one had ventured unadvisedly to make; and though it did seem to me upon the field of battle that I should never think of eating again, — yet no sooner did I cast my eyes upon these viands than I pounced upon them, as a falcon does upon his prey, and devoured them with nearly as much voracity. They seemed to me to be delicious; and [335] the brown bread and butter, especially, were incomparable.

The woman of the house and her two daughters, who were industriously employed in plain needle work, related to us with great naïveté all the terrors they had suffered, and all the horrors they had seen. Like all the other inhabitants of the village, they had fled the day before the battle, — not into the woods, but to a place, the name of which I do not remember, but which they said was very far off, ("bien loin.")

Several cannon-balls had lodged in the walls about this house, although it was at the extremity of the village, farthest from the field. Having finished our frugal repast, for which these kind and simple people asked a most trifling recompense, we left Mont St. Jean, passed through the [336] village of Waterloo Brussels with an impression on our minds, from our visit to the field of Waterloo, which no time can efface.[102]

1817 A friend of Sir Harry Smith visits the battlefield, Sir Harry records:

In 1817, I and a friend went to look over the field of Waterloo. The wood of Hougoumont had been cut down, which very much altered the appearance of the ground, as did the want of troops, etc. To those unaccustomed to look at ground with and without troops, the difference cannot well be explained. I trod, however, upon this immortal field with a thrilling sensation of gratitude to Almighty God, first for personal safety and for the additional honour and glory my country's Army had acquired there, and next for the beneficial results to Europe ensured by the achievement of that wonderful battle. The left of the position as well as the centre was as during the battle, with the exception of the many tombs and monuments erected to mark the spots where lay interred so many gallant spirits, and many is the burning tear I shed over the mounds of some of my dearest friends, many of England's brightest sons and rising soldiers. No one can feel what a soldier does on such a spot, especially one who was in the [309] midst of the strife. But nothing struck me so forcibly as the small extent of the field. It appeared impossible that so many thousands of troops could have contended on so constricted a space, the one spot on earth which decided the fate of Emperors and Kings, and the future destiny of nations. [103]

22 May 1817 Mrs Calvert visits Waterloo and writes to her brother:

Dear George Knox unexpectedly arrived — a delightful addition to our party. At half past eight we all went to Lady Clancarty's. The Prince and Princess of Orange, Duke of Wellington and all the beau monde [279] of Brussels were there. But I am very much affronted with the Duke. He never asked for Felix!

"The next day we all visited Waterloo, accompanied all the time by La Coste, a most intelligent person who explained everything so clearly that I understand the battle perfectly. I saw the spot on which poor Picton fell and the bridge where the 32nd were stationed. La Coste was with Bonaparte during the whole of the 18th. He says it is quite a mistake to suppose that he headed his army or exposed his person. He was the entire time on the high road to Charleroi, behind his own cannon! He seemed in very good spirits till the arrival of the Prussians, when he turned '*f'dle comme la mort*.' He then galloped off to Charleroi, La Coste also of the party, his horse having been fastened all the time to that of the aide-de-camp at Charleroi. Bonaparte said to La Coste ' *Vous pouvez retourner chez vous*.' The aide-de-camp then gave him a Napoleon, and that was all he had for his agreeable day's work — it was not paying like an Emperor.

"We saw a very small chapel at Hougomont in which forty five wounded soldiers were laid after the battle. It caught fire; part of the floor was burnt, and also the feet of a figure of our Saviour on the Cross. No more than that, for instantly the fire dropped down and was extinguished, and this La Coste seemed to attribute to a miracle."[104]

6 August 1817 Sylvester Douglas, Lord Genbervie records in his journal his visit with his wife Kitty:

Aug. 6, Wednesday, 3.30 a.m., in bed, Jenappe: Hôtel du Roi d'Espangne. At this little inn, in the small village of Janappe, the landlord, an eye-witness, told me that the Duke of Brunswick breakfasted on the day of his death at 11 o'clock and that between 2 and 3 the same day his dead body was brought back here. He had been killed about that time at Quatrebras, a farmhouse a league off on the right hand of the road leading from Brussels to Namur. We came yesterday over the field of battle of the eighteenth, having first passed through the village of Waterloo, between one and two miles, I should suppose, from the place where Colonel Alexander Gordon and General Picton were killed, and near which the battle seems to have commenced, the English army extending on a ridge to the right and left of the road, and I imagine in the road, which is in a considerable hollow just under the close to the high spot on the right where Gordon fell, and where a monument is now erecting to his memory, with a long inscription on the pedestal on one side in English and on the other in French, ant the joint expense of his five brothers and his sister. Picton fell about a hundred yards to the left of the road and about the same distance further on along the road and close to it on the right is the house (with a few hedges adjoining) called la haye Sainte, which was lost and gained so often that memorable day.

About half a mile farther on the road, and also close to it on the left, is the little public house called "la Belle Alliance," and a mile or something more farther on still is this little village and our inn, which is on the left side of the road. On the spot where the monument in memory of Colonel Gordon is erecting, one sees distinctly all the principal parts of this great scene where the greatest event perhaps recorded in history took place; on the left near the road, the place where Picton fell. About a mile more to the left and a little farther onwards, the woods from whence about six in the afternoon Blucher's army was seen advancing. To the right and a little onward, about the distance of two or three hundred yards, is the Hoogemont [sic]. But the house is hid by the brow of the ridge, and even when we got so far on the road as la Belle Alliance, though the land rises all [238] the way to the place from la Haye Sainte, we could not see it owning to its being masked by trees. A considerable way from la Belle Alliance, perhaps one and a half miles, on a commanding ridge which from Gordon's monument bounds the horizon on the right, in the wood from which Blucher emerged, does at the same distance, but on much lower ground on the left, stand the Observatory among some scattered trees, from which Buonaparte was seen to examine the ground and the position of the Allied army. Fred says that Observatory was standing when he came in a part from Brussels about [blank] days after the battle to see the place.

The landlords says that so early as half past five, and before the Prussians were descried, many French soldiers an even officers came flying through Jenappe in great disorder. He says Buonaparte had at first meant to sleep at his house on the 17th, but afterwards changed his mind and went to some other quarters. The Duke of Wellington was at his house in the course of the morning of the 16th. We did not see Buonaparte's guide (as Fred had), but according to the landlord, when Buonaparte first saw the Prussians he asked the guide who they were, and when he said, "the Prussians," Buonaparte said, "*Cela est impossible, c'est le corps de* — [*sic*]," having no lancers with him), and that on receiving this intelligence he grew as pale as a sheet, and said, *"Alors tout est perdu,"* or some such expression.[105]

29 October 1818 Lord Palmerston writes to his sister:

My dear Elizabeth, — We reached Valenciennes, and saw the grand review on Friday 23rd and the inspection of the Russians on Thursday 22nd. It is needless to say that both, but especially the grand review, were magnificent sights, and that we were gratified beyond measure. Fred. Ponsonby lent us two troop horses, which carried us remarkably well. On Saturday went on to Maubeuge, a dirty filthy hole, fit only for a Russian army, but I wonder that "Woronzow should not have managed better for himself. We were put into an unoccupied and unfurnished building, out of which a Russian major had been turned to make room for us, and every civility was offered us by two servants who spoke no language but their mother tongue, and wanted only to be tatooed and covered with a mat to pass for South Sea Islanders. Woronzow gave us a very good ball in the evening, at which the Emperor and King of Prussia and Duke of Wellington were present.

On Sunday we started soon after daybreak, and got on to Sedan by three o'clock the following morning. We travelled very slow, for the Russian artillery drivers had such an invincible affinity for ditches, into one of which we actually descended, and just stopped upon the brink of several, that we soon discarded them, and took to the French post; but the horses were always either tired or engaged, and we worked our way slowly on by means of cart-horses and plough boys. Sedan we found a comfortable quarter in the Duke's house, and on Monday went to see the Prussian review on the plain of Donchery, about three or four miles to the westward of the town. At half-past two we dined with the king, and went to a ball in the theatre. The dinner was in a riding-house, very neatly fitted up with the Russia duck prepared for the soldiers' trousers, and the scarlet cloth of which their trousers are made, and the ball-room was ornamented with the same materials, none of which were cut so as to be less useful afterwards.

The Prussian troops amounted to about 25,000, and made a very pretty review. They are in most respects of dress and discipline in imitation of the Russians, but with a great deal of [85] their steadiness they combine much of our quickness and activity, and seem a more manageable army.

We did not leave Sedan till near ten o'clock on Tuesday 27th, and got on very slowly, as there were swarms of Grand Dukes and Generals, &c., travelling the same road, who greatly interfered with our motions. However, we reached Namur about four in the afternoon next day. The fortress now making there is on the top, of a hill, 400 feet from the level of the river. It will be strong, but I did not like to hear the engineer who superintended the works expatiate so much as he did upon the advantage of some works ' pour encourager la garnison, and the aptitude of others *'pour faire peur à l'ennemi*.' I am afraid our allies the Belgians want much of that 'spirit never to submit or yield' which is necessary to enable them successfully to defend their territory. "We slept at Namur, and came on to this place to-day, seeing Quatre Bras and Waterloo in our way. By the assistance of a good plan and description, and some peasants we met on the ground, we satisfied ourselves completely about Waterloo; walked over the position of our army, picked some bullets out of the orchards of La Haie [sic] Sainte and Houogomont, cut a bundle of sticks at the latter enough to beat clothes with during the rest of our lives, bought a French sword which probably never saw the battle, and came on here by eight this evening.

During the next few years we heard little of Palmerston in Parliament. He seems to have preserved an absolute silence awhile the repressive measures adopted by Lord Liverpool were being forced upon the country. He was, however, very active in the world of fashion, was considered a dandy, and one of the leading lights of the famous Almack's. It is worth a passing remark that Lady Cowper, afterwards destined to become Lady Palmerston, was at this time one of the most assiduous of the lady patronesses who ruled that circle of fashion. In the following extract from a letter of Lord Palmerston to his brother describing the Westminster Election at which the Whig candidate — William Lamb — after- wards Lord Melbourne, and brother of Lady Cowper, was returned, we find a graphic description of the violence which at that time seemed to assert itself as a defiance to the high-handed acts of the administration. [86] The Whig- candidate had received the support of the Government as against the ' Jacobins,' Burdett and Hobhouse.[106]

November 1818 Accounts of Waterloo and Brussels are published in *The Atheneum, Or, Spirit of the English Magazines* (1819)

'ORIGINAL ANECDOTES ON WATERLOO' From the *Gentleman's Magazine* November 1818

The following memoranda were communicated some by a Traveller others by an Officer.

The Forest of Soignies disappoints the visitant because the trees are quite young and very slender. It is perforated with some intricate bye roads. By means of these a person well acquainted with the spot was conveying some refreshments of a superior kind to the Duke of Wellington upon the 18th of June. When he arrived in presence of his Grace he informed the messenger that the battle was over and bade him to dispense the viands among the wounded sufferers.

A person who had an opportunity during a part of the battle of observing the Duke thus describes his Grace's anxiety he says that he saw him pick up straws from the trampled corn and twist and pinch them with every air of internal agitation.

The Wellington Tree like the Shakespeare Mulberry is sadly mutilated for relics by the visitants. Upon the arrival of English strangers children run out of the cottages with knives or axes to scoop out balls from the trees in hopes of thus obtaining some sous.

When the plough first passed over the ground the toes and finger bones thrown on the surface were disgusting objects. The spots where the dead were interred are still strongly exhibited (July 1818) by a rankness of growth in the com Several of the cottages are distinguished by the graves of Officers elegantly decorated For though the [45] modest professors of Popery can ask us Protestants for Emancipation yet they will not allow our bodies to rest in their Church-yards. One would thus suppose that Protestantism did not consist jo the mind but in the muscles and a man could be a heretic when he was a corpse. The advocates of such nonsense ought to know that the refusal of interment under the circumstances in question is an absolute outrage to the human species for it treats a man as if he were a dog.

A woman is described in the printed accounts as stopping at one of the farm houses in the village of Mont St Jean during the battle to take care the pigs and cattle. It was only a female who from infirmities had not the means of escaping.

The wife of a peasant with a large family died with terror. The Duke is said to have behaved very liberally to the poor surviving husband.

His Grace this summer (1818) ciceronied a party of ladies over the field battle. John Bull's family still visits the spot in almost daily parties from Brussels. Many amusing anecdotes of them are retailed at Brussels. Among these are the following one honest devotee of the great national viand arrived at an hotel but not being able to speak French called out Bring me a Beefsteak. The order was explained to the waiter who served him up one the form and size of a card. What have you got there a frog's leg Non Monsieur. This he comprehended but ordered another and proceeded to the amount of nine. The wondering waiter upon his return to the kitchen shrugged up his shoulders and exclaimed *Ah Monsieur Anglois* he eats nothing but beuf stoke. Another of our countrymen asked what he was to call the waiter Garcon was the reply Having some very faint knowledge of French and not a very clear bead he confounded it with another word of similar termination and called to the waiter Cochon Cochon &c &c ie pig pig bring me &c. This by the way is the appellation which from his person the disaffected French give to their virtuous and amiable Sovereign.

An old wooden chair at La Belle Alliance where Blucher or Wellington sat is exhibited and regularly squatted into by the visitors. Hougomont remains in ruinous statu quo and the walls of the Chapel are inscribed with pencilled names of the visitors. Among these is that of the Bishop of London. A piece of brick from the garden wall is one of the relics brought away by the visitors.

A Belgian Gentleman was asked a question concerning the battle by the traveller. His answer was The English were cut to pieces the Prussians and Belgians won the day. At Ghent the traveller in company with a Naval Officer and his lady was thus accosted by three Dutch soldiers. Tam your eyes you *Englis fis.* Whether they alluded to insular situation or our habits of boxing and meant fish or fist is not easy to decide.

The Officer relates the following: he belongs to a corps of Hussars. It is well known that the French ride mostly upon a walk or a canter they rarely trot and if they do do not rise in the stirrups. They were astonished to see our Hussars leap over a fence and ditch. One of the Cuirassiers like another Goliath faced a regiment of our light cavalry and challenged any one of them to single combat. A private rode out and engaged him The armour and skill of the Frenchman baffled all his efforts for victory. The dragoon after a long struggle found himself wearied in short exhausted and in danger. Ashamed to retreat and unwilling to die if such a fate could be avoided he pulled out his pistol and shot the unexpecting cuirassier. Being reproached for this conduct when he returned to the ranks by his officers and comrade he defended himself by stating the necessity under which he laboured All this was true but if it did not occasion at least it contributed to sanction the massacre of the light cavalry prisoners taken by the French.

At every charge of the lancers by the light cavalry one man in three was lost [46] by the latter Their orders were to parry the lance by the sabre stoop down rise up close to the enemy and pistol or cut him down. Still, it is plain that nothing but a similar weapon can avail.[107]

18 June 1819 Frederica Louisa Murray, eldest daughter of the Earl of Mansfield, visits the battlefield and writes in her diary:

We went to the Church of St Michael or St Gudule to hear the Te Deum which is annually sung in commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo. The church was lined with troops; the service was not so impressive as I had expected but the music was good [. . .]

We then wet off for Waterloo, we passed through the Forest of Soignies and at length arrived at the place of Waterloo. We went into the church where there are a great many monuments to officers who had fallen in the battle. In contemplating these records of the ravages of war and of British bravery, the enthusiasm with which we had entered Waterloo died within us and gratitude for the lives of those friends who had been spared and the hope that for many years to come no such scenes will occur, feelings which remained. [. . .]

We then passed a small inn (Quatier General du Duc du Wellington) where he passed the night before the battle. In this house Lord Fitzroy Somersets arm was amputated. We went to the inn 'Arc Grand du Nivelles' where we dined. We then proceeded to the village of Mont St Jean where we procured a guide; we passed by the farm and stopped on the hill in front of La Hay Saint. On each side of the road there is a monument, one to the Hanoverians on the left and the other to Sir Alexander Gordon. To the left there is a tree near which Sir Thomas Picton fell; in a field towards Frischermont Sir William Ponsonby was killed. Not far from this to the right of the road is the tree near which the Duke of Wellington is supposed to have remained during the great part of the day, as from thence called the Wellington tree. It was much shattered by balls and many branches were carried off as memorials by travellers and they say it was in a dying state when it was bought by an Englishman for 100 F and carried by him to England. The root still remains and we eagerly collected small pieces of it as relics . . .

We saw the farm of La Belle Alliance in front of us and near it the farm of Rosomme where Bonaparte was in the morning of the battle at eight o'clock; he then went for a little while to the observatory and from thence to Trimoteau where he remained the whole day. Our guide told us that Decoster had been taken as guide to Bonaparte was not believed in the country and that a secretary of Bonaparte's had declared when he saw him that he had never been with them. Almost the whole of the field is covered with corn which grows with particular luxuriance, some stalks we pulled up were above 6 foot high. The Chateau of Hougoumont is a sad scene of desolation; the court is filled with the fragments of its walls. The chapel was set on fire but still remains; on the outside the fruit trees were flourishing and the contrast was striking. We went into the garden which is pretty; close to it is a small wood which was a great defence to our troops. After remaining here some time we left this interesting scene which no one who has feelings of an Englishman can witness without the strongest emotions of awe and veneration and of gratitude. The effect it produced on us heightened by the being the anniversary of the day, was such as can neither be described or forgotten.[108]

17 July 1820 Dorothy Wordsworth visits, with her husband, as part of a Continental tour.

Monday, July 17th. Brussels. Brussels exhibits in its different quarters the stateliness of the ancient and the princely splendour of modern times, mixed with an uncouth irregularity, resembling that of the lofty tiers of houses at Edinburgh; but the general style of building in the old streets is by no means so striking as in those of Ghent or Bruges.

[. . .]

Waterloo. Waterloo is a mean village; straggling on each side of the broad highway, children and poor people of all ages stood on the watch to conduct us to the church. Within the circle of its interior are found several mural monuments of our brave soldiers long lists of naked names inscribed on marble slabs not less moving than laboured epitaphs displaying the sorrow of surviving friends. . . . Here we took up the very man who was Southey's guide (Lacoste), whose name will make a figure in history. He bowed to us with French ceremony and liveliness, seeming proud withal to show himself as a sharer in the terrors of that time when Buonaparte's confusion and overthrow released him from unwilling service. He had been tied upon a horse as Buonaparte's guide through the country previous to the battle, and was compelled to stay by his side till the moment of flight.

[. . .]

Monday, July 18th. Brussels. The sky had been overshadowed by clouds during most of our journey, and now a storm threatened us, which helped our own melancholy thoughts to cast a gloom over the open country, where few trees were to be seen except forests on the distant heights. The ruins of the severely [172] contested chateau of Hougomont had been ridded away since the battle, and the injuries done to the farm-house repaired. Even these circumstances, natural and trivial as they were, suggested melancholy thoughts, by furnishing grounds for a charge of ingratitude against the course of things, that was thus hastily removing from the spot all vestiges of so momentous an event. Feeble barriers against this tendency are the few frail memorials erected in different parts of the field of battle! and we could not but anticipate the time, when through the flux and reflux of war, to which this part of the Continent has always been subject, or through some turn of popular passion, these also should fall; and "Nature's universal robe of green, humanity's appointed shroud" enwrap them: and the very names of those whose valour they record be cast into shade, if not obliterated even in their own country, by the exploits of recent favourites in future ages.[109]

1822

Christopher Kelly published the two volume work History of the French Revolution, and of The Wars Produced by that Memorable event (1822). This description of the battlefield claims to be one of the very earliest, though its publication follows on late. The detail of the description follows much of that published by Charlotte Eaton (1817) and Kelly's work may simply be a less elegant rendering. Unlike Eaton, the description is a second hand account.

"A View of the Field of Waterloo, a few weeks after the Engagement"

In the month of July, 1815, three English Gentleman set out from Brussels, to explore the celebrated field of Waterloo. The distance from Brussels to this village is about ten miles, and the prospect on leaving the city is very pleasing. The forest of Soignies soon appears in view, and it has a deep gloomy aspect, which adds considerably to the interest of the landscape. This forest occupies an immense tract of country from east to west, but is only about seven miles broad, where the road passes through it to Waterloo. The visitors naturally contrasted the quiet of their journey, –with its terrific appearance on the day of the retreat of the baggage and wounded of the army; the numbers who fell through weakness or loss of blood; the hundreds who were crushed to death; the hurry the noise, the confusion, the shrieks, and agonizing groans, of the heartrending scene.

The carriage kept the paved centre of the road; the two sides being deep and muddy, as they were on the day of the battle. The whole breadth of the road, including the sides, appeared to be about fifty feet. The trees by which it is bounded on both sides are tall, and kept trimmed like a high hedge; and beyond these commences the wood, in all the irregularity of nature. Here the wounded had crawled, to find a last resting place, and hither the entire population of the country had fled for safety. Several mounds marked the spots where men and horses had been buried. These were rendered peculiarly affecting by the frequent appearance of hoofs, limbs, and bayonet-scabbards, which ad not been sufficient covered; and the sides of the road presented innumerable shoes, caps, and fragments of cloth, which were not hardly distinguishable from the mud. [109] The village and church of Waterloo were now in sight, embosomed in a recess of the wood.

The road was quiet out of the forest; which, whoever, covered the whole country to the east and west as far as the eye could reach. Our travellers proceeded a mile forward to the hamlet of Mont St. Jean, by a gradual ascent of the road; on the right and left of which, the British army bivouacked on the night preceding the battle.

The inhabitants of this hamlet issued from their houses, at ever fresh arrival of visitors, and offered for sale some relics of the battle. Entire cuirassses, elegant carbines, costly sabres, and beautiful pistols, were shewn in succession; together with letters, bibles, pamphlets, songs, remnants of military habiliments, and even the buttons torn from the jackets of the dead.

Here, as the strangers looked around, and contemplated the numerous graves that presented themselves on every side, they felt that these mounds of earth were more awfully impressive than the view of thousands of lifeless bodies. "These hillocks, which frequently tripped the step on crossing a hedge-row, clearing a fence, or winding along among the grass that overhung a secluded path," generally lay in thick clusters and long ranks; betwixt which a black circle demonstrated that fire had been employed to consume as worthless refuse, what had been cherished by parents, esteemed by friends, and fondly loved by angelic women .

The passing gale that shook the branches of the trees, brought with it a dreadful stench; and the foot that startled the bird from its repose amidst the clover, disturbed at the same time some poor remnants of a human being. [poem by Southey ' some marks of wreck were scatter'd all around'

From St. Jean, the road ascends up the back of the ridge, on the height and in the front of which, the Duke of Wellington's infantry was formed in line. The cavalry, at the commencement of the battle, were posted on the St. Jean side of the eminence. The ascent is easy; and, on reaching the summit, the whole field of battle is at once before the eye.

The point whence this complete view of the scene first presents itself,

is truly interesting. It is the summit of the ridge close to the road, overhung by an old picturesque tree, with a few straggling branches projecting from its vendable trunk.

The British position extended on the right and left of the road, for the extent of two miles, along the summit. [. . .]

The tree, already noticed, as overhanging the bank above the high road from Brussels to Charleroi, marks the centre of the British position; and, the Duke of Wellington having remained near it the great part of the day, it had obtained the appellation of "Wellington tree."

[. . .]

At a short distance from this tree, near the road, our travellers saw the farm of La Haye Sainte. The garden exhibited an awful scene of delectation: the hedges were levelled, and the walls broken down. The door was perforated with all sorts of shot, and furnished a dreadful proof of the fury of the attack, and the determination of the devence. This post, after a most heroic resistance by the part to who it was entrusted, was forced by the French and every person within the building was put to death. On entering into the courtyard, the appearance was still more wretched and fearful. The roofs of the dwelling-house and offices were knocked into large holes by bombs and cannon-balls; the windows were dreadful wrecks, the glass shattered to pieces, the frames broken, and the fragments hanging in a most forlorn state.

The visitors next proceeded to the memorable post of Hougoumont, so gallantly defended by the first, second, and third, regiments of British foot-guards, with a detachment of Brunswickers, against the departed and persevering attacks of thirty thousand of the enemy.

Hougoumont was a country-seat, with gardens neatly laid out in the Dutch taste, and extensive offices. A small wood was on the outside, a short distance from the garden wall, which is of brick, perforated in two tiers for musketry, and much shattered with the enemy's cannon-balls. The light companies of the three regiments of guards were stationed in this wood, and were thence driven into the house.

When waling in th garden, where the fruit-trees and shrubberies appeared blighted, and the neat alleys of holly of holly and yew were badly lacerated and deranged, our travellers saw the gardener, who had remained in his garden the whole time of the battle; because, he candidly confessed, after hostilities had commenced, he could not venture out of it.

We have already stated, in our account of the battle, [110] that it was an object of importance to the enemy to gain this post, as, from its situation, it commanded a considerable part of the British position; and accordingly it was furiously and incessantly assailed, but gallantly and successfully defended to the last. Bonaparte himself directed the charge of the French Imperial guards against it; but even though fighting under the eye of their chief, they were broken and repulsed by the British guards. Thirty pieces of artillery played continually over this wood, to assist its defence, while the French directed against it their hottest fire.

All the trees in the wood of Hougoumont were pierced with balls, and, in some instance upwards of twenty had lodged in a single trunk. The strokes, however which were so gal to human life, had done but little injury here. Though the trunks were filled with balls, and the branches broken and destroyed, their verdure still remained. Wild flowers were still blooming, and wild raspberries ripening beneath their shade; while huge offensive piles of human ashes were all that now remained of the heroes who fought and fell upon this fatal spot.

The chateau, upon which the attack was first made by the French, is immediately behind the wood, by the road leading to Nivelles. It was the country-seat of a Belgic gentleman, and was set on fire by shells, during the battle, which completed the destruction occasioned by the cannonade. In the garden behind the house, the orange-trees, roses and geraniums in full flower, presented a striking contrast to the mouldering piles of the ruined house, and surrounding scene of the desolation. Our poet-laureate, who visited the filed of battle in the autumn of 1815, has thus described the garden of Hougoumont,

"The pears had ripen'd on the garden-wall:
Those leaves which on the autumnal earth were spread,
The trees, through piere'd and scarr'd with many a ball,
Hold only in their natural season shed:
Flowers were in seed, whose buds to swell began
When such wild havoc here was made of man;

Through the garden, fruits and herbs and flowers
You saw in grownth, or ripeness, or decay;
The green and well-trimm'd dial mark'd the hours
With gliding shadow as they pass'd away;
Who would have thought, to see this garden fair,
Such horrors had so late been acted there?"

Our travellers now crossed over to La Bell Alliance, which proved to be a hovel of the meanest kind, consisting of four rooms, a passage, and some retched holes up stairs. [141]

[. . .]

Hougoumont was a large farm-house, or chateau, on the right of La Haye Sainte; but the ruin that now presents itself on every side, conveys a most terrific idea of the ravages of war. This post was obstinately contested on both sides. The British were in possession of the chateau and the gardens; and the French troops, under the command of Jerome Bonaparte, made several furious attacks on the place, but were as resolutely opposed. After a scene of the most dreadful carnage, the French set the place on fire, and great numbers of wounded, on both sides, perished in the conflagration.

At this place, as well as in other parts of the country about Waterloo, the peasants offer to travellers innumerable relics of the dreadful conflict. Helmets, cuirasses, sabres, medals, eagles, buttons, and various other articles, are here to be purchased on easy terms. I purchased, for twelve francs, (ten shillings English,) a very handsome sword, which belonged to a grenadier of Napoleon's imperial guard. It is considerably longer than any of the swords used by the British. This circumstance contributed, in the first attacks, to annoy Lord Wellington's troops most dreadfully. After a short pause, however, the British changed their mode of attack, and, by aiming exclusively at tbe arms and legs of the enemy, compelled them to give way. The edifice is now completely destroyed, with the exception of a few out-buildings, and the chapel, the latter of which, to the astonishment of every spectator, is left entire. This chapel is very small, and appears to have been merely designed for the convenience of one family: on the altar is a crucifix, which, from the rudeness of its carving, appears to have been of considerable antiquity.

The farm-house of La Belle Alliance will ever be memorable in history, in consequence of the circumstances which are connected with the important battle of Waterloo.

Although the chateau is in ruins, the beautiful gardens, laid out in shady walks, and ornamented with verdant arbours, are left uninjured. The orchard, which adjoins the garden, was entered by the French, and a severecontest ensued, in which they repeatedly attempted to scale the garden-walls: these, however, served as a breast-work for the British, and the assailants were uniformly repulsed with considerable loss. The garden is protected on three sides by a strong wall, and the part, which was unprotected, commanded a view of Lord Wellington's position on the heights.

ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

[Extracted from the public Prints.]

LETTER FROM AN OFFICER OF HIGH RANK.

Dated Waterloo, three leagues in front of Brussels, June 19, 1815.

The gates of the chateau are literally like a sieve, being perforated with balls in every part. The French entered these gates three times, but never obtained! We gained a great and most glorious victory yesterday evening, and totally defeated Buonaparte's army, and took all his cannon, baggage, &c. &c.!![110]

[27 January] 1828 William Wordsworth writes to his brother of a continental tour with Thomas Coleridge.

RYDAL MOUNT, Friday, 1828.[1]

My dear Brother,

. . . Our expedition answered perfectly. Our route was by steam from London to Ostend, by barge to Ghent, by diligence to Brussels, by diligence to Namur, stopping four hours at the field of Waterloo, up the Meuse (en voiture) to Dinant, and back to Namur; thence by barge down the Meuse to Liege, en voiture to Spa, and by the same conveyance to Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne; thence to Godesberg, two leagues above Bonn on the Rhine. Here we halted a week, and thence up the Rhine, as far as it is confined between the rocks, viz. to Bingen, and down it by water to Godesberg again, having stopped a day or two wherever we were tempted. At Godesberg we remained nearly another week, and .thence down the Rhine to Nijmegen; thence *en voiture* to Arnheim and Utrecht, and by barge to Amsterdam, and so on through Haarlem, Leyden, The Hague, Delft, to Rotterdam; thence in steamboat to Antwerp, in diligence to Ghent, and by barge again to Ostend, where we embarked for London. . . . On our return to the North we stopped a fortnight with John, with whom his mother had resided during our absence of nearly seven weeks; and found John happy in the quiet and solitude of Whitwick.[111]

[1]This imperfectly dated letter refers to the tour on the Rhine, in Belgium, and in Holland, which Wordsworth took with his daughter and S. T. Coleridge "in the summer" of 1828. See his letter to Joseph Cottle, Jan. 27, 1829. Ed.

13 August 1828

Diary of a tour through Europe by Mortimer & Lucy Thoyrs, their visit to the battlefield curtailed, but not without seeing the Hougoumont:

Tuesday Aug 12th . Again Windy and rainy. Waterloo again deferred.
[. . .]
Wednesday Aug 13
At ten we set off to view the celebrated and to us all memorable field of Waterloo. About three miles from Brussels we entered the Forest of Soynies. A thick wood of Beech. The road is paved the whole way, and from the part which enters the Forest is now intolerably bad. On emerging from the wood we entered the small Village from which the Battle takes its name. Here in the Church are several monuments erected to the memory of the brave officers and men who [*f* 39 *r*] fell in the engagement which we viewed with a intent. The are mostly Tablets without any ornament. And are the more striking from their simplicity. In a garden adjoining and under a Willow Tree is buried the Leg of Lord Anglesea and his Boat is shown in the House. A Tablet with a long inscription records the loss and is placed near the Tree. From hence we drove through to Village of Mount St Jean. And on rising a small eminence which was occupied by the British Troops, we came upon the field of Battle. To the right is now erected. A large Mound of Earth, surmounted by a Bronze Lion, of large dimensions. It is 18ft in length and 12 in height and is erected by the Government of the Netherlands Immediately in front is the monument of the Sir Alex. Gordon and another to the officers of the German Legion. A little to the left is a dead tree, which marks the spot, where the gallant Sir Thomas Picton was killed. The rain which began to fall quite spoiled the pleasure of our visit, but we could not have this interesting spot without seeing Hougoumont. Which since the Battle, has been purchased by an inhabitant of Brussels to preserve it in the same state in which it appeared when the engagement was decided. And its ruined and blackened walls, convey the most lively picture of the conflict which took place within its precinct. The Battle marks, and the holes made by the English musquetry to fire from still remain. The chapel is shewn where the fire ceased near the door, and the guide laid great stress upon the wonderful miracle, as it was immediately at the feet of the crucifix – We returned to La Belle Alliance which with the Farm of La Haye Sainte has been so much repaired that no part remains in the state it was in 1815. We came home to Dinner [*f* 40 *r*]at Brussels, much disappointed at the provoking rain which had much interfered with our promised and interesting visit.[112]

I am an idle man and a bachelor, and being in possession of an independent fortune, I need scarcely add that I am fond of travelling. Indeed *ça va sans dire*, for the love of locomotion is so natural to an Englishman, that nothing can chain him at home, but the absolute impossibility of living abroad. No such imperious necessity acting upon me, I gave way to my *oiko-phobia*, and the summer of 1815 found me at Brussels.

The town was then crowded to excess - it seemed a city of splendour; the bright and varied uniforms of so many different nations, mingled with the gay dresses of female beauty in the Park, and the *Allée Verte* was thronged with superb horses and brilliant equipages. The *tables d'hôte* resounded with a confusion of tongues which might have rivalled the Tower of Babel, and the shops actually glittered with showy toys hung out to tempt money from the pockets of the English, whom the Flemings seemed to consider as walking bags of gold. Balls and plays, routs and dinners were the only topics of conversation; and though some occasional rumours were spread that the French had made an incursion within the lines, and carried off a few head of cattle, the tales were too vague to excite the least alarm.

I was then lodging with a Madame Tissand, on the Place du Sablon, and I occasionally chatted with my hostess on the critical posture of affairs. Every Frenchwoman loves politics, and Madame Tissand, who was deeply interested in the subject, continually assured me of her complete devotion to the English.

"*Ces maudits François*!" cried she one day, with almost terrific energy, when speaking of Napoleon's army. "If they should dare come to Brussels, I will tear their eyes out!"

" Oh, aunt!" sighed her pretty niece; "remember that Louis is a conscript!"

"Silence, Annette. I hate even my son, since he is fighting against the brave English!"

This was accompanied with a bow to me; but I own that I thought Annette's love far more interesting than Madame's Anglicism. [84]

On the 3d of June, I went to see ten thousand troops reviewed by the Dukes of Wellington and Brunswick. Imagination cannot picture any thing finer than the *ensemble* of this scene. The splendid uniforms of the English, Scotch, and Hanoverians, contrasted strongly with the gloomy black of the Brunswick Hussars, whose veneration for the memory of their old Duke, could be only equalled by their devotion to his son. The firm step of the Highlanders seemed irresistible; and as they moved in solid masses, they appeared prepared to sweep away every thing that opposed them. In short, I was delighted with the cleanliness, military order, and excellent appointments of the men generally, and I was particularly struck with the handsome features of the Duke of Brunswick, whose fine, manly figure, as he galloped across the field, quite realized my beau ideal of a warrior.

The next time I saw the Duke of Brunswick was at the dress ball, given at the Assembly-rooms in the Rue Ducale, on the night of the 15th of June. I stood near him when he received the information that a powerful French force was advancing in the direction of Charleroy. "Then it is high time for me to be off," said the Duke, and I never saw him alive again. The assembly broke up abruptly, and in half-an- hour drums were beating and bugles sounding. The good burghers of the city, who were almost all enjoying their first sleep, started from their beds at the alarm, and hastened to the streets, wrapped in the first things they could find. The most ridiculous and absurd rumours were rapidly circulated, and believed. The most general impression seemed to be that the town was on fire; the next that the Duke of Wellington had been assassinated; but when it was discovered that the French were advancing, the consternation became general, and every one hurried to the Place Royale, where the Hanoverians and Brunswickers were already mustering.

Strange rumours were now whispered. Some said that the enemy were actually at the gates lying in ambush to surprise the city, and some that the security of the English General arose from his having bought over the French. Poor Madame Tissand, who had risen at the first alarm, was

dreadfully embarrassed by these contradictory sto ries, and according as one or other prevailed, the French Emperor or the Duke of Wellington became the god of her idolatry. The confusion of her ideas produced the most absurd mistakes, and she frequently be gan invectives which ended in becoming panegyrics of the persons whom she did not mean to praise. Annette was silent, but her eye and cheek spoke eloquently; and notwithstanding my own danger, I could scarcely wish destruction to the army which contained her Louis.

About one o'clock in the morning of the 16th, the whole population of Brussels seemed in motion. The streets were crowded as in full day; lights flashed to and fro; artillery and baggage waggons were creaking in every direction; the drums beat to arms, and the bugles sounded loudly "the dreadful note of preparation." The noise and bustle surpassed all description; here were horses plunging and kicking amidst a crowd of terrified burghers; there lovers parting from their weeping mistresses. Now the attention was attracted by a park of artillery thundering through the streets; and now, by a group of offi cers disputing loudly the demands of their imperturbable Flemish landlords; [85] for not even the panic which prevailed could frighten the Flemings out of a single stiver; screams and yells occasionally rose above the busy hum that murmured through the crowd, but the general sound resembled the roar of distant ocean.

Between two and three o'clock the Brunswickers marched from the town, still clad in the mourning which they wore for their old Duke, and burning to avenge his death. Alas! they had a still more fatal loss to lament ere they returned.

At four, the whole disposable force under the Duke of Wellington was collected together, but in such haste, that many of the officers had not time to change their silk-stockings and dancing-shoes; and some, quite overcome by drowsiness, were seen lying asleep about the ram parts, still holding, however, with a firm hand, the reins of their horses which were grazing by their sides.

About five o'clock, the word " march" was heard ill all directions, and instantly the whole mass appeared to move simultaneously. I conversed with several of the officers previous to their departure, and not one appeared to have the slightest idea of an approaching engagement. The Duke of Wellington and his staff did not quit Brussels till past eleven o'clock; and it was not till some time after they were gone, that it was generally known the whole French army, including a strong corps of cavalry, was within a few miles of Quatre Bras, where the brave Duke of Brunswick first met the enemy;

"And foremost fighting - fell."

Dismay seized us all, when we found that a powerful French army was really within twenty-eight miles of us; and we shuddered at the thought of the awful contest which was taking place. For my own part, I had never been so near a field of battle before, and I cannot describe my sensations. We knew that our army had no alternative but to fly, or fight with a force four times stronger than its own: and though we could not doubt British bravery, we trembled at the fearful odds to which our men must be exposed. Cannon, lances, and swords, were opposed to the English bayonet alone. Cavalry we had none on the first day, for the horses had been sent to grass, and the men were scattered too widely over the country, to be collected at such short notice. Under these circumstances, victory was impossible; indeed, nothing but the staunch bravery, and exact discipline of the men, prevented the foremost of our infantry from being annihilated; and though the English maintained their ground during the day, at night a retreat became necessary.

The agony of the British, resident in Brussels, during the whole of this eventful day, sets all language at defiance. No one thought of rest or food; but every one who could get a telescope, flew to the ramparts to strain his eyes, in vain attempts to discover what was passing. At length, some soldiers in French uniforms were seen in the distance; and as the news flew from mouth to mouth, it was soon magnified into a rumour that the French were coming. Horror seized the English and their adherents, and the hitherto concealed partizans of the French began openly to avow themselves; tri-coloured ribbons grew suddenly into great request, and cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" resounded through the air. These exclamations, however, were changed to "Vive le [86] Lord Wellington!" when it was discovered that the approaching French came as captives, not conquerors.

On my return from my post of observation, I found Madame Tissand and Annette busily employed in making a whole basket-full of tri-co-loured cockades. "*Ah ça, Monsieur*!" cried Annette gaily. "*Voilà ma corbeille de mariage*."

I sighed, and Annette's joyful countenance immediately lost its brightness. In the exuberance of her joy, she had forgotten that I was an Englishman, and now blushing, she tried to heal the wound she had inflicted.

"*Monsieur n'aura pas besoin de ce fâcher*," said she in a timid, hesitating tone. "*Si les François arrivent, les camarades de Louis respecteront le bienfaiteur de sa fiancée*."

I thanked the pretty Annette for her courtesy, but whispered that the moment for it was not yet arrived, as the French who were advancing were only prisoners.

"*Prisonniers*!" exclaimed Madame Tissand, dropping a half-finished cockade from her fingers as she spoke. "*Ah! c'est une autre affaire cela! Tims, ma chère*" continued she, addressing Annette, and tossing the ribbons and cockades altogether in the basket. " *Câche les pour le moment; ils serviront toujours en cas de besoin!*"

Alas! there were that day many Madame Tissands in Brussels, and all equally well prepared, "*en cas de besoin.*|"

Between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, I walked up to the *Porte de Namur*, where the wounded were just beginning to arrive. Fortunately, some commodious caravans had arrived from England, only a few days before, and these were now entering the gate. They were filled principally with Brunswickers and Highlanders; and it was an appalling spectacle to behold the very soldiers, whose fine martial appearance and excellent appointments I had so much admired at the review, now lying helpless and mutilated - their uniforms soiled with blood and dirt - their mouths blackened with biting their cartridges, and all the splendour of their equipments entirely destroyed. When the caravans stopped, I approached them, and addressed a Scotch officer who was only slightly wounded in the knee. "Are the French coming, Sir?" asked I.

"Egad, I can't tell," returned he. "We know nothing about it. We had enough to do to take care of ourselves. They are fighting like devils; and I'm off again as soon as my wound 's dressed."

An English lady, elegantly attired, now rushed forwards - "Is my husband safe?" asked she eagerly.

"Good God ! Madam," replied one of the men, " how can we possibly tell ! I don't know the fate of those who were fighting by my side; and I could not see a yard round me." She scarcely heeded what he said; and rushed out of the gate, wildly repeating her question to every one she met.

Some French prisoners now arrived. I noticed one, a fine fellow, who had had one arm shot off; and though the bloody and mangled tendons were still undressed, and had actually dried and blackened in the sun, he marched along with apparent indifference, carrying a loaf [87]

of bread under his remaining arm, and shouting "Vive I'Empereur." I asked him if the French were coming? "

"*Je le crois bien*," returned he, "*preparez un souper, mes bourgeois — il soupera à Bruxelles ce soir*."

"Pretty information for me," thought I. — "Don't believe him, Sir," said a Scotchman, who lay close beside me, struggling to speak, though apparently in the last agony. "It 's all right—I—assure —you—"

The wounded suffered dreadfully from the want of a sufficient number of experienced surgeons able to amputate their shattered limbs; and there was also a deficiency of surgical instruments, and of lint. The Flemings, however, roused by the urgency of the case, shook off their natural apathy, and exerted themselves to the utmost to supply every thing that was necessary. They tore up their linen to make lint and bandages; they assisted the surgeons in the difficult operations, and they gave up even the beds they slept upon, to accommodate the strangers. The women, in particular, showed the warmest enthusiasm to succour the wounded; they nursed them with the tenderest care, and watched them night and day. In short, their kindness, attention, and solicitude, reflect immortal honour on the sex. The very children were seen leading the wounded Highlanders into the houses of their parents, exclaiming, "*Voici notre brave Ecossois!*" Even the national vice of covetousness was forgotten in the excitement of the moment; rich and poor fared alike, and in most cases, every offer of remuneration was declined.

The whole of Friday night was passed in the greatest anxiety; the wounded arrived every hour, and the accounts they brought of the carnage which was taking place were absolutely terrific. Saturday morning was still worse; an immense number of supernumeraries and runaways from the army came rushing in at the *Porte de Namur,* and these fugitives increased the public panic to the utmost. *Sauve qui peut!* now became the universal feeling;

all ties of friendship or kindred were forgotten, and an earnest desire to quit Brussels seemed to absorb every faculty. To effect this object, the greatest sacrifices were made. Every beast of burthen, and every species of vehicle were put into requisition to convey persons and property to Antwerp. Even the dogs and fish carts did not escape— enormous sums were given for the humblest modes of conveyance, and when all failed, numbers set off on foot. The road soon became choked up — cars, waggons, and carriages of every description were joined together in an immoveable mass; and property to an immense amount was abandoned by its owners, who were too much terrified even to think of the loss they were sustaining. A scene of frightful riot and devastation ensued. Trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus were broken open and pillaged without mercy; and every one who pleased, helped himself to what he liked with impunity. The disorder was increased by a rumour, that the Duke of Wellington was retreating towards Brussels, in a sort of running fight, closely pursued by the enemy; the terror of the fugitives now almost amounted to frenzy, and they flew like maniacs escaping from a madhouse. It is scarcely possible to imagine a more distressing scene. A great deal of rain had fallen during the night, and the unhappy fugitives were obliged literally to wade through mud. I had, from the first, determined to await my[88]fate in Brussels; but on this eventful morning, I walked a few miles on the road to Antwerp, to endeavour to assist my flying countrymen. I was soon disgusted with the scene, and finding all my efforts to be useful unavailing, I returned to the town, which now seemed like a city of the dead; for a gloomy silence reigned through the streets, like that fearful calm which precedes a storm; the shops were all closed, and all business was suspended.

During the panic of Friday and Saturday, the sacrifice of property made by the British residents was enormous. A chest of drawers sold for five francs, a bed for ten, and a horse for fifty. In one instance, which fell immediately under my own observation, some household furniture was sold for one thousand francs, (about 40£) for which the owner had given seven thousand francs, (280£) only three weeks before. This was by no means a solitary instance; indeed, in most cases, the loss was much greater, and in many, houses full of furniture were entirely deserted, and abandoned to pillage.

Sunday morning was ushered in by one of the most dreadful tem pests I ever remember. The crashing of thunder was followed by the roar of cannon, which was now distinctly heard from the ramparts, and it is not possible to describe the fearful effect of this apparent mockery of heaven. I never before felt so forcibly the feebleness of man. The rain was tremendous - the sky looked like that in Poussin's picture of the Deluge, and a heavy black cloud spread, like the wings of a monstrous vulture, over Brussels. The wounded continued to arrive the whole of Saturday night and Sunday morning, in a condition which defies description. They appeared to have been dragged for miles through oceans of mud; their clothes were torn, their caps and feathers cut to pieces, and their shoes and boots trodden off. The ac counts they brought were vague and disheartening - in fact, we could only ascertain that the Duke of Wellington had, late on Saturday, taken up his position at Waterloo, and that there he meant to wait the attack of the French. That this attack had commenced we needed not to be informed, as the roar of the cannon became every instant more distinct, till we even fancied that it shook the town. The wounded represented the field of battle as a perfect quagmire, and their appearance testified the truth of their assertions. About two o'clock a fresh alarm was excited by the horses, which had been put in requisition to draw the baggage-waggons, being suddenly galloped through the town. We fancied this a proof of defeat, but the fact was simply thus; the peasants, from whom the horses had been taken, finding the drivers of the waggons absent from their posts, seized the opportunity to cut the traces, and gallop off with their cattle.

As this explanation, however, was not given till the following day, we thought that all was over; the few British adherents who had remained were in despair, and tri-coloured cockades were suspended from every house. Even I, for the first time, lost all courage, and my only consolation was the joy of Annette. “England cannot be much injured by the loss of a single battle,” thought I; “and as for me, it is of little consequence whether I am a prisoner on parole, or a mere wanderer at pleasure. I may easily resign myself to my fate; but this poor girl would break her heart if she lost her lover, for he is [89] every thing to her.” In this manner I reasoned, but in spite of my affected philosophy, I could not divest myself of all natural

feeling; and when about six o'clock we heard that the French had given way, and that the Prussians had eluded Grouche, and were rapidly advancing to the field, I quite forgot poor Annette, and thanked God with all my heart. At eight o'clock there was no longer any doubt of our success, for a battalion of troops marched, into the town, and brought intelligence that the Duke of Wellington had gained a complete victory, and that the French were flying, closely pursued by the Prussians.

Sunday night was employed in enthusiastic rejoicing. The tri-colourcd cockades had all disappeared, and the British colours were hoisted from every window. The great bell of St. Gudule tolled, to announce the event to the surrounding neighbourhood; and some of the English, who had only hidden themselves, ventured to re-appear. The only alloy to the universal rapture which prevailed, was the number of the wounded; the houses were insufficient to contain half; and the churches and public buildings were littered down with straw for their reception. The body of the Duke of Brunswick, who fell at Quatre Bras, was brought in on Saturday, and taken to the quarters he had occupied near the Chateau de Lacken. I was powerfully affected when I saw the corpse of one, whom I had so lately marked as blooming with youth and health; but my eyes soon became accustomed to horrors.

On Monday morning, June 19th, I hastened to the field of battle: I was compelled to go through the Forest de Soignes, for the road was so completely choked up as to be impassable; and I had not proceeded far, before I stumbled over the dead body of a Frenchman, which was lying on its face amongst the grass. The corpse was so frightfully disfigured, and so smeared with mud and gore, that I felt horror- struck; but when, on advancing a little farther, I saw hundreds, and in less than an hour, thousands of slain, I found my pity for individuals merge in the general mass, and that the more I saw the less I felt; so true it is, that habit reconciles every thing.

The dead required no help; but thousands of wounded, who could not help themselves, were in want of every thing; their features, swollen by the sun and rain, looked livid and bloated. One poor fellow had a ghastly wound across his lower lip, which gaped wide, and showed his teeth and gums, as though a second and unnatural mouth had opened below his first. Another, quite blind from a gush across his eyes, sat upright, gasping for breath, and murmuring, "*De l'eau ! de l'eau !*" The anxiety for water was indeed most distressing. The German "*Vasser! Vasser!*" and the French " *De l'eau ! De l'eau !*" still seem sounding in my ears. I am convinced that hundreds must have perished from thirst alone, and they had no hope of assistance, for even humane persons were afraid of approaching the scene of blood, lest they should be taken in requisition to bury the dead; almost every person who came near, being pressed into that most disgusting and painful service.

This general burying was truly horrible: large square holes were dug about six feet deep, and thirty or forty fine young fellows stripped to their skins were thrown into each, pell mell, and then covered over[90] in so slovenly a manner, that sometimes a hand or foot peeped through the earth. One of these holes was preparing as I passed, and the followers of the army were stripping the bodies before throwing them into it, whilst some Russian Jews were assisting in the spoliation of the dead, by chiselling out their teeth! an operation which they performed with the most brutal indifference. The clinking hammers of these wretches jarred horribly upon my ears, and mingled strangely with the occasional report of pistols, which seemed echoing each other at stated intervals, from different corners of the field. I could not divine the meaning of these shots, till I was informed, that they proceeded from the Belgians, who were killing the wounded horses. Hundreds of these fine creatures were, indeed, galloping over the plain, kicking and plunging, apparently mad with pain, whilst the poor wounded wretches who saw them coming, and could not get out of their way, shrieked in agony, and tried to shrink back to escape from them, but in vain.

Soon after, I saw an immense horse (one of the Scotch Greys) dash towards a Colonel of the Imperial Guard, who had had his leg shattered; the horse was frightfully wounded, and part of a broken lance still rankled in one of its wounds. It rushed snorting and plunging past the Frenchman, and I shall never forget his piercing cry as it approached. I flew instantly to the spot, but ere I reached it the man was dead; for, though I do not think the horse had touched him, the terror he felt had been too much for his exhausted frame. Sickened with the immense heaps of slain, which spread in all directions as far as the eye could reach, I was preparing to return, when as I was striding over the dead and dying, and meditating on the horrors of war, my attention was attracted by a young Frenchman, who was lying on his back, apparently at the last gasp. There was something in his countenance which interested me, and I fancied, though I knew not when, or where, that I had seen him before. Some open letters were lying around, and one was yet grasped in his hand as though he had been reading it to the last moment. My

eye fell upon the words " Mon cher fils," in a female hand, and I felt interested for the fate of so affectionate a son.

When I left home in the morning, I had put a flask of brandy and some biscuit into my pocket, in the hope that I might be useful to the wounded, but when I gazed on the countless multitude which strewed the field, I felt discouraged from attempting to relieve them. Chance had now directed my attention to one individual, and I was resolved to try to save his life. His thigh was broken, and he was badly wounded on the left wrist, but the vital parts were untouched, and his exhaustion seemed to arise principally from loss of blood.

I poured a few drops of brandy into his mouth, and crumbling my biscuit contrived to make him swallow a small particle. The effects of the dose were soon visible; his eyes half opened, and a faint tinge of colour spread over his cheek. I administered a little more, and it revived him so much that he tried to sit upright. I raised him, and contriving to place him in such a manner, as to support him against the dead body of a horse, I put the flask and biscuit by his side, and de parted in order to procure assistance to remove him.

I recollected that a short time before, I had seen a smoke issuing [91] from a deep ditch, and that my olfactory nerves had been saluted by a savoury smell as I passed. Guided by these indications, I retraced my steps to the spot, and found some Scotch soldiers sheltered by a hedge, very agreeably employed in cooking a quantity of beefsteaks over a wood fire, in a French cuirass! ! I was exceedingly diverted at this novel kind of frying-pan, which served also as a dish; and after begging permission to dip a biscuit in their gravy for the benefit of my patient, I told my tale, and was gratified by the eagerness which they manifested to assist me; one ran to catch a horse with a soft Hussar saddle, (there were hundreds galloping over the field,) and the rest went with me to the youth, whom we found surprisingly recovered, though he was still unable to speak. The horse was brought, and as we raised the young Frenchman to put him upon it, his vest opened, and his " livret" fell out. This is a little book which every French soldier is obliged to carry, and which contains an account of his name, age, pay, accoutrements, and services. I picked it up, and offered it to my patient — but the young man murmured the name of

"Annette," and fainted. "Annette !" the name thrilled through every nerve. I hastily open ed the *livret*, and found that it was indeed Louis Tissand whom I had saved! The rest is soon told. Louis reached Brussels in safety, and even Madame's selfishness gave way to rapture on recovering her son. As to Annette — but why perplex myself to describe her feelings? If my readers have ever loved, they may conceive them. Louis soon re covered; indeed with such a nurse he could not fail to get well. When I next visited Brussels, I found Annette surrounded by three or four smiling cherubs, to whom I was presented as *le bon Anglais*, who pre served the life of their papa.[113]

At six o'Clock we left the beautiful city of Brussels; our good-natured host, Monsieur Proft, and a crowd of waiters and idlers assembled to see the novel sight of an English party (eight In number) all travelling outside an English carriage. The morning was lovely, and we considered ourselves most fortunate in having such a day for our journey. The view of Brussels from the Boulevards which surround the city is fine, but we soon lost sight of the fair capital of Belgium, which some of us perhaps may never live to see again.

Our road lay through the Forest of Soignée, which is of great extent; every foot of ground appeared to have an interest to the feelings of Englishmen. On the ever memorable 18th of June this road presented a dreadful scene of confusion: the heavy rains which fell on the 17th had rendered the roads nearly impassable, and when it is remembered that this narrow pass was choked up with thousands of men attempting to return to Brussels, horses, baggage-waggon, and the innumerable follows of a camp, some faint idea may be formed of this dreadful scuffle, in which many horses were killed, and some lives lost. At the village of Waterloo we stopped to see the church in which several brave British officers who fell on the 18th were interred.

Few places can inspire more painful, or yet prouder thoughts in an English bosom, that does this same little Church of Waterloo: its striking simplicity renders it infinitely more touching than the most magnificent mausoleum, which could have been raised to the memory of the noble dead who repose within its sacred walls. From the Church our Guide conducted us to the house [23] where the Marquise of Anglesea was carried after the battle to suffer amputation; and in the garden we were shown the monument which was placed over his Lordship's leg, which was buried there with a proper funeral honours.

From Waterloo we proceeded across the field, to the village and Farmhouse of Mont St. Jean, to the Château. The effects of the fearful contest which took place on the field of blood are nowhere more remarkable than at this place, which at the period of the battle was the beautiful country seat of a Belgian gentleman.

There is scarcely a tree in the Orchard which is not shattered, or pierced with cannon balls and shot; some of the trees still bear fruit, and one of our guides brought me some wild cherries and strawberries which he had gathered in the garden smiled, and still where many a garden flower grows wild."

Having spent an hour or two on this interesting spot, we returned to the carriage, and drove to the farm of La Haye Sainte, which was desperately attacked and defended. Near this place the French Imperial Guards made their last ineffectual charge, when they were so bravely repulsed by the British troops, and finally the panic which so unaccountably sized the French, communicated itself to the whole of their immense army, [24] every individual of which, when the cry of "Sauve qui peut" was heard, saved himself by flight.

We made an excellent Dinner at La Haye Sainte, upon eggs, bread, cheese, butter and milk, for which, however, our good hosts made us pay exorbitantly. After Dinner we all set off to walk across the fields to the Mount, which is a large mound of earth, about 2160 feet in circumference and 200 feet high. This enormous mound was erected in 1825; for six months 2000 men and 600 carts were constantly employed, and two years elapsed before this stupendous monument, which is surmounted by a lion 12 feet in height, was finished. It is erected near the spot where the Prince of Orange was wounded.

Having "bade a long, perhaps a last adieu" to this interesting spot, which in future ages will be as sacred to Englishmen as the plain of Marathon to the Greeks, we continued out route to Genappe, passing Quatre Bras and La Belle Alliance on our road. At the former a sharp engagement too place on the 16th, and La Belle Alliance was the house where Wellington and Blücher met in the evening after the fate of the battle was decided.

We reached the town of Namur (which is finely situated on the Meuse) in the evening and took up our quarters at the Hôtel d'Hollande, where we procured [25] fair accommodation. Being much fatigued with our day's journey, we gladly retired to rest immediately after supper.[114]

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Sir Walter Scott visited Brussels about the middle of August 1816, when I had the good [334]fortune to meet him at the house of Sir Frederick Adam, who was prevented by a wound from joining his brigade, though he was able to do the duties of the small garrison there.

Sir Walter Scott accepted my services to conduct him to Waterloo. The general's aide-de-camp was also of the party, Sir Walter Scott being accompanied by two friends, his fellow travellers. He made no secret of his having undertaken to write something on the battle; and perhaps he took the greater interest on this account in every thing that he saw. Besides, he had never seen the field of such a conflict; and never having been before on the Continent, it was all new to his comprehensive mind. The day was beautiful; and I had the precaution to send out a couple of saddle-horses, that he might not be fatigued in walking over the fields, which had been recently ploughed up. The animal he rode was so quiet that he was much gratified, and had an opportunity of examining every spot of the positions of both armies; and seemed greatly delighted, especially with the Farm of Goumont, where he loitered a'couple of hours. In our rounds we fell in with Monsieur Da Costar, with whom he got into conversation. This man had attracted so much notice by his pretended story of being about the person of Napoleon, that he was of too much importance to be passed by: I did not, indeed, know as much of this fellow's charlatanism at that time as afterwards, when I saw him confronted [335] with a blacksmith of La Belle Alliance, who had been his companion in a hiding-place ten miles from the field during the whole day; a fact which he could not deny. But he had got up a tale so plausible and so profitable, that he could afford to bestow hush-money on the companion of his flight, so that the imposition was but little known; and strangers continued to be gulled. He had picked up a good deal of information about the positions and details of the battle; and being naturally a sagacious Wallon, and speaking French pretty fluently, he became the favorite cicerone and every lie he told was taken for gospel. Year after year, until his death in 1824, he continued his popularity, and raised the price of his rounds from a couple of francs to five; besides as much for the hire of a horse, his own property; for he pretended that the fatigue of walking so many hours was beyond his powers. It has been said that in this way he realized every summer a couple of hundred Napoleons.

There was another peasant whom I discovered, an extremely intelligent little fellow, who had actually been forced into the service by a Prussian officer. He was found skulking in the forest, and put at the head of the column, to conduct it, by the best and shortest route, to the scene of action, which, from the noise of the cannon and platoons, could be at no great distance. The little pioneer did his duty; there was nothing improbable in his [336] story; and when I made his acquaintance, I found him very acute, and gave him some further knowledge of the details than he already knew; dubbed him Blucher's aide-de-camp; and set him up, to all strangers that fell in my way, in opposition to Da Costar. He was content with a franc for a course, and soon became a popular character.

When Sir Walter had examined every point of defence and attack we adjourned to the "Original Duke of Wellington" at Waterloo, to lunch after the fatigues of the ride. Here he had a crowded levée of peasants, and collected a great many trophies, from cuirasses down to buttons and bullets. He picked up himself many little relics, and was fortunate in purchasing a grand cross of the legion of honor. But the most precious memorial was presented to him by my wife — a French soldier's book, well stained with blood, and containing some songs popular in the French army, which he found so interesting that he introduced versions of them in his" Paul's Letters;" of which he did me the honor to send me a copy, with a letter, saying, "that he considered my wife's gift as the most valuable of all his Waterloo relics."

On our return from the field, he kindly passed the evening with us, and a few friends whom we invited to meet him. He charmed us with his delightful conversation, and was in great spirits, from the agreeable day he had passed; and with [337] great good-humour promised to write a stanza in my wife's album. On the following morning be fulfilled his promise by contributing some beautiful verses on Hougoumont. I put him into my little library to prevent interruption, as a great many persons had paraded in the Pare opposite my window to get a peep of the celebrated man, many having do^ed him from his hotel.

Brussels affords but little worthy of the notice of such a traveller as the Author of “Waverley” but he greatly admired the splendid tower of the Maison de Ville, and the ancient sculpture and style of architecture of the buildings which surround the Grand Place.

He told us, with great humour, a laughable incident which had occurred to him at Antwerp. The morning after his arrival at that city from

Holland, he started at an early hour to visit the tomb of Rubens in the Church of St. Jacques, before his party were up. After wandering about for some time, without finding the object he had in view, he determined to make inquiry, and observing a person stalking about, he addressed him in his best French; but the stranger, pulling off his hat, very respectfully replied in the pure Highland accent, *' Fm vary sorry, Sir, but I canna speak only thing besides English." — '* This is very unlucky indeed, Donald," said Sir Walter, " but we must help one another; for to tell you the truth, Fm not good at any other tongue but the*English, or rather, the [338] Scotch'— “Oh, dear, maybe,” replied the Highlander, "you are a countryman, and ken my master Captain Cameron of the 79th, and could tell me whare he lodges. I'm just cum in. Sir, frae a place they ca' Machlin, and ha' forgotten the name of the captain's quarters; it was something like the Laborer" — '* I can, I think, help you with this, my friend," rejoined Sir Walter. '* There is an inn just opposite to you, (pointing to the Hotel de Grande Laboreur:) I dare say that will be the captain's quarters;" and it was so. I cannot do justice to the humour with which Sir Walter recounted this dialogue.

Conscious of possessing great talents, and sensible of the fame he had acquired in Spain, Wellington was anxious to wipe away the stain of a surprise on the opening of the campaign. Blucher's assurances, also, that he would reach Mont St. Jean on the 18th, together with the confidence of the British general in the steadiness of his troops and the strength of his position, induced him to determine on hazarding an engagement with an army flushed with victory, led on by the conquerors of Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena and of Friedland. Beside, he might calculate the chances that were in his favour: the veteran [28] troops of France had perished on the banks of the Niemen; many of the marshals had deserted, and the elements seemed to favour the English. The British order of battle extended in a semicircle along the Nivelle road, and crossed the road from Charleroy to the small farmhouse of Papillotte: an inclined plane covered with mire produced by two days rain, formed a glacis almost inaccessible. The right was protected by the old chateau of **Goumont,** surrounded by a brick wall, having an old orchard, a dike and a thick hedge round it; six batteries, on a hill behind it, swept all the approaches; and without carrying this post, which was sunk under the hill, it was impossible to approach the British right. To the maintenance of this outpost Wellington attached the utmost importance. It protected his right, and in case of disaster, secured his retreat to Halle. The centre extended along the road from Nivelle, the ground forming a covered way; the left crossed the Charleroy road in the direction of Wavre: both were covered by a farm-house and hedge close to the road to Charleroy (La Haie Sainte), which was not so strong or large as Goumont, but still of incalculable importance, in stopping the advance of the French, maintaining the possession of the high road to Charleroy, and facilitating the advance of artillery and charges of cavalry. The rules of war should have directed the attack in the first instance against La Haie Sainte – carried that post – and then have endeavoured to break the left and centre of the British – carried the heights of Mont St. Jean, and forced the retreat of the English in the direction of Halle and Ghent. The road to Brussels would have been thus opened to the French, while the English and Prussian armies would have been separated. By some [29] unaccountable mistakes the French commenced the attack on Goumont. The English artillery from the hills in the rear and the musquetry from behind the old walls of the castle carried death and destruction into the ranks of the foe, whilst the fire of the French against an enemy concealed by hedges and covered by a parapet, was exhausted in harmless vollies that flew over or were deadened by walls ten feet high. The bravery of the French carried the orchard and ditch, but the wall was impregnable, and they were ultimately repulsed with immense loss. They returned with fresh troops, again carried the orchard, and were again driven back, when Napoleon, at length apprized of the strength of Goumont, ordered it to be burned. Shells were thrown with unerring precision, and almost the whole building its garrison and all the wounded, were destroyed in the conflagration; the latter, if removed, as they ought to have been, to the rear of the Nivelle road, might have been saved from this exterminating bombardment. We were shown a small chapel that escaped, and superstition ascribed it to the sanctity of the place. A fresh garrison still maintained this post, nothing but scaling ladders could have carried it. During this murderous conflict, Napoleon observed on his right at the distance of six miles, the corps of Bulow advancing from the heights of St. Lambert. Grouchy, apprized of this movement, remained paralyzed and im moveable in his position at Gomblou, ten miles in the rear. An order from Bonaparte to advance never reached him: treachery had suppressed the despatches. [30] [. . .]

Thus terminated a conflict that changed the fortunes of Europe and of which innumerable discordant and contradictory accounts have been given.

Few traces remain of the ravages of this destructive engagement. The trees shattered by the cannon-shot have been all cut down but the outward wall of Goumont, bearing the marks of the inoperative fire of the French, with its ditch, orchard, and hedge, attest its almost impenetrable position. The platform at Mont St. Jean no longer manifests its superior elevation, for the earth has been dug away to the depth of six feet, saturated with the blood of 40,000 men, for the purpose of rearing the adjoining mound. If the blood of so many heroes could command sympathy, this monument of Belgic vanity might last, but the first shock between France and the northern powers will level it to the ground. A walk of near ten miles from Waterloo to Mont St. Jean and back again on a day of intense heat was compensated by the information we acquired, and the fatigue was lessened by contrast with the toil and sufferings of so many gallant spirits on the same ground twenty years before.

In taking a last view we could not but sit down in sorrowful

reflection over the mad ambition and the insane policy of sovereigns. They sacrificed their subjects and wasted their strength to restore legitimacy and impose on the French nation a detested dynasty. Thousands were afterwards squandered in forming a rampart of fortified towns round Belgium against the mighty power which the barriers of nature could never restrained.[115]

August 1832 Thomas Dykes travels the continent and publishes *Travelling Mems During a Tour Through Belgium Rhenish Prussia Germany Switzerland and France in the Summer and Autum of 1832*. His tour includes a tour of the field of batte:

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with Nature's tear drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over, the unreturning brave Byron.

We were seated at six o clock in a voiture on the road to Waterloo. At this early hour the fruit and vegetable market, through which we passed, was worth seeing, being thronged with peasantry, and well supplied with the various articles.

Our road, after leaving the suburbs, ran through the Forest of Soigney, a branch of the ancient forest of Ardennes; and while we travelled along it, we could not avoid imagining the events connected with it, previous to and after: the battle the rolling [10] of the artillery-carriages, the hallooing of the soldiery, the galloping of the squadrons, the flight of the peasantry, the flashing of bayonets and accoutrements, must have created a scene the most impressive. Passed through the village of Waterloo, and breakfasted at Mont St. Jean where we engaged a cicerone.

A walk over the field of Waterloo is an era in an Englishman's life; for here was gained that victory which purchased the ultimate peace of Europe, humbled an ambitious tyrant, and secured the freedom of our homes and altars: here, too, lie the mouldering relics of our friends and kindred, who died fighting for a holy cause, and whose only shrouds were the halos of glory. Bones, bullets, trappings, and various military ornaments, meet the eye in every direction upon the newly-ploughed lands. We picked up several mementos, and purchased others of some old people resident on the field.

There were, standing not far from each other, two trees, known as the Wellington and the Picton trees, from the stations of these distinguished men having been in their vicinities: they are now, however, taken away. The former was purchased of a farmer by a mercenary Goth from England, who hacked and twisted it into toothpicks and snuff boxes. The remains of the Picton tree lie [11] before a cottager's door, where every person who feels inclined hews off a portion. As a part of the army of spoilers, we brought away small pieces of it as memorials. In a few years the misshapen remnant will entirely disappear.

Standing on a part of the eminent ground occupied by the British troops, we commanded a view of the entire battle-field, and our intelligent guide pointed out the different localities. The events of the glorious days of June are known to every body; and the topographical description of the plains of Waterloo has been repeated by so many visitors, that I mean to say very little either of the one or the other. We visited the farm-house of La Haye Sainte, the scene of the murderous conflict between the German legion and the French soldiers; and walked through the barn belonging to it, where the former having dealt destruction to the enemy, and refusing, to the latest, to yield, were, with the exception of one man who escaped, totally annihilated by the French troops, when the fortune of the day gave the building into their possession. The doors and walls bear signal marks of this wholesale butchery. The barn now presented a happier prospect, containing, as it did, the fruits of the late harvest.

Our next stroll was to the summit of the vast mound of earth, raised by the Belgic-Dutch as a [12] memorial; as though the event needed such a remembrancer! As a work of art this monument is very fine; surmounted by the bronze Belgic lion cast from cannon taken in the engagement. But the worst part of the affair is, that a considerable quantity of soil has been taken from that part of the field where the last attack took place, for the purpose of forming the mound so that the original feature of the ground is destroyed. The bodies of the troops lying in the removed soil have been placed in the centre of the mound. The lion on the summit is a beautiful piece of workmanship, and with the pedestal of stone, forms a gigantic work of art. The impotent efforts of the French soldiery to destroy it, on their late march into Belgium, are ludicrous. The utmost their malice could do was to strike off a few corners of the pedestal. The view from the lion is extensive: the tract of country to Quatre Bras, Nivelles, Wavre &c. being well laid open. The soil of Waterloo is of a loose sandy nature, bearing excellent crops, and being well cultivated.

On our return to Brussels we entered the church of Waterloo, the walls of which are covered with tablets and monuments recording the names

of hundreds of our brave countrymen and allies who fell in the arms of honourable death. The images [13] of the Virgin and Child here were very badly painted figures of wax, dressed in dolls clothes' of glazed gingham and tinsel. We re-entered Brussels at two o'clock.[116]

Chapter IV.

Waterloo - St. Jean - Belle Alliance - Monuments- Road to Namur - Namur - Huy - Pensionnat - Cita del - Liege- Quentin Durward - Churches - Chaud-fontaine - Belgian Politics.

Notwithstanding the twenty years, or near it, which have passed since Waterloo was the spot of earth to which all Europe looked with the most lively interest, all my English feelings were as much awakened at the idea of seeing it, as if its glory had arisen but yesterday. Though I am aware that the subject is "somewhat musty" and decidedly out of fashion, yet I must venture to give a few words to it. A mile before we reached the ground, we were addressed on each side of the carriage by men who offered to be our guides over it: women, too, with baskets on their arms containing relics of the battle, came crowding round us, offering imperial eagles, bullets, and brass buttons for [84] sale. One might easily have fancied the event to which they all referred had taken place a short month before. We had been cautioned not to stop at the village, though its name made it difficult to obey; but in fact, the battle-ground is too far from Waterloo to permit its being reached from thence by a walk. We therefore persuaded our coachman, though not very easily, to take us on to Mont St. Jean, a little hamlet of the same parish, nearly a league farther, in which are several detached farms; and in the fields surrounding these was lost and won the most important battle that ever was fought. On arriving at this hamlet, we found, contrary to the assurances of our driver, a very decent little inn, close to all the objects we wished to examine, and immediately accepted the services of a guide, recommended by our host, to lead us among them. We could not have fallen into better hands: he was sixteen years old when the engagement took place; and had been an active agent in the scenes which followed it. He was employed, as he told us, for many hours of the day in carrying water to the wounded; and [84] towards evening had ministered to the wants of the more fortunate; to whom a substantial meal, however rude, was all that was wanting to make them the most contented as well as the most triumphant of mortals.

The weather was intensely hot; and the plain we had to walk over utterly without shade; but this good fellow contrived to beguile the way wonderfully well. I know not whether he had tact enough to teach him that such anecdotes would be particularly agreeable; but he gave us more than one beautiful story of British tenderness, generosity, and fortitude. If, however, our Belgian friend intends to be equally agreeable to all the English travellers who may still pause on their way to look at Waterloo, he must study a page of their politics, which it was evident had not yet been opened to him.

"Votre Due de Wellington était là" said he, pointing to a spot near us; "je l'ai vu, moi, entoure de ses généraux. Mon Dieu! Quel homme! J'éais tout près de lui ici - justement ici - et lui, il était là. Quel homme! et comme tous ses [85] officiers le regardaient. N'est-ce-pas qu'il est adoré en Angleterre? "

My cheeks tingled as I remembered the windows of Apsley House; and I would not have been obliged to tell that poor fellow, in his rusty, *blouze* what he would see if he came to gaze on the dwelling of the hero of Waterloo, for more than I will say.

"Oui, mon ami, oui," was my reply; and if I spoke not truth, the sin will rest on other heads than mine.

In the course of our progress, we were led to the monument raised to the Hanoverians who fell; and to that erected to the memory of Sir Alexander Gordon. But the most striking object on the field of Waterloo is

the stupendous mound piled by the King of Holland over the spot where his son the Prince of Orange was wounded. It is a pyramid of 250 feet high, and employed 200 men constantly for three years.

Considering the sad numbers who breathed their souls out on the same battle-ground, to whom not even a grassy hillock rises, marking the spot where [86] they fell, this colossal memorial of the royal soldier's wound seemed somewhat too predominant. It struck me, moreover, that if living bravery be thus permitted to witness its own renown, it would not be amiss to ask permission of King Leopold for the erection of a statue to the Duke of Wellington. As the thought occurred, I fixed upon the spot where I would have it rise; it was the bit of elevated ground on which he stood when his genius directed the bold and decisive movements which made the conqueror of the world stand aghast. A massive bronze statue on this spot would show well against the sky; and, as my fancy conjured it up before me, methought it was classically draped, after the manner of John Kemble, with an attitude and air which recalled the idea of Coriolanus.

We mounted to the top of the pyramid by steps so rudely cut as to render the enterprise one of some difficulty; but were rewarded by overlooking the field of battle in a manner to give a much more comprehensive idea of its arrangement than could be obtained below. Our guide was a very intelligent chronicler, and pointed out with great animation[87]the points where the tug of war had been the strongest.

The bronze lion on its summit, which was fabricated at Liege, is a magnificent monster, measuring twenty feet from head to tail and looked, as our guide remarked, proudly enough towards France.

After descending from this artificial mountain, which was very nearly as difficult as climbing up it, we traversed the plain in all directions; and, spite of the burning mid-day sun, left no spot unvisited to which any record of peculiar interest was attached.

Not all that has been said and written on the subject - not all the years that have passed since that great day arose - could lessen the interest we felt at finding ourselves standing on the ground whose fame had been so long familiar to us.

Who could be told, without feeling some swelling at the heart, “There, where you now stand, stood your Wellington - here were his officers all round him - yonder was the farthest point to which Napoleon advanced - and it was there he uttered his last command, 'Sauve qui peut !" [88]

The ruin of the Chateau of Hougoumont is, I think, the most interesting point of all. The struggle was there perhaps the fiercest; the battered walls, the dismantled and fire-stained chapel, which remained standing through all the wreck, and where they show a crucifix, that, as they say, repeatedly caught fire, but never was consumed, - - the traces of attack upon attack, still renewed and still resisted - all, together, bring the whole scene before one with a tremendous force. In the garden of Hougoumont is one solitary tomb raised over the body of Captain Blackman. He was buried exactly where he fell -

" With his martial cloak around him," and his monument is the only one so erected. At length, sufficiently heated and weary to make the sight of the little inn extremely welcome, we reached La Belle Alliance, over the door of which it is recorded that within its humble walls Wellington and Blucher met, and reposed, on the evening of the ever-memorable 18th June, 1815.

As I sat down in the little whitewashed parlour [89] where the first triumphant, yet melancholy hour that succeeded the battle was passed by the victorious Generals, I fancied I saw them surrounded by their staff, waiting with trembling eagerness to learn who among their brave companions still lived to share their triumph. It was in this room that they heard the names of all the brave spirits who had paid their lives for the mighty prize their country had won; and it was here that the first and most precious tribute of gratitude and of sorrow embalmed the memory of the slain.

We returned to our little inn about three o'clock; and gladly welcomed the shade of its humble parlour. Our walk had altogether been so long and fatiguing, and the heat continued to be so overpowering, that I reposed for some hours before I ventured out again: but towards evening large masses of heavy summer clouds rolled together; and though the air was stifling, there was at least no longer sunshine to dread: once more, therefore, I walked out upon the field; my companions had wandered farther, and I was quite alone. Having passed the morning in listening to the brave but bloody deeds it [90] had witnessed, I almost trembled to find myself alone there.

The spot was an awful one, and no great stretch of imagination seemed necessary to people it; moreover, the heavy gloom of an approaching storm hung upon every object, and a poet might easily have fancied that the air was darkened by the waving banners of a spectre host careering over it. The day ended by the only violent thunderstorm we encountered during the whole summer.

The next morning, being fortunate enough to find vacant places in a public carriage going from Namur to Brussels, we availed ourselves of it to return to the village of Waterloo. It was Sunday, and we heard mass performed in the little church, whose walls are lined with the memorials erected in honour of the brave men who perished near it. After mass we walked with a guide about the village, and visited many spots made memorable by having some connexion or other with the battle.

The object, whose display was preluded with the most ceremony, was a sort of mausoleum, bearing the following inscription: - [91]

"Ci est enterreé la jambe
De l'illustre et vaillant Comte Uxbridge,
Lieutenant-General de S. M. Britannique,
Commandant en chef la cavalerie
Anglaise, Beige, et Hollandaise,
Blesse le 18 Juin, 1815,
A la memorable bataille de Waterloo,
Qui, par son héroisme, a concouru au triomphe
De la cause du genre humain,
Glorieusement décidée par l'éclatante
Victoire
Du dit jour."

On each side of this inscription was a tablet bearing another: that to the right ran thus -

"Cet endroit fut visité le 1er Octobre, 1821,
Par George IV. roi de la Grande Bretagne;"

that on the left,

"Cet endroit fut visité le 20 Septembre, 1825,
Par S. M. le roi de Prusse, accompagné de
Trois princes, ses fils."

No one, I think, can help feeling that this singular shrine is not that on which the names of the royal pilgrims could with the most propriety have been engraved: yet it is the only one at Waterloo which bears records of their visits. There is something disagreeably approaching to the pathos, in passing from the graves of buried heroes [92] to the repository of a severed limb. Had this brave and noble soldier left no other memorial of his presence at Waterloo than his leg, this strange devotion to it would be less annoying. Whoever they were who testified the fervour of their admiration by raising this singular mausoleum, they would have done better, had they trusted, for the recollection of the event, to the fame of the noble and well- remembered firmness with which Lord Anglesey bore his loss: but as the leg itself was most assuredly the member to which the brave nobleman was the least likely to be indebted on the field of battle, some portion of the circumstance and ceremony respecting it might have been well spared.

We dined at l'Hotel du Roi d'Angleterre, and then took the coupe, which we had previously engaged, in the diligence for Namur. We passed by Quatre-bras, where Blucher was defeated on the 17th - the day before the decisive battle; and also by the well-known village of Genappe. About two leagues before reaching Namur, our eyes were refreshed by the first picturesque landscape we had looked upon since we entered Belgium.

A little bright, meandering stream, a beetling [93] rock of mountain limestone hanging over it, with a most Udolpho-like-looking castle in the woods beyond, formed a perfect treat for three picturesque-seeking travellers, who 5 for the last month, had seen nothing but the level plains of Flanders, Antwerp, and Brabant.

All the large farm-houses in this neighbourhood have been evidently constructed with a view to defence. They almost always enclose a square: the outsides of the barns, which form the walls of it, are very substantially built of stone, having loop-holes at regular distances round the whole extent: the gates are high, and frequently embattled, with a huge portal, calculated to resist every thing except artillery.[117]

July 1834 Robert MACNISH, & David Macbeth MOIR. *The modern Pythagorean; tales, essays, and sketches* (Edinburgh: 1838).

START FOR WATERLOO

Next morning, at six o'clock, I started for Waterloo, and was allowed by the coachman to drive his vehicle the whole way. The route presented nothing remarkable till we arrived at the forest of Soignée, through which the road passes, and which, for its extent alone (were it for nothing else), is well worthy of admiration. The circumference of the forest is twenty miles; it stands between the scene of conflict and Brussels, and is the spot in which, on the event of a defeat, the Duke of Wellington intended to have bivouacked his army for the night. On arriving at the village of Waterloo, you are instantly accosted by guides, offering to conduct you over the field: which, by the by, is not at Waterloo at all, but fully two miles off, close by the village of Mont St. Jean. The battle received its present name from the Duke of Wellington accidentally writing his despatches in, and dating them from, the small inn of Waterloo. The French, with greater propriety, call it the battle of Mont St. Jean; in the immediate neighbourhood of which it was fought. The first place I visited was [450] the church of Waterloo–a small neat structure, possessing, in an architectural point of view, nothing particular to recommend it; but rendered an object of sorrowful interest from the number of memorials erected within it to the memory of those who perished in the battle. It abounds with marble slabs, the inscriptions upon which are generally executed with great good taste and feeling. These simple records it is impossible to view without sensations of the deepest melancholy. There is here a concentration of sorrow, which goes like a poisoned arrow to the heart. Grief has accumulated all her stores within the sculptured walls of this little temple; and we feel as if in a shrine, where the memory of heroes was preserved for worshippers of every land to come and do it honour.

THE MARQUESS OF ANGLESEA'S LEG.

Behind the church, in a small enclosed field are interred the bodies of a great many officers, whose remains were brought from the field of battle and deposited in this spot. Some are very distinguished names; nor can it be doubted that the meanest among them was a hero "whose heart lay in his sword", and was the seat of lofty and gallant thoughts. Near this field a quadrangular piece of ground not more than twenty feet by ten with a tree at each corner to distinguish it from more vulgar soil, was pointed out, where not fewer than four hundred bodies were interred. Close by, in a garden, lies the Marquess of Anglesea's leg. The spot is indicated by a small tumulus [451] of earth planted with flowers, and more ostentatiously by a flaming description in French, which seems placed there as if to prove the truth of Napoleon's observation, that there is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous. Having seen the spot which the leg occupies when dead, one cannot do less than take a glance at the boot which it filled when living. This is preserved in the house of the proprietress of the garden, who, in shewing it, takes the opportunity of asking you to purchase a copy of the different monumental inscriptions referring to the battle.

WATERLOO MOUND.

Having seen the village of Waterloo itself, I proceeded, under the direction of an intelligent guide, to the scene of conflict. Passing Mont St. Jean, you enter the field, in the centre of which stands the com memoratory mound: a huge erection, 1200 feet in circumference, 200 in height, and surmounted with the colossal figure of a lion. The appearance of this earthen pyramid is exceedingly striking; it is by far the most prominent object in the landscape, and whether considered in reference to itself, or the great event which it illustrates, partakes in no small degree of the sublime. Though the day was dreadfully hot, and the glare of the sun most intense, I ascended to the summit– no trivial task, even in cool weather, for a pedestrian; and yet I was told that a madcap Frenchman, belonging to the army then on its way to attack. [452] Antwerp, had gone up on horseback – a feat which in the days of chivalry, would have been applauded to the echo; but which Marshal Gerard, his commander-in-chief, was unromantic enough to visit with severe animadversion and punishment. The lion crowning the summit stands on a lofty pedestal of white granite; it is of cast iron, and the work of an Englishman at Liege, by whom it was founded: its appearance altogether is grand and majestic, the height of the animal being fifteen feet, and his length, from the nose to the root of the tail above twenty. Some Frenchmen belonging to the above army were at the pains of mutilating this monument of national defeat, by breaking some of the claws and teeth with a hammer, besides dinting the figure here and there with musket shot. What lengths they might have gone it is impossible to say; but Gerard, hearing of the outrage, had the guilty parties put under arrest and sentinels placed to prevent any other Vandalisms of the same kind. Had these steps not been

taken, it is probable that the lion would have been blown into the air by the irritated soldiers of France; and even the mound itself levelled with the earth. The mound stands on the spot occupied by General Chassé and the Dutch troops several hundred men were employed three years in its erection. The earth of which it is composed was drawn from the fields immediately surrounding it –a circumstance perhaps to be regretted as the ground is thus lowered and the original character of a part of the battlefield considerably impaired. [453]

SHAW THE LIFE GUARDSMAN

Descending from the mound, I visited the different remarkable places on the field of battle; such as the farm houses of Hougomont, La Haye Sainte and La Belle Alliance. The two former are considerable steadings, with out-houses, trees, and a garden attached to each; the latter is a solitary white house upon the roadside, without any of these accessories. Hougomont was the spot first attacked, and the seat of one of the most desperate conflicts of modern times: here the Coldstream Guards made good their lodgement against the sanguinary and severe assaults of the French, who three times gained possession of the place and were as often driven out of it. At La Haye Sainte I saw the grave of Shaw the life guardsman, who, with his single arm, destroyed eight of the enemy. The guide informed me, that he beheld the body of this brave soldier after the breath was out of it and was struck with the muscular development and appearance of vast strength which it exhibited. His heart was as big and as strong as his body. He rushed headlong into the hostile masses, and to the man who had the temerity to measure swords with him. Before him fell the cuirassiers like children: he laughed at their defensive armoury, their breastplates of steel, their helmets of brass. In the battle he received no wound of any consequence, but died from the loss of blood occasioned by a multitude of small ones. He was several times commanded by [454] his officers to retire and have his wounds dressed; but preferring glory to safety, and animated by an heroic love of danger he neglected the advice and continued fighting till he bled to death. Had this gallant soldier been in the French army and survived the scene of his exploits he would have risen to the rank of a general had he lived in the time of the crusades he would have proved a second Richard or Rinaldo. Shaw's talents were not confined to the sword; he was a tremendous pugilist, fought several times in the ring, and never was beaten. Such was the confidence he possessed in himself, that he challenged all England, at a time when the ring was in its high and palmy state; nor, from what was known of his capabilities, was it doubted that he would have proved at least an equal match for any man who could have been brought against him. Peace to the manes of Corporal Shaw!

FERTILITY OF THE FIELD.

The field of battle is, like the rest of Belgium remarkably rich. For several years after the conflict, the crops were prodigious, owing to the vast quantity of animal matter blended with the soil. Even yet after a lapse of nineteen years, the grain on those portions where the dead were interred was not only richer but of a darker colour than elsewhere. This discoloration and profuse growth I distinctly noticed in several places, and was told that it proceeded from [455] the above cause: the fact seems incredible, but it is nevertheless true.

WATERLOO RELICS

The mound is not the only monument on the field; there are two others, but neither so considerable as to attract particular notice. One of them is erected in honour of the German legion, a great portion of which fell in the engagement; the other is to the memory of Sir Alexander Gordon, another victim of Waterloo, and not the least distinguished of its many heroes. While examining the latter, two women came up, offering bullets and other pretended relics of the field for sale. I however declined purchasing, having been told beforehand that, in nineteen cases out of twenty, no reliance was to be placed on the authenticity of these articles. *Ancient* coins are manufactured at Birmingham, and *ancient* cameos and intaglios at Rome for the benefit of the virtuosi. The same system is carried on at Belgium as regards Waterloo remains. Not but that a bullet, or a fragment of a sword or shell, may be occasionally picked up even yet; but this happens so very rarely, that we are justified in looking with suspicion upon any thing which is now *said to be found* on the field of battle.

CONCEITED ENGLISHMEN AND BELGIAN SOLDIERS.

On arriving at Brussels in the evening, I met at the hotel with an Englishman, the first I had seen since leaving Paris. He was a smart vivacious little [456] person; and like most of his countrymen who go from home, seemed to take great delight in abusing every thing he saw, and sounding the immeasurable superiority of Old England. We talk of French vanity, but that of our own country seems quite as remarkable, and infinitely more barefaced. In fact, the eternal trumpeting of their native land by newly fledged English travellers on the continent and the airs which they assume, are ridiculous and almost disgusting. Some of my new friend's remarks were, however, sufficiently judicious; especially those which bore reference to the military character of Belgium. The troops were, in a particular manner, the objects of his animadversion; and I am sorry to say that appearances justified every thing he alleged against them. The Belgian soldier is indeed a poor fellow. Better paid and more gaily dressed than the troops of France, he presents a striking contrast to them in his want of energy, his lounging idle gait, and lack lustre air of indecision. He shoulders his musket as an old woman might do her broom-stick, and seems a living moving satire upon the soldier trade. The Belgian temperament is singularly unenergetic: it wants devilry; and I doubt if under any system of discipline, it would be possible to make even tolerable troops of the inhabitants. In their latter displays of prowess they have failed lamentably; shewing the white feather at Waterloo, and, more recently, flying like scattered deer before less than half their number of Dutchmen. How are such things to be accounted for, seeing that [457] this people were at one time distinguished for their military virtues and a spirit of daring enterprise? I fear we must look for the cause in the constant changes that are taking place in the country, which, instead of constituting, like other powers a separate and independent state has been tossed about from one hand to another till every characteristic feature is obliterated and its very identity destroyed. National pride and national energy go hand in hand: destroy the first, by annihilating the independence of a country, and the last is sure to follow.

I believe that the physical organization of men, and, as a natural result, their personal character, is modified, in the course of time by such circumstances as the Belgian has for ages been subjected to. He is not the same man that he was in the time of Caesar, or in far less distant periods, any more than the Italian of the present day is the Roman who encountered Hannibal on the plains of Zama. Belgium is at this moment virtually a province of France, and Leopold a mere puppet in the hands of the citizen-king, who pulls the wires at his pleasure and makes him dance to any tune he thinks proper. As for the Chambers at Brussels, they are a satire upon representation--the puny echoes of the French court: with a show of independent power, they do little more than ratify the orders of the Tuileries.[118]

28 September 1835

James Forbes's makes a continental tour. Waterloo represents an increasing lesser role in the published accounts. Forbes writes:

Started at six o'clock in the morning by diligence for Waterloo, where we arrived at half-past eight; and having procured a guide, I was conducted over this celebrated field of action, which is now all under a fine system of agriculture. I proceeded to the noted chateau at Hougoumont, which is enclosed by a brick wall, and still exhibits the marks of bullets. About the centre of the field of battle is a large mount, raised in commemoration of that eventful day; it measures 1680 feet in [106] circumference at the base, and is about 200 feet high. On the top is placed the Belgic Lion, said to weigh 48,000 lbs.

On my return through the little village of Waterloo, I visited the church, which contains a large number of tombs, in memory of the British officers who fell in the field of battle.

I got back to Brussels about one o'clock, when I proceeded to the palace of Lacken, and having a letter of introduction to the gardener, from Mr. Macintosh at Claremont, ready access was obtained to the gardens and grounds attached to this royal residence.[119]

I have been to Waterloo, and my soul is sick. The distance from Brussels is twelve miles. The road lies nearly half the way through a very thick and tall beach forest. At the time of the great battle it was much more extensive than it is now. Large tracts of it have been recently cut down, and the process of bringing the land under cultivation, in its various stages reminded me more of what one every where meets with in the newly settled parts of the United States, than I ever dreamed of seeing in Europe. The road is exceedingly infested with beggars, of both sexes and of all ages. And while you are yet two or three miles from the field, you may expect to be met by half a dozen guides, who will almost force their services upon you. One of these ran nearly half a mile by the side of our carriage, till another, whom we had been told was better acquainted with the field, made his appearance, and then the first gave up the chase. As you come a little nearer, women and children sally out with maps, and plans, and relics; and it is almost impossible to shake them off. One wants to sell you a bullet, another offers you a grape shot, another a brass eagle, another a small piece of a bomb shell, and so on. One little interesting girl in particular, who met us with some small trophy, seemed so [337] anxious to trade, that I was vexed with the lazaroni, for having got away all my sous before she came up. The only relic I brought away, was a piece of charcoal from the ruins of the farm house of Hugomont, which was burnt, full of the wounded during the engagement. This I value the more, as I feel quite sure, it was not manufactured for the occasion.

In some respects the field of Waterloo has undergone considerable changes since the battle. A part of the forest through which Blucher brought his Prussians into the action, has been cut down, as has also another forest on the right wing of the British army, where the battle raged with most horrible fury and slaughter. But the greatest alteration has been made by the erection of an immense mound of earth very near the British centre. To build this pyramid, which is nearly one third of a mile in circumference at the base, and about two hundred feet high, the ground has been taken away, to the depth of several feet, for a great distance, so as to reduce the most commanding point of Wellington's position to a dead level. This, it is said, military men regard as a kind of sacrilege which they will not soon forget, nor forgive.

At first, I felt a little inclined to complain of it too; but when I came to ascend to the top of the mound, and to see what a perfect map lies spread out before you of the whole scene of action; and especially. When I came to look eastward and westward and northward and southward, over the fertile afld lovely landscape, I confess I was glad the pyramid had been raised, even at whatever expense of military taste. It is surmounted by a huge lion, resting one paw upon a globe and looking defiance upon the French lines. Every one who has the heart of a christian or a philanthropist within him, will readily conceive, that as I stood over this grave-yard of two mighty armies, and [338] looked first at the ground, and then at the plan of the battle, I was oppressed by such a throng of rushing thoughts, as can never be adequately expressed, and that when I descended from this watchtower of death, and walked slowly away, I could not help exclaiming, O Lord, what is man ? What is he in the boundlessness of his ambition — in his wrath — in the pride of his power — in his cruelty to his own flesh, and in his contempt of the law of his God.

As this is my country's birthday — and while I am here, a perfect stranger to every human being around me, and no voice of praise or gladness salutes my ears, how different is it in the “land of the free.” How many millions of bright faces and rejoicing hearts and glorious remembrances are there! Would that I could spend the day with my friends on that loved soil; not amid the roar of cannon, or the deafening shouts of inebriate and boisterous mirth — but in those patriotic congratulations and devout thanksgivings, which religion sanctions, and which duty demands of a christian people. But the great ocean is between us. Here I am alone in the midst of monarchical institutions, of strange faces and strange tongues. Thus circumstanced, I know not how better to spend a few moments more profitably, than in moral reflections upon the field of Waterloo.

And is this the very spot on which the most remarkable man of his age staked his diadem, and in the defence of which so many thousands of the bravest of the brave poured out their blood? it true history, or is it fable, that I have so often read? How calm and peaceful is every thing now, as if the breath of mortal strife had never caused so much as a leaf to tremble!

How benign is the radiance which looks down upon it to-day! Did the instruments of death ever flash in beams so bright? Did the sun of Waterloo ever [339] mourn in sackcloth over the carnage of a great battle? Now in conscious security, the peasantry are here at their work. The ripening harvest is here and soon will the reapers be here to gather it in, and return with "joy, bringing their sheaves with them." But Aceldama is the proper name of this field. For here two mighty armies met, steel to steel. Here, flying from rank to rank, went forth the dreadful note of preparation; and the war horse "pawed in the valley, and went on to meet the armed men." Here broke forth "the thunder of the captains, and the shouting, and here were the garments rolled in blood." Here was the shock of those veterans, who had conquered Europe on one side, and of those lion hearts which, from the cliffs of their own little island, had bid defiance to the conqueror on the other. Here raged, from hour to hour, of awful uncertainty, that iron storm, which threatened to beat down every living thing into the dust. Here thousands upon thousands fell, to rise no more. From this gory field, went up the voices of the wounded and the dying, and entered into the ears of Him who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Here the victor in a hundred battles, played his last game. Here at the close of that day, the star of Napoleon went down "in the blackness of darkness forever."

"It was a glorious battle!" so said the warrior — so said the politician — so said the moralist — so said the republican — so said the christian — so said the united voice of Europe and America. But as a christian, as a philanthropist, as a man, I protest against this decision. Before heaven and earth I protest against it. — There is no true glory in slaying forty thousand men in one day, and maiming as many more. That terrible battle ought never to have been fought. Does any one meet me here and say it was necessary? — [340]

Who, I demand, created that necessity? Nothing but human depravity could ever have made such a battle necessary. I do not undertake to decide where the guilt lay. That is quite another question. But war is an incarnate demon. War is wholesale murder, and it is impossible for murder to come from him who hath said, "thou shalt not kill." The field of Waterloo ought never to have been heard of by the civilized world; and were the principles of the Christian religion to control the councils of states and kingdoms no such murderous conflict would ever again disgrace the pages of history.

But still, it was a glorious victory! It was glorious to be wounded there, to die there; and to be buried there, was to sleep in the bed of glory! It was glorious intelligence that flew from nation to nation, from continent to continent! Yes it was as glorious as the slaughter of forty thousand men could make it! For when the news reached England, as I well remember to have read in the papers, the Park and Tower guns were fired, and there was great public feasting and rejoicing throughout the land. Yes there was a flood of glory. Was there nothing else? Where was the widows and parents and sisters and orphans of those who were slaughtered at Waterloo? Could the roar of cannon, and the ringing of bells assuage their grief? Could the general rejoicing bring back their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers? Glorious as that great victory was in the eyes of the nation, it was tears and agony and death to the bereaved.

"Is war then, never justifiable?" One thing is certain it could never take place, were the great law of love to be recognized as the universal law of nations. No battle was ever fought, or ever will be, without involving the guilt of murder. It may be on one side or on both? but the stain of blood guiltiness is certainly [341] there, and no rivers can wash it out. How fearful then, must be the responsibility of whetting the sword upon a point of honor, or making aggressive war under any circumstances whatever. And how will those; professed disciples of the Prince of Peace, who either foment, or justify, or cherish a war spirit, meet him in the great day ?

But hark! what sound is it that breaks over the field of Waterloo ? Look! what heaving of the earth! No— I anticipate. I hear no voice as yet— -I see no moving of the sleeping dust. But the trumpet mil sound over this field of blood, and the dead will awake. All the thousands that lie buried here will come forth from their graves, and will be summoned to the judgment bar. Officers and common soldiers must hear and obey the summons alike. And at the same bar will they meet all those who kindled the war in which they perished. Kings, privy counsellors, military commanders, will all be there. And I have the most solemn conviction, that before that dread tribunal, every mortal wound at Waterloo will be held and adjudged as a clear case of murder, the guilt of which must rest somewhere. In whose skirts, or in the skirts of how many, the blood of that most bloody day will be found, it belongs to no mortal absolutely to decide; but the Judge will know, and when the final sentence comes to be pronounced, the universe will know. O, how fearful a thing will it be, under such circumstances, to "fall into the hands of the living God."[120]

1836 John Murray's first edition of a *A hand-book for travellers on the continent*. A popular guide for the British travellers, constantly revised and republished in new additions. The tour of the field of battle is included as part of Routes 23 and 24, and as a sole tour as Route 25:

ROUTE XXV.
BRUSSELS TO AIX LA CHAPELLE, BY WATERLOO, NAMUR, LIEGE, AND SPA.

Waterloo is now nearly joined to *Mont St. Jean,* a long straggling village, once almost a mile from it, and lying on the edge of the field of battle.

Here the road divides: the branch on the right leads to Nivelles; the other, continuing straight on, is the high road to Genappe and Namur. Travellers not strong a-foot ought not to leave their carriage at Waterloo, or even at Mont St. Jean, as it is still a mile short of the centre of the field, and this mile will considerably increase the long walk which they must at any rate take in order to see the ground to advantage. It is more prudent to drive on to La Bell Alliance, and then to send back the carriage to Mont St. Jean, where there is a decent little inn, to await their return. If the traveller intended to proceed on to Namur and not return to Brussels, the carriage must stop at La Belle Alliance, which is a sorry kind of public-house.

Leaving the village of Mont St. Jean, the road reaches an open country, uninclosed, and almost entirely with-out trees; it ascends a gentle rise, and passes the large farm house with offices called Ferme de Mont St. Jean, which during the battle was filled with wounded, and served as a sort of hospital. The Mound surmounted by the *Belgic Lion*, by far the most conspicuous object in the field of Waterloo, now appears in sight. It marks the spot which may be considered the centre of the conflict.

On arriving at the end of this ascent, the traveller finds himself on the brow of a hill or ridge extending on the right and left of the road, with a gentle hollow or shallow valley before him, and another ascent and nearly corresponding ridge beyond it.

Along the ridge on which he stands the Britsh army was posted, while the position of the French was along the opposite heights. The road on which we are travelling, intersected the two armies, or, so to speak, separated the left wing of the British and right wing of the French from the main bodies of their respective armies.

To render the declivity more gradual, the road has been cut through the crest of the ridge several feet deep, so as to form a sort of hollow way. At this point two *Monuments* have been erected close to the roadside; that on the right ([4] in the plan) to the memory of Col. Gordon, that on the left (5) in honour of the Hanoverian officers of the German Legion who fell on the spot.

Near this the high road is traversed nearly at right angles by a small country cross-road. During the first part of the action, the Duke of Wellington stood in the angle formed by the crossing of these two roads, and on the right of the highway, beneath a solitary elm, thence called the Wellington Tree ([1] in the plan). After being mutilated and stripped by relic hunters, it was cut down and sold, some time after the battle, to an Englishman.

About half-way down the hollow which separated the two armies, and in which the most bloody combats took place, is the *Farm of la Haye Sante* ([6]), close to the roadside on the right. It was at first occupied by the soldiers of the German Legion, and gallantly defended till their ammunition was exhausted, when they were literally cut to pieces, and it was captured by the French, who could not, however, long keep possession of it: a terrible carnage too place in the house and garden, and the building was riddled with shot.

Close to this house is shown the grave of Shaw the heroic Lifeguardsman, who killed 9 Frenchmen with his own hands in the battle. Not far off, on the opposite side of the road, the [143] [map] [144] bodies of 4000 men, intermixed with those of many horses, were buried in one common grave, it was near this spot that the brave General Picton was killed, and Colonel Ponsonby wounded. One of the attacks against the English was led by Ney in person. Four Scotch Regiments were engaged in this part of the fight.

La Haye, bear witness" sacred is it height,
And sacred is it truly from that day;
For never braver blood was spent in fight
Than Britain here hath mingled with the clay
Set where thou wilt thy foot, thou scarce canst tread
Here on a spot unhallowed by the dead.

Here was it that the Highlanders withstood
The tide of hostile power, received its weight
With resolute strength, and stemmed and
Turned the flood;
And fitly here, as in the Grecian strait,
The funeral stone mgith say – Go, traveller,
Tell
Scotland, that in our duty here we fell,
If we now proceed across the valley

and up the opposite slope, we reach the farm of *La Belle Alliance*, a solitary white house, on the left of the road ([7]). It was occupied by the French, whose lines were drawn up close behind it; though towards the end of the engagement, Napoleon in person marshalled his imperial guard in front of it, for a final charge. Napoleon's place of observation during a great part of the battle was nearly on a line with La Belle Alliance, at some distance on the right of the road. In this house, now a poor inn, Wellington and Blucher met after the battle. The Prussians have erected a cast-iron monument ([9]) at a short distance on the left, in memory of their fellow-countrymen who fell here.

A little way beyond La Belle Alliance is the house of Coster ([8]), Napoleon's guide (since dead); and near this spot, a glimpse may be had of the farm of *Hougoumont*, about 2 miles off on the right.

Gros Caillou ([10]) a farm house in which Napoleon slept, was burnt in consequence by the Prussians next day, to show their hatred of their enemy.

The foregoing enumeration of the various localities of the field, has been made in the order in which a traveller would pass them, in following the high road from Brussels. If he intended to turn aside and examine the field more minutely, the following description may assist him:–

The *Mound of the Belgic Lion* ([2]) is by far the best station for surveying the field. It is a vast tumulus, 200 feet high, beneath which the bones of friends and foes lie heaped indiscriminately together. A flight of steps leads up to the top. The lion was cast (by Mr. Cockerill of Liège) from cannon taken in the battle, and is intended to stand on the spot where the Prince of Orange was wounded.

TO show with what different eyes various travellers behold the same object, the following extracts are given, touching the commemorative mound: "there is bad taste in thus seeking to glorify *one* particular wound amidst so many instances of devotedness to death. The great mass of earth too, obstructing the view, and changing the face of the field, is an ill-imagined excrescence." *Boddington's Reminiscences of the Rhine*.

"The appearance of this earthen pyramid is exceedingly striking; it is by far the the most prominent object in the landscape; and whether considered in reference to itself, or the great events which it illustrates, partakes in no small degree of the sublime" – *Notes of a Journey from Paris to Ostend.*

A third critic, the author of the Family Tour, takes a middle cours: –

"The mound and the lion have equally been the subject of ill-natured censures, but would appear appropriate enough, since they serve as once as a memorial, a trophy, and a tomb."

The lion's teeth and nails were mutilated by some of the French troops in their passage to the siege of Antwerp. They would have vented their ill-humor in further injuries, had not Marshal Gerard put a stop to the proceedings. [145]

The present appearance of the field differs considerably from what it was at the time of the battle, owing to the excavation made along the front of the British position, to obtain earth for this artificial mound. The ridge of Mont St. Jean has been considerably reduced in height; and the spot where the duke of Wellington stood is quite cut away; the ground near being lowered sevral feet by the removal of the earth.

From the top of the Mound, it will be perceived, that the ground is a perfect open and undulating plain. The British force was disposed in tow lines along one of these undulations; the foremost line occupied the brow of the eminence, and was partly protected by a hedge, running from Mont St. Jean to Ohain, which given the name to the farm of *La Haye Sainte* ([6]); the second stood a little way behind, on the reverse of the slope, so as to be partly sheltered from the enemy's fire. The British were separated by the shallow valley above mentioned – varying from 500 to 800 yards in bread – from the French, who were posted on the opposite ridge. The situation of both armies was in many parts within point-blank range of their opponent's artillery.

The position of the British from right to left did not much exceed a mile and a half, – "small theatre for such a tragedy;" yet on this limited front did its commander place and manœuvre an army of 54,000 men, a remarkable instance of concentration of force. It was drawn up in a sort of curve, to suit the ground along the heights, and the right wing extended as far as Mirbe Braine. The Rights flank of the centre stood 400 yards behind the house of Hougoumont ([3]), which was very strongly occupied; the left of the

centre was posted at a considerable distance behind the farm house of La Haye Saint ([6]), which stood nearly midway between the two armies, and was also occupied and fortified as well as its small size and the time would admit. The left wing reached to the farm house called Ter la Haye.

The distance between the two farms of Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte is 1300 yards. The French columns could not pass between them without being exposed to a flank fire, nor did Napoleon think it prudent to leave two such posts in his rear in the possession of his enemy; and his first efforts, previous to advancing against the English line, were to make himself master of them.

The Chateau of Hougoumont or Goumont (3), about 3/4 mile from La Haye Sainte, is decidedly the most interesting spot in the field of Waterloo; not only for its importance in the history in the history of the battle, but because it still exhibits marks of the dreadful combat. It formed, in fact, the key of the British position, an the possession of it would have enabled Napoleon to turn the English flank. It was on an old-fashioned Flemish chateau, with walled gardens and farm offices attached to it. Had these buildings been formed for a fortress to resist the kind of assault which they [147] endured, they could scarcely have possessed greater advantages; being surrounded on all sides by strong walls, which the English farther fortified by breaking loopholes in them, through which the garrison, if it may be so called, directed the fire of their musquetry. But, notwithstanding its strenght, so furious were the attacks, and so disproportionably great the number of assailants, that it could not possibly have held out, but for the bravery of the troops by whom it was maintained. The orchard and garden were several times in the possession of the French, but they never succeeded in forcing the enclosures which surrounded the house. This little citidel, though set on fire by the howitzers, and almost gutted by the flames, was bravely and judiciously maintained to the very last by the Coldstream Guards.

Toward the Grove the wall with musket holes
Is pierced; our soldiers here there stations held
Against the foe, and many were the souls
Then from their freshly tenements expelled.
Six hundred Frenchmen have been burnt close by,
And underneath one mound their bones and ashes lie.

At the beginning of the battle, the house stood in the centre of a wood; but the trees were so mutilated by cannon shot during the action, that few now remain. The old house, however, still exhibits a shattered and patched-up appearance; and the walls of the orchard retain the loopholes formed by the English, who, by this means, converted them into a sort of battery; whilst on the outside they present a broken surface crumbling to the touch, from the effect of the French musquetry so long and vainly directed against them. In the little chapel is shown a crucifix, saved (as the peasants say) by miracle from the flames, which, after destroying all about it, stopped on reaching the foot of the cross. It is reported that the autographs of Byron and Southey are to be discovered among the names which cover the walls.

Lord Byron mentions, in one of his letters, that he went on horseback alone over the field, comparing it with his recollections of similar scenes. "As a plan, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination: I have viewed with attention those of Platea, Troy, Matinea, Leuctra, Chæronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mont St. Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little better cause, and that undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except, perhaps the last mentioned."

Though it is not intended to give a full and particular history of the fight [omitted] [147]

. . .

The great concourse of strangers who repair year after year to visit the scene of this memorable battle, as had the effect of raising up in the neighbourhood a number of persons whose profession may be said to vary between that of extortioners, cheats, and beggars. The stranger is their game upon whom they prey. He is first set upon by a host of guides before he reaches the ground; but they though somewhat too violently importunate in proffering their services, are at least useful. He has not sooner escaped from them than he halls into the hands of the relic hunters, a numerous horde who infest the spot, persecuting and bothering him to buy buttons and bullets. The furrows the plough during each succeeding spring turn up numberless melancholy memorials of the fight – half consumed rags, bullets corroded and shattered, fragments of accoutrements, bones ands skulls; but when the real articles fail, the vendors are at no loss to invent others, so that there is little fear of the supply being exhausted. Then there are so many sights; at every step he is pestered to turn aside and look at something not worth seeing, for which he is expected to pay handsomely; an when all this is done, he is subjected to the eloquence of beggars, a most persevering class of

tormentors, who beset every path, in many instance apparently without the pretext of poverty. All this is [148] very disagreeable; it ruffles the temper, and tends to dispell those associations which the sight of the spot would naturally call up. It is therefore as well to prepare for them beforehand. [121]

1838

Charles James Lever (1806-1872) leaves Ireland for Brussels to improve his heath. Lever remaining in Brussels until 1845 and he visits the battlefield on a number of occasions. His observations of tourists and the local guides inform many works including *The Dodd family abraod*, a novel based on a middle-class family taking a continental tour.

Hougoumont and the battlefield are described within the Lever's *The Dodd family abroad (*1854) a, the satirical novel of manners and nationalism which continued in print through many editions. Lever's work, though fiction, records the changed state and attitude towards the battlefield.

Saturday.

Waterloo's a humbug, Tom. I don't mean to say that Bony found it so some thirty-odd years back, but such it now appears. I assure you they've cut away half the field to commemorate the battle,--a process mighty like slicing off a man's nose to establish his identity. The result is that you might as well stand upon Hounslow Heath or Salisbury Plain, and listen to a narrative of the action, as visit Waterloo for the sake of the localities. La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont stand, certainly, in the old places, but the deep gorge beside the one, and the ridge from whence the cannonade shattered the other, are totally obliterated. The guides tell you, indeed, where Vivian's brigade stood, where Picton charged and fell, where Ney's column halted, faltered, and broke; they speak of the ridge behind which the guard lay in long expectancy; they describe to you the undulating swell over which our line advanced, cheering madly: but it's like listening to a description of Killarney in a fog, and being informed that Turk Mountain is yonder, and that the waterfall is down a glen to your right. One thing is clear, Tom, however,--we beat the French; and when I say "We," I mean what I say.[122]

1839 Anna Maria Wilhelmina Pickering records travelling through Belgium with here parents:

We went in our own open landau with four horses; my parents and I inside, the boys on the box, and Mitchell and the courier in the ramble behind. We first went through Belgium stopping to see whatever interested us.

The weather was delightful: it was early springy and everything was bursting into green, and looking most lovely. We halted to see Waterloo and went over the plain. Brussels we were much interested in, but we did not stay there long as my parents thought that, if the King heard of their being there he would ask them to dinner, which would be a bore to them while en voyage and would, perhaps, detain them longer than they wished.[123]

Very good carriages are made here about two thirds cheaper though not equal in excellence to the English MM Jones Rue de Laeken are the most eminent coachmakers Money Changers: Messel 70 Rue de la Madeleine, Yates Mont de la Cour. There are two Chapels in which the English Church service is performed every Sunday one close to the Museum the other on the Boulevard de l'Observatoire Service at the Chapel Royale Rue du Musee at 9 am and 2 pm at the Chapel on the Boulevard de l Observatoire 1 pm and 3 pm The shortest way to England London maybe reached via1 Ostend and Dover in 12 hrs The steamers now go daily from Ostend to Dover. See p 119. To reach Calais by railway takes 8 or 10 hrs. The principal Promenades besides the Park mentioned before are the Boulevards extending nearly round the town the most fashionable and frequented being those de Waterloo du Regent and de l'Observatoire between the gates of Schaerbeck and d'Anvers an entirely New Quarter. Quartier Leopold has sprung up between the Portes de Louvain and de Namur the Botanic Garden near the Porte de Schaerbeck which is very prettily laid out and is open to the public Tues Thurs Sat from 10 to 3 and the Alle e Verte a treble avenue of lime trees by the side of the canal leading to Mechlin which were spared by Marshal Saxe at the entreaty of the ladies of Brussels when he besieged the town 1746. Excursions may be made from Brussels to Laeken [155] A fiacre costs 5 fr to go and return provided it be not detained more than 2 hrs Laeken is a railway station. From the fields near Laeken is the best view of Brussels. T Suffell an Englishman 12 Rue Rabenstein supplies carriages and saddle horses for hire. The Excursion to Waterloo see Rte 24 will occupy about 8 hrs allowing 3 hrs for the horses to rest and for surveying the field. A carriage with [162] horses, voiture de remise to go and ought not to cost more than fr driver and turnpikes included vigilante cab may be hired for 10 fr, is necessary to stipulate that you be taken to Mont St Jean and or what is better let the be to convey you to any part the field you please otherwise you be set down at the village of 2 m short of the most interesting points in the field of battle or compelled to pay 2 or 3 fr extra for farther. The hire of a saddle ought not to exceed 8 or 10 fr field of Waterloo is 12 m from a drive of about 2 hrs The road to Namur and Liege Rte 24 through Waterloo and across the of battle The Nivelles diligence it daily to and fro SufFell runs stage coach daily from Brussels Fare Waterloo and back 5 fr It starts Hue Eabenstein.

MEUSE NAMUR TO MAESTRICHT To Liege 16 posts 78 Eng m The quickest way to Liege is by the through Louvain Bte 26 and to Namur by the railroad through Hal R 28 but the following road possesses the recommendation of passing by and the beautiful valley of the English Stage coach daily to Waterloo. Diligence to Nivelles. Near the village of Ixelles, a good view of Brussels, and of the country far and wide is obtained on which it is a crowded place of resort with the citizens upon Sundays. About 2m from Brussels the enters or skirts the Forest of Soigne. Soignies now much curtailed and converted into cornfields. Byron by poetical licence has identified it the ancient Forest of Ardennes, march of the British troops through it on their way to the battle is by him in these beautiful lines:

> Ardennes waves above them her green leaves.
> Dewy with nature's tear drops as they pass
> Grieving if aught inanimate were grieves.
> Over the unreturning brave alas [162b]
> Ever evening to be trodden like the grass
> Which now beneath them but above shall grow
> In its next verdure when this fiery mass
> Of living valour rolling on the foe
> And burning with high hope shall moulder cold and low.

The forest is about 9 m long and 7 broad (2) Waterloo Inn H de l'Argenteuil. This village on the outskirts of the forest about 10 m from Brussels was the head quarters of the English army on the days before and following the battle to which it has given its name June 17 and 19, 1815. The Duke's quarters were in the Post house opposite the church. Here after 16 hrs in the saddle he dismounted from his faithful steed Copenhagen long afterwards a pensioner in the paddocks of Stratfieldsaye and the spirited animal conscious of the termination of his labours is stated to have kicked out in a manner which had nearly proved fatal to his rider. The moment a traveller comes in sight of Waterloo he will be assailed by guides and relic venders claiming the honour of serving him in the capacity of guide. The only mode of appeasing the clamours and rescuing himself from the annoyance is to fix upon one or other informing him at the same time what will be his remuneration 3 or 4 francs will be enough for his services over the whole field but if this be not settled beforehand he will not hesitate to demand at least double English travellers seeking a guide to the Field may safely resort to Serjt Mun day late of the 7th Hussars who lives half way between the village and the Field of Waterloo. He may also be heard of at the Waterloo Museum formed by the late Serjt Cotton opposite the Hotel de la Colonne which contains some really interesting objects. The best Belg guides are Martin Viseur, Martin Pirson, Jean Jacques Pierson and Jacques Deligne the last and Viseur speak English. The little Church and churchyard of Waterloo are crowded with melancholy memorials of English officers they contain nearly 30 tablets and monuments to those who fell [163a] by the Belgic Lion by far the most conspicuous object in the field of Waterloo now appears in sight. It marks the spot which may be considered the centre of the conflict. The field had been examined by the Duke of Wellington in the previous year In a Memorandum on the defence of the frontier of the Netherlands addressed to Lord Bathurst 22nd Sept 1814 he says. About Nivelle and between that and Binch there are many advantageous positions for an army and the entrance to the foret de Soignies by the high road which leads to Brussels from Binch. Charleroi and Namur would if worked upon afford others Despatches xii 129. Though not a strong position it was the best between Quatre Bras and Brussels available for the protection of that capital. On arriving at the end of this ascent the traveller finds himself on the brow of a hill or ridge extending on the rt and 1 of the road with a gentle hollow or shallow valley before him and another ascent and nearly corresponding ridge beyond it. Along the ridge on which he stands the British army was posted while the position of the French was along the opposite heights. The road on which we are travelling intersected the 2 armies or so to speak separated the 1 wing of the British and rt wing of the French from the main bodies of their respective armies. To render the declivity more gradual the road has been cut through the crest of the ridge several feet deep so as to form a sort of hollow way. At this point, 2 Monuments have been erected close to the roadside that on the right in the plan a pillar to the memory of Col Gordon bearing a most touching epitaph well worth perusal that on the left 5 an obelisk in honour of

the Hanoverian officers of the German Legion who fell on the spot. Hereabouts the high road is traversed nearly at right angles by a small country cross road. During the first part of the action the Duke of Wellington stood in the angle formed by the crossing of these 2 roads and on the rt of the highway at a little distance from a solitary elm in the plan [163b] [164 plan of battlefield] called the Wellington Tree from unfounded report that the Duke placed himself heneath it during action. The Duke knew better to post himself and his staff close to object which must inevitably serve as mark for the enemy to fire at the strength of this story however elm after being mutilated and by relic hunters was cut down sold some time after the battle to Englishman. About half way down in the which separated the 2 armies and which the most bloody combats place is the Farm of La Haye Sainte close to the roadside on the rt was occupied by the soldiers of German Legion and gallantly till their ammunition was when they were literally cut to pieces the French got possession of it 2 o clock from a circumstance which to be attributed to the neglect of officer commanding on the spot were never removed from thence till commenced the attack in the evening but they never advanced further on side, *Despatches* xii 610. A carnage took place in the house garden and the building was with shot. Close to this house a spot is as the grave of Shaw the valorous Life guardsman who killed 9 with his own hand in the battle far off on the opposite side of the road a vast accumulation of bodies of men intermixed with horses were buried one common grave It was near spot that the brave General Picton killed and Colonel Ponsonby wounded 5 Scotch regiments were engaged this part of the fight. If we now proceed across the and up the opposite slope we reach farm of La Belle Alliance a white house on the 1 of the road 7 now a poor public house. It was occupied by the French whose lines drawn up close behind it towards the end of the Napoleon in person marshalled his imperial guards in front of it for the final charge Napoleon's place of observation during a great part of the battle Belgium [165a] was nearly on a line with La Alliance at some distance on the rt of the road. The Prussians have a cast iron monument at a short distance on the left in memory of fellow countrymen who fell here loss in the battle amounted to 7000 it occurred chiefly in the of Planchenoit a village on the 1 the road beyond La Belle Alliance which was stormed and retaken 3 times It has been erroneously stated Blücher met the Duke after the at La Belle Alliance but the fact is that he did not overtake the Duke till he was 2 m beyond the field at Maison Bouge or Maison du Boi on the road to Genappe. Here the Duke gave orders for the halt of his troops In spite of the fatigues of the day he had pursued the French in person till long after dark and when Colonel Harvey who accompanied him pointed out the danger he ran of being fired at by stragglers from behind the hedges he exclaimed. Let them fire away the victory is gained and my life is of no value now. A little way beyond La Belle Alliance is the house of Coster 8, Napoleon's guide since dead and near this spot a glimpse may be had of the farm of Hougoumont, 1 m off on the rt Gros Caillau 10 a farm house in which Napoleon slept was burnt in consequence by the Prussians next day to show their hatred of their enemy. The foregoing enumeration of the localities of the field has been in the order in which a traveller pass them in following the high from Brussels. If he intend to aside and examine the field more the following description may him. The Mound of the Belgic Lion is far the best station for surveying field. It is a vast tumulus 200 ft beneath which the bones of friends foes lie heaped indiscriminately. A flight of steps leads up to top. The lion was cast by Cockerill Liege and is intended to stand on the spot where the Prince of Orange wounded. The mound and the lion have [165b] equally been the subject of ill natured censures but would appear appropriate enough since they serve at once as a memorial, a trophy, and a tomb. Family Tour. The present appearance of the field differs considerably from what it was at the time of the battle owing to the excavation made along the front of the British position to obtain earth for this artificial mound. The ridge of Mont St Jean has been considerably reduced in height and the spot where the Duke of Wellington stood is quite cut away the ground near being lowered several feet by the removal of the earth. From the top of the Mound it will be perceived that the ground is a perfectly open and undulating plain. The British force was disposed in 2 lines along one of these undulations the foremost line occupied the brow of the eminence and was partly protected by a hedge running from Mont St Jean to Ohain which gave the name to the farm of La Haye Sainte the second stood a little way behind on the reverse of the slope so as to bo partly sheltered from the enemy's fire. The British were separated by the shallow valley above mentioned varying from 500 to 800 yards in breadth from the French who were posted on the opposite ridge. The situation of both armies was in many parts within point blank range of their opponents artillery. The position of the British from rt to 1 did not much exceed a mile and a half small theatre for such a tragedy yet on this limited front did its commander place and manoeuvre an army of 54,000 men a remarkable instance of concentration of force. It was drawn up in a sort of curve to suit the ground along the heights and the rt wing extended as far as

Merbe Braine. The rt flank of the centre stood 400 yards behind the house of Hougoumont which was very strongly occupied the L of the centre was posted at a considerable distance behind the farm house of La Haye Sainte which stood nearly midway between the 2 armies and was also occupied and fortified as well as its small size and the time would admit. [166a] The distance between the 2 farms and La Haye Sainte is 300 yards. The French columns could pass between them without being to a flank fire nor did Napoleon think it prudent to leave 2 such in his rear in the possession of his and his first efforts previous to against the English line to make himself master of them. The British army remained during whole day firm in its position and into squares received on this in front and on each side of the now occupied by the Mound furious charges of the French who were on the plateau between the 2 high roads nearly hr firing having ceased on both sides the time of the appearance of the not a square had been broken shaken the British had not swerved inch backwards but were rather in of their first position. The says writing to Lord Beresford 2 1815. Napoleon did not manoeuvre at all. He just moved forward in the old style in columns and driven off in the old style. The difference was that he mixed with his infantry and supported both with an enormous quantity artillery I had the infantry for time in squares and we had the cavalry walking about as if they been our own I never saw the infantry behave so well. Far on the L in the direction of are seen the woods through the Prussians first advanced to battle. The Chateau of Hougoumont or Goumount (3) about 3 ½mi. from Waterloo, 1 ½m. from Mont St Jean and 3/4m from La Haye Sainte is decidedly the most interesting spot in the of Waterloo not only for its in the history of the battle but because it still exhibits marks the dreadful conflict. It formed in the key of the British position the possession of it would have Napoleon to turn the English. It was on this account that he his utmost efforts towards it least 12,000 men commanded by his [166b] brother Jerome were brought at different times against it and the fierce attacks continued with hardly any intermission during the whole of the day. It was an old fashioned Flemish chateau with walled gardens and farm offices attached to it. Had these buildings been formed for a fortress to resist the kind of assault which they endured they could scarcely have possessed greater advantages being surrounded on all sides by strong walls which the Duke himself caused to be further fortified by breaking loopholes in them through which the garrison if it may be so called directed the fire of their musketry. But notwithstanding its strength so furious were the attacks and so disproportionally great the number of assailants that it could not possibly have held out but for the bravery of the troops by whom it was maintained. The wood orchard and kitchen garden were several times in the possession of the French but they never succeeded in forcing the walled enclosures which surrounded the house. This little citadel though set on fire by the howitzers and almost gutted by the flames was maintained to the last by the Coldstream Guards. At the beginning of the battle the house stood in the centre of a wood but the trees were so mutilated by cannon shot during the action that few remain. The old house set on fire by French shells has been entirely removed some of the outhouses however still exhibit a shattered and patched up appearance and the walls of the orchard retain the loopholes formed by the English whilst on the outside they present a broken surface crumbling to the touch from the effect of the French musketry so long and vainly directed against them the French it is asserted mistaking for some time the red brick wall for the English uniforms. The Belgian yeoman's garden wall was the safeguard of Europe whose destinies hung on the possession of this house. In the little chapel is shown a crucifix saved as the peasants say by miracle from the flames which after destroying all about it stopped on reaching the foot of [167a] cross. The autographs of Byron and Wordsworth were once be discovered among the names cover the walls. Though it is not intended to give a of the fight the following additional facts will not be inappropriately here the force which Napoleon brought into the field amounted his own confession to nearly 75,000 54,000 men composed the whole the Duke of Wellington's army actually engaged of these only 32,000 British or of the German Legion has been often asserted and is still by many that the Duke of was taken by surprise at and that he first heard the of the advance of the French in a room. This is not the fact the was brought to the Duke June 15 by the Prince of Orange found him at within 100 yards of quarters in the park at Brussels 3 o'clock and by 5 the same orders had been sent to all the of the British army to break their cantonments and move on (1) of Quatre Bras. A proposal was to put off the ball intended to be by the Duchess of Richmond that at Brussels but it was thought to let it proceed and thus to keep inhabitants in ignorance of the of events the Duke therefore his principal officers to be present but to take care to quit the ballroom as soon alter 10 as possible he stayed till 12 and set off for the at 6 next morning. On the morning of the 16th the Duke having the disposition of his forces across the country to Blücher at being unwilling to trust to any the important point of concerting for the co-operation of the Blücher then promised to him with 2

divisions of his in case Napoleon should direct principal attack against the British fact is important and not generally. Another common error respecting this battle is that the British were the point of being defeated when the arrived this is sufficiently by the testimony of the Prussian [167 b] general. Muffling who expressly that the battle could have afforded favourable result to the enemy even the Prussians had never come up. The Prussian army was expected the British at 2 but it appears Mueller's despatch that it was half 4 before a gun was fired by them that it was half past 7 before they in sufficient force to make any impression on the French rt. At that Napoleon had exhausted his means attack. He had no force in but the 4 battalions of the Old. These gave way on the advance of British line. The story of the having thrown himself into the of a square of infantry during charges of the French cavalry is also pure fiction.

The fertility of the ground on the battle was fought increased for several years after it took place. Nowhere were richer crops produced the whole of Belgium and the corn said to have waved thickest and have been of a darker colour over where the dead were interred in spring it was possible to discover them by this mark alone.
[poem by Southey]

The stranger arriving at Waterloo commonly set upon by a horde of relic hunters who bother to buy buttons and bullets. The furrows of the plough during many succeeding springs laid bare melancholy memorials of the fight half consumed rags bullets and shattered fragments of accoutrements bones and skulls but when the real articles failed the vendors were at [168 a] no loss to invent others so that there is little fear of the supply being exhausted. Beggars too a most persevering class of tormentors beset every path in many instances apparently without the pretext of poverty. In 1705 the Duke of Marlborough was within an inch of fighting the French nearly on the same ground as Wellington His head quarters were at Frischermont and the French were posted across the Brussels road He was thwarted however by the pigheaded obstinacy or cowardice of the Dutch commissioners who accompanied his army.

15 September 1840 Elizabeth J. Knox writes from Brussels of her visit to the battlefield.

We left Spa on the 9th, much to my regret. Uncle Ranfurly has taken a house here for a year. Some of us dine with him every day, and we all spend the evening there. A day or two ago we went by the railroad to Antwerp and spent a very pleasant day there sight-seeing. Yesterday we spent a most delightful day, and I am sure you would have envied us. We went to Waterloo, walked over all the field of battle, had everything explained to us and every particular spot pointed out.

The ruins of Hougoumont are very interesting. We went into the little chapel, which escaped the general wreck, and saw the crucifix at the foot of which the flames stopped. A monument has been erected, and a mound made over the spot where the Prince of Orange was wounded. The French soldiers could not bear the sight of the Lion that was put up on this mound, and when they came to Waterloo, after the siege of Antwerp, they fired at him, and wounded him in the neck. The marks of the balls are still visible. The guide told us that when the Duke of Wellington visited Waterloo he was very angry at the mound's having been put up, as it altered the look of the field completely. He and George IV walked all over it in 1821. The chapel in the village of Waterloo is very interesting too, as all the monuments to the dead are there. We went to the house where Lord Anglesea's leg was amputated and saw the table on which the operation was performed, and his boot shattered and torn. We were told that he came to this house four years ago with two of his sons, and dined on that very same table. What a strange fancy! We came back delighted [114] with all we had seen, and full of admiration of British valour and British soldiers, and as you are one you ought to be flattered. I have been wishing ever since that you might turn out a great hero and distinguish yourself on the field of battle, provided it was any other distinction than that of having a marble monument over you. I hope soon to hear from you; your next letter by rights ought to be to me.[124]

2 May 1843 Lieutenant T. E. Knox enters into his journal:

Rode to Waterloo with Stuart. Saw the Church there with several monuments to different officers. Rode on to Mont St Jean, put up our horses at the Hotel des Colonnes and walked to the field, where in order to get rid of the importunities of the relic sellers, we bought a few which were probably not genuine. We saw the monuments to Sir Alexander Gordon and to the Hanoverian officers at the roadside. [192] Walked on to Hougoumont where we spent half an hour. This is about the only part of the field much in the same state as it was left after the battle, being still in ruins, and covered with marks of shot. Rode home through the forest of Soignies, having spent a most agreeable day. Dined with the Tyntes."[125]

1843 John Brown writes for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

About two miles out of Oxford, on the C—— road, if any one takes the trouble to turn up a narrow lane, and then follow a footpath by the side of the canal, he will come to one of the most curious-looking farmhouses that he (or at least I) ever met with. It is a large rambling uninhabited-looking place; the house, as is not unusual, forming one side of a square enclosure, of which the barns and outhouses make up the rest. The high blank walls of these latter, pierced only here and there by two or three of the narrowest possible lancet-holes, give it something the air of a fortification. Indeed, if well garrisoned, it would be almost as strong a post as the Chateau of Hougoumont; with this additional advantage, that it has a moat on two sides of it, and a canal, only divided from it by a narrow towing-path, on a third. The front (for it has a front, though, upon my first visit, it took me some time to find it, it being exactly on the opposite side to the approach at present in use, and requiring two pretty deep ditches to be crossed, in order to get at it from the direction)—the front only has any regular windows; and of these, most of the largest are boarded up, (some, indeed, more substantially closed with brick and mortar) in order to render it as independent as possible of the glazier and the assessor of taxes. There is a little bridge, very much decayed, thrown across the narrow moat to what was, in former days, the main entrance; but now the door was nailed up, the bridge ruinous, and the path leading to it no longer distinguishable in the long rank grass that covered the wet meadows upon which the house looked out. It was a place that filled you involuntarily with melancholy feelings; it breathed of loneliness and desolation, changed times and fallen fortunes. I never beheld it but I thought of Tennyson's "Mariana in the moated Grange"—

"Unlifted was the clicking latch,
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated Grange."[126]

1849 GUIDEBOOK: Caroline Matilda Kirkland publishes for the American market: *Europe from the West* which includes a tour of the Waterloo battlefield:

BRUSSELS AND WATERLOO

We passed Antwerp to come hither, intending to return to the quainter and more antique city to spend Sunday. Brussels has all along been a point with us, for we have had what we called an intention to return to Paris from here. But we are so near England - the weather is becoming so autumnal - Paris has such an insurrectionary reputation, and has suffered so much in interest for the stranger by her recent changes, that when the moment for final decision arrives we determine to return from Belgium to England - giving what little time we may yet spare, to [269] the mother country. I would not have believed, before I left New York, that I would even acquiesce in such a decision; but the Paris of our five days there was so different from the Paris of my imagination, that I have scarce a regret in passing it thus. This is no doubt to be ascribed, in no small measure, to the weariness of spirit which a tour through Europe occasions. The mind is full-fed, and cannot be tempted to any wish for more. If we could afford a week of entire stagnation here at Brussels, I have no doubt we should wake with a strong desire to go to Paris.

Brussels is a little Paris in itself; everything about it reminds us of the French capital, though to me it is far more agreeable. It is a white city, and looks, in the new parts, as if built more for show than use. I found myself doubting, as in Paris, whether there was anything behind those fine, white, theatrical looking fronts. We are at the Hotel Bellevue, next to the Palace, and "giving" on the Park, - a beautiful enclosure in the French taste, adored with statuary, but richer in fine old trees. This hotel was "riddled with shot" during the revolution of 1830, when the Park was the scene of the principal conflict; but it is an exceedingly nice place now. Here we received letters from home, making Brussels of course *colleur de rose* to us.

We set out immediately after breakfast for Waterloo-- disagreeable paved road and occasional showers. We engaged a good guide, alighted at Hougoumont, and went afoot all over the field, with an interest which I did not anticipate. We gathered some flower-seeds to bring home, and our guide cut some canes from the trees near the Chateau, [270] which remains in the dilapidated state in which it was left by the fierce contest. We could not help purchasing a few relics too, although the knowing ones say these are manufactured in large quantities. For my part I do not know why it should yet be necessary to manufacture them; since the slaughter of a hundred thousand men within this space must have supplied the field for many a year's swarm of tourists. The blood spilt was sufficient to increase conspicuously the fertility of the ground; and when we consider the complication of the machinery of war, and the immense amount of bullets that must have fallen, I think we may defer our suspicions of the honesty of the scattered inhabitants of this region for a few years longer. Pirson, who was our guide, interested us by his tenderness towards his wife dying of consumption, and his daughter who has been living as lady's-maid in an English family.

We had partly discovered that F. began his brilliant career as a drummer under Napoleon, and when we reached Waterloo he shone out with a variety of reminiscences. I do not remember anything richer about my whole acquaintance with F. than his air at Waterloo.

We toiled to the top of the sepulchral mound in the centre of the field, for the sake of viewing the whole at a glance. This seems to me the best use of the tumulus, which, as an object in the landscape, lacks both grace and dignity. At the top we found several persons sketching or making notes, though it was rather too breezy to be pleasant. One of these gentlemen, an American, boasted that he never employed a guide, or *valet de place*, in travelling in Europe; finding his own eyes, with the [271] assistance of guide-book and map, far more to be depended upon.

We returned to Brussels to dinner; after dinner walked in the Park, and were caught in a shower; went to see the Hotel de Ville - a grand old building, on a grand old square. This is considered the most splendid specimen of the kind in the Netherlands. The abdication of Charles V. is said to have taken place in one of its apartments. In the square the Counts Egmomt and Horn were executed.[127]

2 Chester Square, October 9, 1860.

My DEAREST FAN — This is actually the first letter I have written since I returned to England, though I returned this day week. I have not yet had the courage to open one of the pile of letters waiting for me at the Council Office, but now I must face the situation, and will begin with a pleasant task — that of writing to you for your birthday tomorrow. Many, many happy returns of it, my [141] dearest Fan, and with fewer cares than you have had in the last two or three years. It is a grievous thing not to spend the day in your company, as I have spent I know not how many birthdays of yours, but I shall try and arrange some expedition in honour of the day. But when I write the word Expedition I think of your mountains in this October sun and air, and sigh. Even London is looking cheerful. I am immensely in arrear with news. I had bought a stamp to put on a letter to mamma which I was to have written from Brussels, but the letter was never written, and the stamp remains in my possession. I seem to myself never to have had a quiet hour for the last fortnight. I have not brought down our history later than the Viel Salm. It will be a fortnight to-morrow since we left it, on a wet morning, one of the many we had there. The cheapness of living and the obligingness of the inn people remained the same to the last, but our last Sunday was the *fête* of Viel Salm, and that day, Monday, and Tuesday there was a ball at our inn, and a general relaxation and rejoicing, which made our quarters a little too unsettled and noisy. Still, we were sorry when the great omnibus which had brought us came again from Spa to fetch us, and we started in the rain down the gorge of that beautiful Salm which we had come up three weeks before. The return journey "was the best of the two, for we had taken the children's dinner with us, and an immense basket of peaches and nectarines, which was a parting present from the Henrards, and the operation of dining made the journey pass quicker [142] for the children. It cleared when we got half way, but it was still raw and cold and cloudy when we reached Spa at four in the afternoon. We drove straight to the station, and reached Liege after a change at Pepinstu, just as it got dark. The Hotel de I'Europe at Liege is kept by the father and mother of M. Henrard, and he had written for rooms for us, so we found splendid rooms and everything ready. Here we had our only alarm about little Tom, for he had complained of fatigue and great pain in his side from Spa to Liege, and looked dreadfully ill. Luckily we had kept him always warm, and got him to the inn at Liege well wrapt up and without catching cold. There he was put to bed with a fire in his room, and calomel administered, and the pain passed off, and he woke the next morning quite himself. I had never seen Liege, and the next day we devoted to seeing it. It was quite strange to be in a town again, with all the luxuries of life which at Viel Salm we had been without. Liege stands at the junction of three valleys, the Meuse, the Ousthe, and the Verdre, and with the Ardennes Mountains all about it. It is one of the finest towns I have seen, and the old Bishop's Palace, now the Government House, quite a model of architecture for public buildings, to my taste. The vine appears at Liege, and I had the pleasure of showing little Tom a vineyard. On the second day we went on to Brussels, and found good rooms at the Bellevue, where I had written on beforehand. Brussels I meant for a consolation to my party for the simplicity and solitude of Viel Salm, which they had [143] so cheerfully undergone on my account, and certainly it is one of the gayest and prettiest of cities. Saturday was passed in shopping, and in the evening Flu and I went to one of the theatres, and laughed very much. On Sunday morning after early church Flu and I started in an open carriage with two horses for the field of Waterloo — an expedition I had long wanted to make. It was gray and misty when we left Brussels, but cleared as we got out of the forest of Soigny and near Waterloo, and we had a splendid afternoon. I have seldom been more interested. One has read the account of the battle so often, the area is so limited, and the main points of the battle so simple, that one understands it the moment one sees the place with one's eyes, and Hougoumont with its battered walls is a monument such as few battle-fields retain. Our guide had been Lord Byron's guide in 1816, and, only a few years ago, Jerome Bonaparte's, the very man who commanded the French in their attack on Hougoumont, and who had never visited the field since. We got back late to Brussels, and found Lucy better, so the next day, as the cost of living at the Belle vue is considerable, we started for Calais, which we reached, after a long and tiring journey, at

ten at night, having had an hour for dinner at Lille on the way. The children bore the journey capitally, and I had by letter secured rooms at the very good clean hotel they have built at the station, so we were saved the long journey up into the town to Dessin's. Next morning it was [144] fine, though with a little breeze. In the morning we all went on the sands, a little after twelve the children dined, and at a quarter past one we went on board the packet. On the whole, the passage was a good one. We met a splendid fast train at Dover, which took us to London in two hours, and by half-past seven I had got all our luggage through the Custom House, and was sitting at dinner with Flu in this dear little house. Thank dearest mamma for her long and informing letter, received at Brussels. Tell her I hope to write to her on Saturday, and every Saturday. We are now permanently here for the winter, unless we pay a visit or two. Lucy is all right again, and the other children very well. Tom sends you a line or two with this. My love to dearest mamma, Susy and John, and all kind friends, as the children say in their prayers, and with all our good wishes, believe me, my dearest Fan,

your ever affectionate brother,
M. A.[128]

Spring 1865 Sir John Stokes visits the field of Waterloo:

In the spring of 1865, I got leave again to go home for the summer and took with me my third son, Frank, to put him in school, and Alfred, too, who wanted a change from the rather trying climate. We were accompanied on our journey by the Miss Standens, who were returning to England. We took the route via Vienna, Nurenberg, and Brussels. At Vienna, these young ladies, who were excellent musicians helped me to choose a piano, which was a great treasure to us for many a year. It was one by Streicher. At Nurenberg we saw the Castle and all the various frightful instruments of torture used in former days. We also visited the Valhalla, and from Brussels we made an excursion to the field of Waterloo.[129]

3 November 1865 Lady Elizabeth Butler visits the field of battle on her 19th Birthday

My birthday. I feel too much buoyed up with the promise of doing something this year to feel as wretched as I might have felt at the thought of my precious 'teens dribbling away. Never say die; never, never, never! This birthday is ever to be marked by our visit to Waterloo, which has impressed me so deeply. The day was most enjoyable, but what an inexpressible sad feeling was mixed with my pleasure; what thoughts came crowding into my mind on that awful field, smiling in the sunshine, and how, even now, my whole mind is overshadowed with sadness as I think of those slaughtered legions, dead half a century ago, lying in heaps of mouldering bones under that undulating plain. We had not driven far out of Brussels when a fine old man with a long white beard, and having a stout stick for scarcely needed support, and from whose waistcoat dangled a blue and red ribbon with a silver medal attached bearing the words 'Wellington' and 'Waterloo,' stopped the carriage an asked whether we were not going to the Field and offering his services as guide, which we readily accepted, and he mounted the box. This was Sergeant-Major Mundy of the 7th Hussars, who was twenty-seven when he fought on that memorable 18th June, 1815. In time we got into the old road, that road which the British trod on their way to Quatre Bras, ten miles beyond Waterloo, on the 16th. We passed the forest of Soignies, which is fas being cleared, and at no very distant period, [31] I suppose, merely the name will remain. What a road was this, bearing a history of thousands of sad incidents! We visited the church at Waterloo where are the many tablets on the walls to the memory of British officers and men who died in the great fithgt. Touching inscriptions are on them. An old woman of eighty-eight told us that she had tended the wounded after the battle. Is it possible! There she was, she who at thirty-eight had beheld those men just half a century ago! It was overpowering to my young mind. The old lady seems steadier than the serjeant-major, eleven years her junior, and wears a brown wig. Thanks to the old sergeant, we had no bothering vendors of 'relics.' He says they have sold enough bullets to supply a dozen battles.

We then resumed our way, now upon more historic ground than ever, the field of the battle proper. The Lion Mound soon appeared, that much abused monument. Certainly, as a monument to mark where the Prince of Orange was wounded in the left shoulder it is much to be censured, particularly with that Belgian lion on the top with its paw on Belgium, looking defiance towards France, whose soldiers, as the truthful old sergeant expressed himself, 'could any day, before breakfast, come and make short work of the Belgians' (*sic*). But I look upon this pyramid as marking the field of the fifteenth decisive battle of the world. In a hundred years the original field may have been changed or built upon, and then the mound will be more useful than ever as marking the centre of the battlefield that was. To make it much ground has been cut away and the surface of one part of the field materially lowered. On being shown the plan for this 'Lion Mound,' [32] Wellington exclaimed, 'Well, if they make it, I shall never come here again,' or something to that effect, and, as old Mundy said, the Duke was not one to break his word, and he never did come again.' Do you know that, Sir Edwin Lanseer, who have it in the background of your picture of Wellington revisiting the field? We drove up to the little Hotel du Musée, kept by the sergeant's daughter, a dejected sort of person with a glib tongue and herself rather grey. We just looked over Sergeant Cotton's museum, a collection of the most pathetic old shakos and casques and blundering muskets, with pans and flints, belonging to friend and foe; rusty bullets and cannon balls, mouldering bits of accoutrements of men an horses, evil-smelling bits of uniforms and even hair, under glass cases; skulls perforated with balls, leg and arm bones in a heap in a wooden box; extracts from newspapers of that sensational time, most interesting; rusty swords and breastplates; medals and crosses, etc., etc., a dismal collection of relics of the dead and gone. Those mouldy relics! Let us get out into the sunshine. Not until, however, the positive old soldier had marshalled us around him and explained to us, map in hand, the ground and the leading features of the battle he was going to show us.

"We then went, first, a short way up the mound, and the old warrior in our midst began his most interesting talk, full of stirring and touching anecdotes. What a story was that he was telling us, with the scenes of that story before our eyes! I, all eagerness to learn from the lips of one who took part in the fight, the story of the great victory of my country, was always throughout that long day by the side of the old hussar, and drank in the stirring narrative with [33] avidity. There lay before us the farm of La Haie Sainte–'lerhigh saint' as he called it–restored to what it was before the battle, where the gallant Germans held out so bravely, fighting only with the

bayonet, for when they came to load their firearms, oh, horror" the ammunition was found to be too large for the muskets, and was, therefore useless. There the great Life Guard charge too place, there is the grave of the mighty Shaw, and on the skyline the several hedges and knolls that mark this and that, and where Napoleon took up his first position. And there lies La Belle Alliance where Wellington and Blücher did *not* meet–oh, Mr. Maclise! –and a hundred other landmarks, all pointed out by the notched stick of old Mundy. The stories attached to them were all clearly related to us. After standing a long time on the mound until the man of discipline had quite done his regulation story, with its stirring and amusing touches an its minutes details, we descended and set off on our way to Hougoumont. What a walk was that! On that space raged most of the battle; it was a walk through ghosts with agonised faces and distorted bodies, crying noiselessly.

Our guide stopped us very often as we reached certain spots of leading interest, one of them–the most important of all being the place where the last fearful tussle was made and the Old Guard broke and ran. There was the field, planted with turnips, where our Guards lay down, and I could not believe that the seemingly insignificant little bank of the road, which sloped down to it, could have served to hide all those men until I went down and stooped, and then I understood, for only just the blades of the grass near me could I see against the sky. Our Guards must [34] indeed have seemed to stare out of the ground to the bewildered French, who were, by the by, just then deploying. That dreadful V formed by our solders, with its two sides and point pouring in volley after volley into the deploying Imperial Guard, must have indeed been a 'staggerer." and so Napoleon's best soldiers turned tail, yelling '*Sauve qu peut!*' and ran down that now peaceful undulation on the other side of the road.

Many another spot with its grim story attached did I gaze at, and my thoughts became more and more overpowering. And there stood a survivor before us, relating this tale of a battle which, to me, seems to belong to the olden time. But what made the deepest impression on my mind was the sergeant's pointing out to us the place where he lay all night after the battle, wounded, 'just a few yards from that hedge, there.' I repeated this to myself often, and always wonder. We then left that historic rutted road and, following a little path, soon came, after many more stoppages, to the outer orchard of Hougoumont. Victor Hugo's thoughts upon this awful place came crowding into my mind also. Yet the place did look so sweet and happy: the sun shining on the rich velvety grass, chequered with the shade of the bare apple trees, and the contented cows grazing on the grass which, on the fearful day fifty years ago, was not *green* between the heaps of dead and dying wretches.

"Ah! The wall with the loopholes. I knew all about it and hastened to look at it. Again all the wonderful stratagems and deeds of valour, etc., etc., were related, and I have learnt the importance, not only of a little hedge, but of the slightest depression [35] on a battlefield. Riddled with shot is this old brick wall and the walls of the farm, too. Oh! This place of slaughter, of burning, of burying alive, this place of concentrated horror! It was there that I most flet the sickening terror of war, and that I looked upon it from the dark side, a thing I have seldom had so strong an impulse to do before. The farm is peaceful again and the pigs and poultry grunt and cluck amongst the straw, but there are ruins inside. There's the door so bravely defended by that British officer and sergeant, hanging on its hinges; there's the well which served as a grave for living as well as dead, where Sergeant Mundy was the last to fill his canteen; and there's the little chapel which served as an oven to roast a lot of poor fellows who were pent up there by the fire raging outside. We went into the terror-fraught inner orchard, heard more interesting and saddening talk from the old soldier who says there is nothing so nice as fighting one's battles over again, and then we went out and returned to the inn and dined. After that we streamed after our mentor to the Charleroi road, just to glance at the left part of the field which the sergeant said he always liked going over th best. 'Oh' he said, looking lovingly at his pet, 'this was the strongest position, excepting Hougoumont.' It was in his region that Wellington was moved to tears at the loss of so many of his friends as he road off the field. Papa told me his memorable words on that occasion: 'A defeat is the only thing sadder than a victory.' What a scene of carnage it was! We looked at poor Gordon's monument and then got into our carriage and left that great, immortal place, with the sun shedding its last gleams upon it. I feel virtuous in having written this much, seeing [36] what I have done since. We drove back, in the clear night, I a wiser and a sadder girl.

About this same Battle of Waterloo. Before the Great War it always loomed large to me, as it were from the very summit of military history, indeed of all history. During the terrible years of the late War I though my Waterloo would diminish in grandeur by comparison, and that the awful glamour so peculiar to it would be obliterated in the fumes of a later terror. But no, there it remains, that lurid glamour glows around ti as before, and for the writer and for the painter its colour, its great form, its deep tones,

remaining. We see through its blood-red veil of smoke Napoleon fall. There never will be a fall like that again: it is he who makes Waterloo colossal.[130]

Easter 1866 Sir Henry Wentworth Acland with his wife and family visited his wife's niece.

Easter 1866 of the next year he made a short holiday trip to Belgium with two of the elder boys, Harry and Theodore, and the following letter from Waterloo is interesting in many respects. The sketch alluded to, ' Waterloo from the French lines, was afterwards completed and occupied a prominent position in the dining-room at Broad Street.

We have had a charming day, barring the usual fact that we got too tired, as seems to me with very little. But certainly the Rugby and Winchester 'men' cannot do more than I. We are settled very nicely at the foot of the Belgian Lion, where is the niece of Sergeant-Major Cotton, long dead. She married a Belgian carpenter, M. Vera Lewek. They have built an inn on the ground, Hôtel du Musée, a really nice clean little country inn, and she a very pleasant modest good person. We have just had evening service all together — with three maids and the children, including the Baby, 'who might as well be present.' One of the party came from near Bow Common, and knows Arthur's[1] labours and respects him much. Altogether the excitement of Waterloo was too much for me. I could not sleep for charges, and wounds, and horrors of every description, and saw the whole scene of the 18th of June half the night thro'.

To-day we had the great pleasure of a letter from you — our first. It came in at breakfast forwarded from Brussels, written from Mrs. Vizard's. I have bought you a 3d jug as [323] a memorial. Well, after breakfast, we read the Service and then walked three miles to Waterloo Church to see the monuments to officers and men, and home to dinner; then walked over to Belle Alliance and round by Hougoumont home, reading Keble's most appropriate hymn for the day, appropriate as the lesson to me of this place is duty, abnegation of self, and of the world.

We keep to our plan of going to Namur to-morrow, to Ghent Wednesday, and go to Antwerp Friday. But I can get no tidings of a Meuse steamer to Liege. I got to-day after dinner a slight notion of the field of battle in a sketch, just to see the effect at sunset, the end of the engagement. To-morrow I shall try to work it in, if it is a fine day and I am up early, but it is not a subject for rapid sketching, the ground being altogether too delicate. It would require several evenings. But I thoroughly understand it. It is a stupendous instance of stupendous heroism, never in the annals of Man surpassed. I am very glad our Sunday was here. It altogether befitted the temper in which one should visit such a scene. I am not, however, disposed to make sermons to-night, so I shall refrain. I could write you a long one. I thought to-day whether I had not better give up my Oxford life and become Leopold's curate for the rest of my days — like an old knight who takes to the cloister. But Keble's hymn for to-day seems to forbid that. Yet how hard is my Oxford life become when taken into conjunction with a susceptible nature, but of this more hereafter. Do read Carlyle's address.[131]

[1]The Rev. A. B. Cotton, Mrs. Acland's youngest brother, and incumbent of St Paul's, the last of the ten churches which Mr. William Cotton built in the East End.

1870 A French royalist's history of the campaign on the eve of the Franco Prussian war. Joseph Melchior, Prince de La Tour d'Auvergne publishes his *Étude de la Campagne de 1815 par le Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Edouard de la tour D'Auverge* (1870). An excerpt relating to the action around Hougoumont:

»Ces onze colonnes se déployèrent avec tant de précision, qu'il n'y eut aucune confusion; et chacune occupa la place qui lui était désignée dans la pensée du chef; jamais de si grandes masses ne se remuèrent avec plus de facilité.

La cavalerie du corps de Reille, qui formait la colonne de gauche de la première ligue, se déploya sur trois lignes, à cheval sur la chaussée de Nivelles à Bruxelles, à peu près à la hauteur des premiers bois d'Hougoumont, éclairant, par la gauche, toute la plaine, ayant des grand'gardes sur Braine-l'Alleud; sa batterie d'artillerie légère sur la chaussée de Nivelles. »[132]

Le maréchal Ney conduirait, à droite de la Haye Sainte, les trois autres divisions de d'Erlon.

Le corps de Reille appuierait ce mouvement à gauche de la chaussée de Charleroi. Les divisions Bachelu et Foy marcheraient au plateau, entre la chaussée et le château d'Hougoumont, qui serait assailli par la division du prince Jérôme.

Les efforts de Ney sur le centre ennemi seraient soutenus par Lobau avec le 6* corps et une masse de cavalerie.

Enfin, en dernière ligne, toute la Garde, avec le reste de la cavalerie de réserve, viendrait, au besoin, seconder le choc décisif.

Ce plan, dans lequel se reflète toute la puissance de conception de son auteur, sera dérangé par plusieurs incidents. Mais, comme l'a écrit le général Jomini, l'Empereur peut le livrer sans crainte à l'examen des maîtres de l'art.

Pendant que l'armée prenait ses dispositions, le major général avait adressé au maréchal Grouchy la dépêche suivante:

En avant de la ferme du Caillou, le 18 juin,
à dix heures du matin.

« Monsieur le Maréchal, l'Empereur a reçu votre dernier rapport, daté de Gembloux; *vous ne parlez à Sa Majesté que de deux colonnes prussiennes qui ont passé à Sauvenière et à Sart-lez-Walhain;* cependant des rapports disent qu'une troisième colonne, qui était assez forte, a passé à Géry et à Gentinnes, se dirigeant sur Wavre.

» L'Empereur me charge de vous prévenir qu'en [260] ce moment Sa Majesté va faire attaquer l'armée anglaise, qui a pris position à Waterloo, près de la forêt de Soignes; ainsi Sa Majesté désire que vous dirigiez vos mouvements sur Wavre, afin de vous rapprocher de nous, vous mettre en rapport d'opérations, et lier les communications; poussant devant vous les corps de l'armée prussienne qui ont pris cette direction et qui ont pu s'arréter à Wavre, où vous devez arriver le plus tôt possible.

Vous ferez suivre les colonnes ennemies, qui ont pris sur votre

droite, *par quelques corps légers*, afin d'observer leurs mouvements et ramasser leurs traînards. Instruisez-moi immédiatement de vos dispositions et de votre marche, ainsi que des nouvelles que vous avez sur les ennemis, et ne négligez pas de lier vos communications avec nous. L'Empereur désire avoir très-souvent de vos nouvelles.

» Le duc DE Dalhatie »[1]

Ce sont, on le voit, toujours les mêmes instructions. Le maréchal Soult, en indiquant Wavre comme direction générale, ne fait que confirmer les ordres qui ont été donnés le 1 7 au maréchal Grouchy, poursuivre les Prussiens, ne jamais les perdre de vue, les occuper, les contenir, en manœuvrant de manière à pouvoir toujours être en mesure de s'opposer à leur jonction avec l'armée du duc de Wellington. C'est dans ce but qu'il a été prescrit au commandant de l'aile droite de [261] ne pas négliger de lier les communications, afin de se mettre en rapport d'opérations avec l'Empereur,

Dès que nos lignes furent établies, l'Empereur parcourut les rangs. Il fut accueilli par d'immenses acclamations. Impossible d'exprimer l'enthousiasme qui animait le soldat. A sa vue, les fantassins élevaient leurs schakos au bout de leurs baïonnettes, les cavaliers leurs casques au bout de leurs sabres, en criant a Vive l'Empereur!» Et ces frénétiques témoignages d'amour se manifestaient encore longtemps après qu'il s'était éloigné.

Le duc de Wellington avait aussi passé la revue de son armée. Mais aucun cri ne s'était fait entendre. Ses soldats n'en étaient pas moins résolus à combattre vaillamment, confiants dans leur général, et dans le concours empressé des Prussiens. Quant aux nôtres, exaltés au dernier point, ils n'attendaient la victoire que d'eux-mêmes, et du génie fécond qui les avait toujours si bien guidés de trophées en trophées.

Après avoir donné ses dernières instructions, l'Empereur vint se placer sur les hauteurs de Rossomme, près de la chaussée de Charleroi. De là, son regard embrassait tout le champ de bataille. Il mit pied à terre; une table et une chaise lui furent apportées de la ferme voisine. Il s'assit, déroula ses cartes devant lui.

Aussitôt, à notre gauche, éclata une violente canonnade.

En un instant, quarante bouches à feu couvrirent de projectiles la droite de l'armée anglo-hollandaise. La position d'Hougoumont était abordée par la division du prince Jérôme. Les batteries de Reille, celles de Kellermann, en protégaient le mouvement. [262]

En faisant commencer l'action par notre gauche, l'Empereur voulait inquiéter le général anglais pour sa droite, appeler sur ce point toute son attention, dans le but de faciliter l'opération principale qu'il avait méditée sur le centre et l'aile gauche de l'ennemi.

L'attaque que le commandant du 2* corps avait à diriger n'était qu'une diversion. On pouvait en obtenir l'effet désiré, sans être obligé de pousser la manœuvre jusqu'à la prise de la position, qui était trèsforte.

Le château d'Hougoumont comprenait une maison d'habitation, une chapelle, une ferme avec ses bâtiments d'exploitation, le tout réuni dans un rectangle dont les quatre côtés étaient formés par les murs mêmes de ces différentes constructions.

Il y avait deux grandes portes: Tune au midi, l'autre au nord.

A l'est du château, et y attenant, un grand jardin précédait un verger plus grand encore. Le jardin était entouré de murs solidement construits et fort élevés. Un de ces murs servait de clôture au verger, qui sur les autres côtés était fermé par des haies hautes de plus de deux mètres, très-fourrées, qui avaient de gros arbres pour appuis, et en arrière desquelles se trouvait un large fossé d'une certaine profondeur.

Le château, le jardin ainsi que le verger étaient couverts au sud par un bois taillis sous une haute futaie assez claire.

Planté sur une pente, s'inclinant doucement vers nos lignes, ce bois descendait jusqu'au fond du vallon de Merbe-Braine, que notre 2* corps avait devant lui. Il [263] touchait, à l'est, à une vaste prairie, bordée de haies, et à l'ouest, à un verger également clos, qui s'allongeait dans le vallon même jusqu'à la chaussée de Nivelles.

Au nord et à l'ouest, le château était à découvert. Mais, dominé à moins de trois cents mètres en arrière par la crête du plateau de Mont-Saint-Jean, il était battu par l'artillerie ennemie.

Un bataillon de Nassau, et plusieurs compagnies hanovriennes, armées de carabines, occupaient le bois et ses abords.

Les gardes anglaises de la division Cooke étaient chargées de défendre le château, le jardin et le grand verger. Anglais, Nassau, Hanovriens, tous nous attendaient, les uns, postés derrière des murs crénelés, les autres, embusqués dans des fourrés ou abrités par des haies.

Les bataillons de Bauduin furent les premiers engagés. Formés en

[1] *Le maréchal Grouchy, du 16 au 19 juin 1815, par le général de division sénateur marquis de Grouchy. Paris, 1864.*

échelons, la gauche en avant, ils marchèrent avec leur élan accoutumé. Une forte chaîne de tirailleurs les précédait.

Près de la lisière du bois, nos soldats essuyèrent un feu meurtrier, parti des taillis qui remplissaient les intervalles de la futaie; et sans chercher à y répondre, ils se jetèrent dans le fourré, pour se ruer à la baïonnette sur des adversaires qu'ils ne pouvaient fusiller. C'est là que le brave général Bauduin fut tué.

L'ennemi, favorisé par les lieux, se défendit opiniâtrement. Il fallut même, pour l'obliger à nous céder le terrain, l'entrée en ligne du prince Jérôme, à la tête de la brigade Soye. [264]

Le duc de Wellington, qui, du haut du plateau, voyait nos progrès, avait aussitôt dirigé au secours des siens un bataillon de Brunswick ainsi que plusieurs compagnies de gardes anglaises. Mais nous étions déjà maîtres du bois; et ces renforts ne purent que recueillir dans le vallon en arrière du château les Nassau et Hanovriens qui avaient fui devant nous.

Nous aurions dû, pour le moment, borner là nos efforts, et nous contenter de ce succès. La possession du bois nous assurait de ce côté un appui suffisant contre les entreprises ultérieures de l'ennemi.

Le général Reille pensait certainement ainsi. Mais notre caractère national accepte difficilement, en présence des périls, les lois de la raison et de la prudence. Généraux et soldats, entraînés par leur ardeur naturelle, ne veulent pas s'arrêter devant des obstacles dont la puissance défie leur audace et a pour eux une attraction irrésistible.

La brigade Soye, qui tient la droite de la division du prince Jérôme, pénètre dans le grand verger en se frayant un passage la hache à la main. Elle y est reçue par un feu des plus violents. Les coups partaient d'une haie paraissant semblable à celle que nous venions de franchir. Nos soldats, avec leur confiance ordinaire, se précipitent sur ce nouvel obstacle, espérant démasquer l'ennemi qui leur envoie la mort, et auquel ils ne peuvent la donner. Cette haie, ils la passent comme la première, mais c'est pour se heurter au grand mur de briques derrière lequel les gardes anglaises les fusillent à bout portant.

De ce côté, l'assaut est impossible. La porte méridtonale [265] du château se trouve dans un rentrant flanqué par les murs du jardin.

L'artillerie ne peut être amenée à travers le bois pour ouvrir une brèche. Pas un pétard, ni quelques sacs de poudre, pour faire sauter un pan de mur. On n'a aucun moyen d'escalade. Et cependant officiers et soldats ne reculent pas. Ils restent en butte à des coups certains, tandis que les plus audacieux, s'aidant de leurs ongles et des meurtrières anglaises, grimpent sur le mur et sautent dans le jardin. La mort est bientôt le prix de leur héroïque et stérile courage. Jamais hommes plus braves ne s'étaient plus vainement sacrifiés !

La brigade Bauduin, qui a tourné le bois par la gauche, se trouvé de même arrêtée par des murs.

Après avoir enlevé le verger qui est dans le vallon de Merbe-Braine, elle s'est présentée devant la partie ouest du château qui, de ce côté, est à découvert. Là, nos bataillons sont non-seulement battus par l'artillerie du plateau, mais encore ils sont frappés par le feu des créneaux. Quelques pièces de douze auraient renversé l'obstacle et ouvert la voie à nos soldats. L'idée n'en vient ni au commandant du 2* corps, ni au prince Jérôme, ni au général Guilleminot. Ainsi se consument en pure perte de sublimes efforts!

Quelques compagnies du 1er léger atteignent la porte septentrionale du château, qu'elles parviennent à enfoncer, malgré la mitraille et la fusillade. Le souslieutenant Legros, suivi d'une poignée de braves, pénètre dans la cour. Le poste va être à nous, lorsque les gardes anglaises accourant, réussissent à nous [266] repousser, à rebarricader la porte, et sauvent le château d'Hougoumont. L'héroïque Legros et ceux qui raccompagnent restent morts sur le terrain.

Tandis que la division du prince Jérôme s'engageait si violemment, le feu éclatait sur toute la ligne jusque vis-à-vis la ferme de Papelotte. Nos tirailleurs avaient réplié ceux de Tennemi qui se tenaient maintenant sur la pente du plateau. L'artillerie tonnait à notre aile droite pour préparer l'opération principale que devait exécuter le maréchal Ney, et qui avait pour but d'enlever au duc de Wellington la chaussée de Bruxelles.

Quatre-vingts bouches à feu, placées sur les collines de la Belle-Alhance et à droite de la chaussée, battaient la gauche de l'armée anglo-hollandaise, ainsi que la partie du centre adjacente à cette aile.

L'Empereur observait avec attention l'ensemble de la bataille. Il promenait sa lunette sur l'horizon en avant des hauteurs de Rossomme, cherchant à discerner si l'ennemi avait pris quelques dispositions nouvelles par suite de l'attaque contre le château d'Hougoumont. Quelques troupes seulement s'avançaient de Braine-l'Alleud. C'était la division Chassé, que le duc de Wellington rapprochait de la chaussée de Nivelles. Quant à son centre et à ça gauche, le généralissime aftglais n'avait rien prescrit à part un léger mouvement en arrière de sa ligne, pour la soustraire à la masse des projectiles que lançait notre grande batterie.

Tout à coup, vers l'extrémité droite de l'horizon, l'Empereur crut apercevoir un corps de troupes, dans la direction de Chapelle-Saint-Lambert.

Ce village, à huit kilomètres au nord-est de [267] Rossomme, est situé à l'extrémité occidentale du plateau de la Dyle. A son pied coule le ruisseau de Lasne, dans lequel viennent se perdre les eaux du vallon qui séparait les deux armées, et qui passe immédiatement audessous de la Haye-Sainte, des fermes de Papelotte et de la Haye, de Smobain et d'Ohain.

Que pouvait ètre ce corps qui se montrait si proche du champ de bataille? Était-ce un détachement de Grouchy, ou notre aile droite elle-même? Était-ce un corps ennemi? Il fallait savoir au plus vite à quoi s'en tenir.

Aussitôt l'Empereur manda auprès de lui le général Domon, auquel il prescrivit d'aller reconnaître, avec sa division légère et celle de Subervie, les troupes que l'on distinguait à l'horizon, de les rallier si elles étaient françaises, de les contenir si elles étaient ennemies. Mais afin d'avoir des nouvelles encore plus promptes, il expédia un de ses aides de camp, le général Bernard, qui prit les devants avec quelques cavaliers.

L'Empereur ne tarda pas à connaitre une partie de la vérité.

Après avoir galopé vers Ghapelle-Saint-Lambert, le général Bernard avait mis pied à terre non loin du ruisseau de Lasne, pour s'approcher davantage, en se couvrant des bois et des haies. Il avait parfaitement vu une ligne de tirailleurs sortant du vallon, dans la direction de Planchenoit; c'était de l'infanterie prussienne. Il revint en toute hâte auprès de l'Empereur lui faire part de cette découverte. [133]

1872 A new guidebook, written as a personal narrative, is produced for the American Tourists, travelling in Europe after the Civil War. Adeline Trafton writes of a visit to Waterloo:

WE could not leave the city without driving out to the battle-field of Waterloo. It is about a dozen miles to The Mound, and you may take the public coach if you choose—it runs daily. Our party being large, we preferred to engage a carriage.

We left the house after breakfast, and passed through the wide, delightful avenues of the Forêt de Soignes,—the Bois de Boulogne of Brussels,—then across the peaceful country which seemed never to have known anything so disturbing as war. Beyond the park lies the village which gave its name to the battle-field though the thickest of the fight was not there. In an old brick church, surmounted by a dome, lie in tombed many minor heroes of the conflict. But heroes soon pall upon the taste, and nothing less than Wellington or Napoleon himself could have awakened a spark of [123] interest in us by this time. Then, too, the vivid present blinded us to the past. The air was sweet with summer scents. Mowers were busy in the hayfields. A swarm of little barefooted beggars importuned us, turning dizzy somersaults until we could see only a maze of flying, dusty feet on either side. One troop, satisfied or despairing, gave way to another, and the guides were almost as annoying as the beggars. They walk for miles out of their villages to forestall each other, and meet the carriages that are sure to come from Brussels on pleasant days. They drive sharp bargains. As you near the centre of interest, competition is greater, and their demands proportionately less. We refused the extortionate overtures of two or three, and finally picked up a shrewd-faced young fellow in a blue blouse, who hung upon the step of the carriage, or ran beside it for the last mile or two of the distance. The village of Mont St. Jean follows that of Waterloo. It is only a scant collection of whitewashed farm buildings of brick. We rolled through it without stopping, and out again between the quiet, smiling fields, our minds utterly refusing to grasp the idea that they had swarmed once with an army; that in this little village we had just left—dull, half asleep in the sunshine—dreadful slaughter had held high carnival one July day, not many years before. Even when the guide, clinging to the door of the carriage, rattled over the story of the struggle in a patois all his own, hardly a shadow of the scene was presented to us.

As our horses slackened their pace, he stepped down from his perch to gather a nosegay of the flowers by the road-side, making no pause in his mechanical narrative—of[124] how the Anglo-Belgian army were gathered upon this road and the fields back to the wood, on the last day of the fight; how many of the officers had been called at a moment's notice from the gayeties at Brussels, and more than one was found dead upon the field the next day, under the soaking rain, dressed as for a ball. He pushed back his visorless cap, uttering an exclamation over the heat, and adding, in the same breath, that just here, about Mont St. Jean, the battle waged fiercely in the afternoon, when Ney, with his brave cuirassiers, tried in vain to carry the position; and all the time, the summer sounds of twittering birds and hum of locusts were in our ears; the barefooted children still turned upon their axles beside the carriage wheels as we rolled along, and that other day seemed so far away, that we could neither bring it near nor realize it. One grim reminder of the past rose in the distance, and, as we drew near, swelled and grew before our eyes. It was the huge mound of earth raised two hundred feet, to commemorate the victory of the allies. Hills were cut down, the very face of nature changed for miles around, to rear this monument to pride and vain-glory. Upon its summit crouches the Belgian lion.

We turn from the paved road, when we have reached what seems to be a mass of unsightly ruins, with only a tumbling outbuilding left here and there. The whole is enclosed by a wall, which skirts also an orchard, neglected, grown to weeds. The carriage stops before the great gates. It is very cool and quiet in the shaded angle of the battered wall as we step down. It has been broken and chipped as if by pick-axes.[125] Ah! the shot struck hardest here. The top of the low wall is irregular; the bricks have been knocked out; the dust has sifted down; the mosses have gathered, and a fringe of grass follows all its length. Even sweet wild flowers blossom where the muskets rested in those dreadful days. At intervals, half way up its height, a brick is missing. Accident? Ah, no; hastily constructed loopholes, through which the English fired at first, before the horrible time when they beat each other down with the butts of their guns while they fought hand to hand here, like wild beasts.

We enter the court-yard. Only a roughly plastered room or two remain, where the greed that gloats even over the field of blood offers

souvenirs of the place importunately. In the centre of this court-yard may still be seen the well that was filled with corpses. It must have given out blood for many a day. Upon one side are the remains of the building used for a hospital in the beginning of the fight, but where the wounded and dying perished in torment, when the French succeeded in firing the chateau; for this is Hougomont.

We came out at the gateway where we had entered; crossed the slope under the shadow of the branches from the apple trees, and followed the road winding through wheat-fields to The Mound. Breast-high on either side rose the nodding crests; and among them wild flowers, purple, scarlet, and blue, fairly dazzled our eyes, as they waved with the golden grain in the sunshine. "O, smiling harvest-fields," we said, "you have been sown with heroes; you have been enriched with blood!"

It was a long, dizzy climb up the face of The Mound to the narrow foothold beside the platform where rests that grim, gigantic lion. Once there, we held to every possible support in the hurricane of wind that seized us, while the guide gave a name to each historic farm and village spread out before our eyes. Only a couple of miles cover all the battle-field—the smallest where grand armies ever met; but the slaughter was the more terrible.

Connected with an inn at the foot of The Mound is a museum of curiosities. Here are queer old helmets worn by the cuirassiers, hacked and rust-stained; broken swords, and old-fashioned muskets; buttons, and bullets even—everything that could be garnered after such a sowing of the earth.

In unquestioning faith we bought buttons stained with mildew, and bearing upon them, in raised letters, the number of a regiment. Alas! reason told us, later, that the buttons disposed of annually here would supply an ordinary army. And rumor added, that they are buried now in quantities, to be exhumed as often as the supply fails.

I remembered Victor Hugo to have said in Les Misérables something in regard to a sunken road here, which proved a pitfall to the French, and helped, in his judgment, to turn the fortunes of the day. But we had seen no sunken road. I mentioned it to the guide, who said that Victor Hugo spent a fortnight examining the ground before writing that description of the battle. "He lodged at our house," he added. "My father was his guide. What he wrote was all quite true. There is now no road such as he described;[127] that was all changed when the earth was scraped together to form The Mound."

We lunched at the inn, surrounded by mementos and trophies, and served by an elderly woman, whose father had been a sergeant in the Belgian army, then late in the afternoon drove back to town.

The pleasant days at Brussels soon slipped by, and then we were off to Antwerp—only an hour's ride. I will tell you nothing about the former wealth and commercial activity of the city—that in the sixteenth century it was the wealthiest city in Europe, &c., &c. For all these interesting particulars, see Murray's Handbook of Northern Germany. As soon as we had secured rooms at the hotel, dropped our satchels and umbrellas, we followed the chimes to the cathedral. The houses of the people have crept close to it, until many of them, old and gray, have fairly grown to it, like barnacles to a ship; or it seemed as though they had built their nests, like the rooks, under the moss-grown eaves. The interior of the cathedral was singularly grand and open. As we threw our shawls about us—a precaution never omitted—an old man shuffled out from a dark corner to show the church, take our francs, and pull aside the curtains from before the principal pictures, if so dignified a name as curtain can be applied to the dusty, brown cambric that obstructed our vision. Rubens's finest pictures are here, and indeed the city abounds in all that is best of Flemish art,—most justly, since it was the birthplace of its master. Rubens in the flesh we had seen at the Louvre; the spiritual manifestation was reserved for Antwerp; and to recall the city is to recall a series of visions of which one may not speak lightly.[134]

It may serve better to illustrate our subject to give a brief description of the country and the relative situation of some of the principal points near to which these events transpired.

Belgium is situated between France and Holland. Its territory is about one-eighth that of Great Britain. The important position the country has occupied in the political and military history of Europe gives it a peculiar interest. It has undergone many changes of government and rulers. Its people have been celebrated for their courage and warlike proclivities. In 1477 Belgium passed under the rule of Austria and subsequently descended to Charles V., king of Spain, and was finally incorporated with the French Republic. By the Congress of Vienna the provinces of Belgium were annexed to those of Holland, to form the kingdom of the Netherlands, and thus existed until it became an independent nation. Belgium has been often the scene on which the surrounding nations have settled their quarrels, and has long been styled the "cockpit" of Europe. In the history of no other country do we find such unbounded liberty, with such an invincible disposition to abuse it.

Brussels, its capital, is situated near the River Severn, about fifty miles from the sea and twelve from Waterloo. Charleroi, the first Belgian fortress on the line of defense towards France, was destroyed by the French in 1795, but restored by Wellington in 1815. Namur is a manufacturing city and has been dubbed "the Sheffield of Belgium." Liege is at the junction of the Outhe and Meuse, and though very much less in size, somewhat resembles the City of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The City of Ghent contains a population of two hundred thousand people, at least one-half of whom are engaged in industrial arts.

Here was the birth-place of John of Gaunt and of Charles V. of Germany; and here the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain was concluded in 1814. Antwerp, the commercial capital of Belgium, was made by the Emperor one of his grand naval arsenals, who spent enormous sums on the construction of its docks and other works. It was here that Joan of Arc was taken prisoner and delivered over to the English. Other localities and places will be sufficiently described in the narrative of succeeding events.

A yet clearer comprehension of the salient features of this lecture, may be gained by a brief summary of the events and circumstances leading up to, immediately preceding and forming parts of the subject under consideration.

The disastrous termination of Napoleon's Russian campaign caused him, on the 6th of April, 1814, to abdicate the throne of France, and seek refuge in a foreign land. Soon thereafter the French throne went back into the hands of the Bourbons, with Louis XVIII as king. Either out of respect for an old warrior, or to make a parade of their generosity, the Allies permitted Napoleon to select Elba as the place of his retreat. Upon the accession again of Louis to the French throne, he found a chaotic state of public affairs, that would have confused and bewildered a much wiser ruler than he was. As a means of quieting the public mind and restoring order, he granted a charter or compact, that deprived him of some of his prerogatives, but it seemed to have satisfied neither of the parties into which France was then divided.

This state of affairs, not unknown to Napoleon, inspired him with the desire of again returning thither, and seeking to regain his former seat of power. Favored by the absence of the English comprissioner, and the fleet stationed to watch the Isle of Elba, Napoleon in a small flotilla set sail, and on the first of March, 1815, landed at Cannes on the coast of France. He saluted his native country "as the parent of heroism and the home of genius."

His reception exceeded his most sanguine hopes. He met the first troops sent out to oppose him by advancing to their front and laying bare his breast to receive their fire; but instead of firing on him they joined his ranks, and rallied under his banner. He was welcomed by his old soldiers in such numbers as soon to swell their ranks to thousands, all of whom received him with the wildest enthusiasm. Included in their numbers was Marshal Ney and the large body of troops under his command. Thus received and honored, the exiled Monarch marched triumphantly to Paris, and re-entered the Tuilleries on the twentieth of March, 1815.

The Bourbons, in the meanwhile, had evacuated Paris and made their escape into Belgium. It will be seen that a revolution was thus completely accomplished in twenty days, without shedding a drop of blood, and Napoleon re-ascended the throne from whence he had been driven the previous year. He immediately commenced the reorganization of the

government, so as to make it conform to the new order of things, and thus re-establish his authority and power over the French people.

Accordingly a new ministry was formed, in which he transferred the Department of War to Marshal Davoust; to Fouche. who is charged with "hedging" on all subjects, was committed the important office of Minister of Police; the Foreign Office was given to Talleyrand; and other important positions were conferred upon his old adherents and officers.

The return of Napoleon to Paris produced great consternation among those of the allied powers who had contributed to his overthrow the year before, and soon thereafter a congress of nations was held and a coalition formed to check the growing influence and power of their former rival; so that by the last of March the great powers of Western Europe had formed a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, against the re-enthroned exile from the Isle of Elba.

Under these circumstances, the Emperor saw no choice but to flee the country and recall Louis XVIII. to power, or to fight. He chose the latter alternative, and proceeded, with his accustomed vigor, at once to organize and equip the army anew. Under what he was pleased to call a "constitutional monarchy," (more in name than in substance,) he prepared to resist the formidable coalition of kings and rulers that compassed his second overthrow.

The military preparations extended as well to the defense of Paris and Lyons, as the frontier defenses towards the Rhine and the Meuse. The preparations of the Allies were on no less a scale, until, it was said, a million of men were ready to fall upon France.

Napoleon had only two courses to pursue; the one to march against the Anglo-Prussians at Brussels or Namur; the other to await an attack at Paris. The former course was adopted, because it removed the theatre of war from French territory to that occupied by his enemies. After disposing of part of his forces to secure other important points, the Emperor only had 120,000 men, with which to attack the forces under Wellington and Blucher. The plan of operations was to try and assail Wellington and Blucher separately before the other forces of the Allies could come to their relief.

Napoleon left Paris on the twelfth of June. The organization of the army was much modified. The commands of corps d'armes were given to younger generals. Ney and Grouchy were to command the different wings of the principal army. To appreciate the nature of the plan of attack, it must be remembered that it was not to attack a single army, but two, having separate and divergent bases of operations — that of the English on Ostend or Antwerp; that of the Prussians on the Rhine and Cologne; thus preventing the opportunities for a central operation by which the allies could be kept divided and fought separately.

The plan and commencement of this campaign forms one of the most remarkable operations in the life of Napoleon. The movements of the troops were arranged with so much precision, that 120,000 men from far distant locations found themselves assembled at a given rendezvous on the Belgian frontier as if by enchantment. Whilst Wellington, who had been given chief command of the allied forces, was occupied in giving fetes at Brussels, under the supposition that the Emperor was at Paris, the latter, at the head of his columns, was near at hand and ready for the impending conflict. Lord Byron, in Child Harold, has grandly portrayed this scene in glowing words of verse and song.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered there
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright

The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when

Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again.

And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? No; 'twas but the wind.

Or the car rattling o'er the stony street.
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;

No sleep till morn when youth and pleasure meet,
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet —

But, hark! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;

And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is — it is — the cannon's opening roar!

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed.

The mustering squadron, and the clattering car.
Meet pressing forward with impetuous speed.

And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;

And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier 'ere the morning star;

While throng'd the citizen with terror dumb,
Or whispering, white lips,
"The foe! They come! They come!"

On the morning of the fifteenth of June the French troops occupied the following positions: The right, of sixteen thousand men, under Gerard, at Phillippeville; the center, of about sixty thousand, under the immediate direction of the Emperor, were near to his headquarters at Beaumont; the left, of forty-five thousand, on and near the Sambre.

The allied armies were not yet assembled. Blücher's forces were at Charleroi, Namur, Dinant, Liege and Luxemburg. On learning of the Emperor's approach to the Belgian frontier, Blucher immediately ordered the concentration of his forces. Wellington's forces were still in their cantonments on the Scheldt, ready, however, to move at the first signal. The road running from Charleroi to Brussels was the point of junction of the two armies, and to this point the operations of the French were directed, in order to prevent such junction. There were computed to be under Blucher about one hundred and eighteen thousand combatants. There were under Wellington about ninety-nine thousand at Brussels and other points in that vicinity.

On the fourteenth of June, Marshal Bourmont, in command of a French corps of troops, had deserted to the allies. It has been said that a drummer, who deserted from the "old guard," gave Blucher the first information of Napoleon's approach.

Ney took command of the left wing of the army, and was ordered to march on the road to Brussels in the direction of Quartre Bras. The right wing under Grouchy was ordered to look after the Prussian forces under Blucher, the center of whose army was near Ligny. Ney delayed the execution of his order to march on Quartre Bras, and on that account, when he did make an attack on that place, was repulsed. Meanwhile the forces under Grouchy had achieved a victory at Ligny. Thereupon Blucher set about concerting plans for a speedy junction with Wellington. Grouchy was sent in pursuit of the retreating Prussians. The reserve and left wing advanced against the English at Quartre Bras, which, however, were in full retreat on the road to Brussels, covered by their cavalry, the French following in close pursuit as far as the heights of Planchenois.

The English manifested an intention to take a stand and offer battle in front of the forest of Soignies,— Waterloo. This, as before stated, was what Napoleon desired — to meet and attack the two armies separately. Blucher had been defeated at Ligny and forced to retreat on a line diverging from the other army, and a force detached in pursuit, thought sufficiently strong, to prevent a junction.

Grouchy was ordered to occupy the defile of St. Lambert, so that if he did not take an active part in the battle, by falling on the left of the English, he could in any event give them some trouble, and at the same time cover the flank of the French army.

Napoleon's reasons for attacking the English at this time and place may best be given in his own words: "The army had been harrassed by rains, bad roads, and forced marches. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been best to allow it some repose and afterwards dislodge Wellington by maneuvers. But other armies were about to invade France, and my presence would soon be needed elsewhere. Moreover, Blucher would soon rally, and with reinforcements again attempt to form a junction with the right of the Allies; it was therefore necessary to end with the English as soon as possible."

The position of the allied army had great defensive advantages. They occupied the slope in front of Mont St. Jean, favorable for their fire, and gave them a view of the French operations. The right extended to the rear of Bram la Leud, with a corps to cover the road from Mores to Brussels. The villages of Braim and Merbes, the chateaus of Hougomont, La Hair Sainte, La Hair and Frichemont, forming advanced bastions, which flanked and secured the whole line just on the brink of the vast forest of Soignies, with no outlet for a great army such as was here assembled.

The road from Brussels to Waterloo lies through this forest. One mile

from the latter place is the hamlet of Mont St. Jean, and half a mile in front is the farm house of the same name on the road to the farm of La Hair Sainte in the immediate rear of the British position. On the ridge, and the ground behind it, occupied by the [9] British, stood a solitary tree, near to which was Wellington's position in the fight.

The British lines extended along the ridge to the right and left, their extreme right being protected by a ravine. In front was a valley, not regularly formed, but with numerous windings and hollows, varying in breadth from a quarter to half a mile. This was the scene of the principal conflict.

The opposite ridges, running parallel to Mont St. Jean, were occupied by the French. La Hays Sainte, the object of the second attack in the middle of the battle, was the point near to which was the conflict between the Imperial Guards and the British troops that decided the fate. of the day. To the right and in the centre of the valley is Hougomont, a farm house, the orchard of which was surrounded by walls. On the road to Charleroi and the ridge exactly opposite the British centre, was La Belle Alliance, the position of Napoleon during most of the engagement.

In determining the plan of the attack, the French commander thought to manœuvre by the left to turn the enemy's right. This might cut off" his retreat on that side of the forest, and would be attended with some advantages to him, but might result in throwing Wellington in the direction of Blucher. To attack with the right to crush the English right was therefore preferable, but the ground was unfavorable, so Napoleon determined to assail the left and pierce the center of the allied army, and in execution of that purpose the mass of the French forces were directed on the center; the extreme left was assailed only by the division from the right of Erlon's corps. Ney was to conduct the three other divisions to the right of La Hair Sainte. The corps of Reille was to support this movement. Two divisions were between this road and [10] the farm of Hougomont. The division of Prince Jerome was to attack this farm, constituting, as it did, the salient point of the enemy's lines. Wellington had formed loop- holes in the walls of the chateau and garden, and secured the enclosure of the park, occupying the whole with the English Guards. The Sixth French Corps and a mass of cavalry followed as a third and fourth line to the center, so as to support Ney's attack; twenty-four battalions of the guard and cuirassiers forming the fifth and sixth lines, ready to bear upon the decisive point. The plan of attack has been regarded as a model by the masters of the art of war.

Napoleon had purposed to begin the attack early in the morning, but rain had fallen in torrents during the night of the 17th and previous day, which delayed the attack until eleven o'clock of the eighteenth of June, when the attack commenced with artillery and musketry against the farm of Hougomont, which Jerome endeavored to carry. A few moments after Ney presented himself at the opposite extreme of the line. The marshal began a violent cannonade against the enemy's left, merely waiting for a signal to fall upon it.

A little after twelve o'clock strong columns were discovered on the right in the direction of Lasue and St. Lambert, supposed to be a detachment of Grouchy's men.

A detachment of three thousand horse were sent to a point where they could either cover Napoleon's flank or open a communication with Grouchy. A Prussian hussar, with an intercepted letter, announced the approach of Bulow with an estimated force of thirty thousand men.

This information determined Napoleon to hasten the attack. Ney at one o'clock made his first onslaught on the center, and by a vigorous charge pierced the first line of the Belgian brigade, but in turn was suddenly assailed by [11] an English division under Picton, who had been placed in the second line behind a rise of ground favorable to their concealment.

The combat now became furious§. The French columns under a murderous fire began to waver, and being charged by the English cavalry their ranks were broken. While these things were taking place against the left and left centre of the Allies, Jerome had dislodged the enemy from the park of Hougomont; but all efforts were vain against the embattled walls and chateau, which was defended by the English Guards.

Wellington was waiting for the promised aid of Blücher, and sought every means to prolong the contest. For him there was no hope of retreat; he must conquer or die. Seeing the efforts of the French were towards his centre, he called twenty battalions of Belgians and Brunswickers, and placed them in reserve behind the right and centre, and himself repaired to the defense of Hougomont. At this point there was an unsuccessful attempt made on the chateau by the division of Jerome to dislodge the enemy, which however failed and degenerated into a cannonade and skirmishes, without advantage to either side. In this interval Ney applied all his energy and force of character to repair the check which he had received in his first attack, and at four o'clock, after almost superhuman efforts, Ney's troops were masters of the two points of La Hair Sainte and Papelotte, which gave the French a decided superiority and all the chances were now in their favor.

At this moment it was found that Bulow, with the fourth corps of the Prussian army, thirty thousand strong, debouched from the woods and commenced an attack on the fifth corps of the French under Laban, with only about twelve thousand six hundred infantry at his disposal. Bulow advanced until he reached the rear of the LofC. [12]

French center, and it became all important to arrest his further advance. Accordingly, at five o'clock the Young Guard with a part of the Old Guard were directed against him with the purpose of afterwards falling upon Wellington with the united reserve. In the meantime Ney was merely to sustain himself in possession of the two points, La Hair Sainte and Papelotte.

Wellington on his side, encouraged by the attack of Bulow and reinforced by troops from his extreme right, sought to regain possession of the park of Hougomont and the farm house of La Hair Sainte, and for this purpose Hanoverian and English troops were directed to these two posts. At this moment Ney sought to get possession at all hazards of the plateau Mont St. Jean and throw his brave cuirassiers on the centre of the Allies. This was a glorious operation most heroically executed; but the plateau was crowned, and it became now necessary to sustain Ney where he was or allow his troops to be cut off. At this time, say after six o'clock, the reserves of the French cavalry to the number often thousand were ordered to advance, and caused great havoc on the enemy's lines, and their progress was only checked by the infantry of the second line. The combined English, Belgian, Hanoverian and Brunswick cavalry now charged the French, but the latter rallied again at a short distance and in turn drive back the Allies' horse upon their infantry. The repeated efforts of this cavalry are glorious beyond description, and the impassable perseverence of their adversaries is also deserving of the highest praise. Wellington himself says "that he never saw anything more admirable than the ten or twelve reiterated charges of the French curassieurs against troops of all arms."

But disorder now began in the allied army, reaching even to Brussels, where the French were momentarily expected. Bulow had been driven back by the French, [13] and Grouchy's cannon were now heard in the distance and victory seemed assured to the French.

To give the finishing stroke, at half past seven all the Guard unite and carry the strong position of Mont St. Jean, which was thought would certainly insure the balance in their favor. But this illusion was of short duration. The French cavalry had hardly rallied its victorious squadrons, when Blucher himself with one or more of his corps arrived.

A bold movement was made to change the fortunes of the day, led by the Emperor himself, aided by Marshal Ney and the brave soldiers of the Old Guard, but these herculean efforts proved of no avail. All that part of the imperial army that were sent against the Prussians under Bulow, broken and pierced by forces double their own numbers, took refuge in flight.

Wellington, seeing that the attack of Blucher was giving the decisive blow, collected his best troops, regained the park of Hougomont, fell upon the Old Guard with an overwhelming superiority and waged an indiscriminate warfare upon the disordered and retreating forces of the Emperor. The remnant of cuirassiers and the cavalry of the Guard do wonders; but all is in vain. Infantry, cavalry and artillery join pell mell in the retreat, leaving Napoleon to effect his own escape across the fields, accompanied only by his staff, without a battallion with which to check the enemy.

Thus ended one of the most courageously fought battles known to history. Whatever else may be said or thought of this world-renowned contest, the masters of military art are all agreed as to the ultimate cause of Napoleon's defeat. Had Grouchy prevented the junction of the Prussians under Blucher with those of Wellington, or flanked their columns on their retreat from the battle-field of Ligny by a lateral pursuit, and thus joined his forces to [p 14] those of the French at the opportune time at Waterloo, in all human probability the result would have added another chaplet to the brow of the all-conquering hero. After the battle of Waterloo, Napoleon returned to Paris. Those of the French forces who escaped, assembled between Laire and Paris. The ministers were called together to deliberate on the measures necessary to save the country. Napoleon appeared before this council, and urged conferring upon him dictorial powers or giving the same to the Chambers. But neither plan was adopted, and the result was the abdication of Napoleon in favor of his son under the title of Napoleon II., Emperor of the French. His purpose was to exile himself from Europe and come to America, but this purpose was thwarted, and he was doomed to end his days on the lone island of St. Helena.

It is known to students of history, that there is considerable diversity of sentiment, as well as of statements, in reference to this memorable struggle; and as the foregoing account of the campaign and battle is mainly gleaned from French sources, I deem it but just to the Allies to give briefly their version of the battle.

It was on the fifteenth of June that the French troops took up their line of march in three columns, which were pointed upon Charleroi and its vicinity. Napoleon had resolved to occupy Brussels, and his line of advance thus lay through the line of cantonments of the Allies. The Prussian general rapidly concentrated his forces and on the morning of the 16th Blucher was in position at Ligny with 80,000 men. Wellington's troops were concentrated at Quartre Bras, about nine miles distant.

On the 16th Napoleon in person attacked Blucher, and after a long and obstinate battle defeated him and compelled the Prussian army to retire toward Wavre. On [15] the same day Marshal Ney, with a large part of the French army, attacked the -English at Quartre Bras; and, though failing to defeat them, succeeded in preventing them from sending help to Blucher.

On the news of Blucher's defeat at Ligny, Wellington, having received promise of his assistance, retreated to and halted on the seventeenth of June at the memorable field of Waterloo. The scene of this celebrated action must be familiar either from description or recollection to all. I shall only aim at giving a general idea of the main features of an event resulting in the discrowning of Napoleon and a crowning victory for the Allies.

When, after a very hard-fought and long-doubtful day, Napoleon had succeeded in driving back the Prussian army from Ligny, and had resolved on marching himself to assail the English, he sent Marshal Grouchy on the 17th with 30,000 men to pursue the defeated Prussians and to prevent their marching to aid the Duke of Wellington,

Great criminations passed afterward between the Marshal and the Emperor as to how this duty was attempted to be performed and the reason of its failure. But it may be surmised that the failure was not so much the fault of Grouchy as the indomitable heroism and perseverance of Blucher himself in exposing a part of his army to be overwhelmed by Grouchy at Wavre on the 18th, while he urged the march of the mass of his troops upon Waterloo. "It is not at Wavre but at Waterloo," said the Marshal, "that the campaign is to be decided."

It was in full reliance on Blucher's aid that the duke stood his ground and fought the battle of Waterloo. The strength of the army under Wellington at Waterloo has been put at 67,655 men; Napoleon's at 71,947.

An accurate idea may be gained of the battle-field by picturing a valley between two and three miles long, of various breadths at different points, but generally not [16] exceeding half a mile. On each side of the valley there is a winding chain of low hills, running somewhat parallel with each other. The declivity from each of these ranges of hills to the intervening valley is gentle but not uniform. The English occupied the northern, the French the southern ridge. The village of Mont St. Jean is situated a little behind the center of the northern chain of hills; that of La Belle Alliance close behind the center of the southern ridge. The road from Charleroi to Brussels runs through each of these villages and bisects both the English and French positions; that of Wellington was strengthened by a village and farm called Mark Branie on the extreme right, and on his extreme left by two little hamlets. La Haye and Papellote.

Behind the whole British position was the forest of Soignies. In front of the British right was an old fashioned farm-house called Hougomont. In front of the British center was another farm-house called La Haye Sainte, which was held by British troops, and was of great importance to them in the progress of the battle.

The principal feature of the French position, in addition to those mentioned, was the village of Planchenoit in the rear of their right, and aided them in checking the advance of the Prussians.

The Prussians were on the morning of the 18th at Wavre, twelve miles east of Waterloo. Theilman with 17,006 men was left to defend Grouchy's contemplated attack on Wavre, whilst Bulow and Blucher moved toward Waterloo and began to appear on Napoleon's right in considerable numbers as early as five o'clock P.M. Never was the issue of a single battle looked forward to as involving consequences of such vast importance, or of such universal influence.

At about half past eleven o'clock Napoleon began the battle by attacking Hougomont. After nine hours of [17] deadly strife, victory perched upon the standard of the Allied forces, and the exultant armies of England and Prussia were in undisturbed possession of the heights lately occupied by their enemies.

The battle was lost by France past all recovery. The loss of the French army in killed and wounded is given at 18,500, with some 8,000 prisoners taken. The loss of the Allies were reported to be over twenty-three thousand in killed, wounded and missing.

Before the return of the Emperor from Elba, death had removed the most brilliant of his former Marshals. Grouchy, Soult, Davoust and Ney were the most renowned of those who espoused his cause after his return.

Grouchy was given Murat's place in charge of the cavalry. After the battle of Waterloo he brought off his corps safely, and was given the

command of the whole army, and arrived at Paris June 29, 1815. The Bourbons intended to have him shot, but he escaped to Philadelphia and died in that city in 1847. Soult was exiled and died at the age of 82 years, during the reign of Napoleon III, After Napoleon left the capital Davoust became provisional governor, and agreed to the capitulation and surrender of Paris. The saddest fate of all was that of Marshal Ney, who was shot on the seventh of December, 1815, in Luxemburg. It is said when the officer of the firing party saw who it was, he became petrified, but another was found to take his place, and the world-renowned warrior fell with six balls in his body and three in the head and neck. The forms of law could not be carried out* the demands of revenge could be.

There are on the battle-ground and in the Church and church-yard of the village of Waterloo numerous monuments and tablets of marble to commemorate the deeds and designates the resting places of officers and soldiers, who fell in that memorable conflict. The most noted of [18] these is known as "Lion Mount," a vast accumulation of of earth, covering the bones of many that were slain in battle, and marks the spot where the Prince of Orange was wounded, and near to which was the desperate charges of the French cavalry, just before the appearance of Blucher with the Prussian legions that determined the conflict. On this rises a conical mound two hundred feet in height and surmounted with a bronze figure of the British lion, with paws overlapping each other, and, significantly enough, his body heading towards France.

Of this "Child of Destiny," it may be said, that his military achievements have not been surpassed in all the centuries agone. It is equally true that he wielded this power for ambitious, selfish ends, and to the irreparable injury, as well of his own, as the other kingdoms devastated by the tread of his armies. His shameful putting away of the Empress Josephine, and his utter disregard of every social and moral virtue, brand him as a moral leper, whose life and example was only evil, and that continually.

The gilded dome that has been raised over his sleeping dust on the banks of the Seine, in the Church of the Invalides, may serve to inspire the looker-on with its grandeur and beauty, but it soothes none of the pangs of sorrow that he brought to the sons and daughters of his native land.

Perhaps the most enduring monument to his fame and greatness will be found in the Code of laws framed by him, known as "The Code Napoleon," that is substantially the same now in force in France, and most of the states of Europe, as also in some of the states of our own country. But to the rising generation there is much more of warning, in the life and character of this man, than of commendation and emulation, —

"Who would soar to such a viewless height, To set in ignominous night?" [19] And what of France? The darkest, bloodiest chapter in the book of time is the slaughter of St. Bartholomew on the banks of the Seine. The conspiracy that conceived and the wickedness that executed this plot, by which one hundred thousand of French Hugenots were slain because of their religious belief, will go down the passing ages as the monster crime known to history. Who does not see in this fiendish deed, its legitimate outgrowth in the Reign of Terror? the Guillotine, the horrorsof the commune, and the deadly inquisition? Yea, more; God's holy day has been set at naught, its observance discontinued and scoffed at. And from that day forth, it would seem as if the avenging angel had been hovering over this delightsome land, with bended bow and destructive quivers, crying, "How long? O Lord! how long? Wilt thou not avenge the death of thy saints? Verily, verily, this people have sown to the wind, and are reaping and garnering the whirlwind, as their harvest."[135]

26 April 1905 Sir Almeric Fitzroy on a tour of the Lowlands:

Our last morning at Brussels was devoted to the Field of Waterloo, and I must admit to an access of no ordinary feeling on the survey of that memorable spot. Fortunately little has been done to disturb its features, and the restricted area on which the battle was fought makes it easy to decipher the whole plan from the summit of the mound now surmounted by the Belgian Lion. Every point in the landscape and every phase in the struggle are there clear to the eye, and it wants very little imagination to see the field swarming with combatants and to hear the din of battle in the air. We got away as quickly as we could from the crowd of sightseers and walked across the open to Hougoumont, about a mile off. Here the traces of the battle concentrate and one feels in the presence of the most personal and vital interest of the day. A plantation to the south has disappeared, but the buildings and enclosures are otherwise pretty much as they were left on the evening of June 18th, 1815, the loopholing of the walls being eloquent of the grim struggle of which the Chateau was the theatre. We were taken over the ground by an old Flamande of most direct and emphatic speech, who knew every inch of it and its associations. At one point in the wall I knelt down to train my umbrella through a loophole, upon which she cried, "Êtes-vous soldat?" and on my replying "Non, moi pékin," she broke into the most uproarious laughter. "You were not born yesterday; you were born the day before yesterday." One could not fail to be struck by the extraordinary oversight of the French in not bringing artillery to bear on the defences of the post; in two hours, with their immense superiority of guns, the wall and buildings might have been demolished, whereas Reille's incompetence in directing infantry attacks upon the position kept 12,000 French troops occupied the whole day in an affair in which no more than 1,200 of the enemy were engaged, and that when time was everything ; and what makes it more astonishing is the fact that this whole episode in the fight was within a few hundred yards of Napoleon's position at La Belle [253] Alliance, and within easy view of the great Captain himself. Indeed, the smallness of the ground over which his troops manoeuvred makes it impossible to acquit Napoleon of ultimate responsibility for the tactical errors of his subordinates.[136]

The patriotic lyric, then, has not been written either by Mr. Kipling or Mr. Henley; and we may safely say it will not be written in this generation, for it is foreign to the genius of Englishmen, which requires a more reflective note. The nearest that Englishmen care to go to lyrical expression about national affairs is such a sonnet as Wordsworth's "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour," or the dedicatory poem appended to Tennyson's "Idylls," which contains a memorable passage about the retention of the colonies:

'So loyal is too costly! friends your love
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and go.'
Is this the tone of Empire? here the faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak
So feebly? wealthier wealthier hour by hour!
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas?'[137]

Waterloo in London

22 June, 1815, The news of the victory arrives in London:

London is one continual scene of uproar and joy in consequence of the total defeat of Bonaparte at Waterloo by Lord Wellington. This is announced by the Park; and Tower guns and by placards upon the gates of the Mansion House. It is also publicly declared that upon Friday and Saturday nights the public buildings are to be illuminated on the occasion.

Mr. D. of Boston having died suddenly, I was notified to attend his funeral, and accordingly went at 7 o'clock in the morning, being the time appointed. Those who were present were furnished by the undertaker with a pair of gloves, a mourning cloak and scarf. The hearse was followed by mourning coaches, preceded [p] by two mutes bearing black banners. At the graveyard the corpse was met by the priest who performed the service in the episcopalian form. At the entrance of the yard on our return we were divested of our cloaks, weepers and gloves, the two latter of which we retained in remembrance of the deceased. Funerals here at this early hour are quite customary. Seldom is there any after one in the forenoon !

On Friday and Saturday night all the public buildings and many private ones were illuminated. Many fanciful and beautiful devices were exhibited. Among those which were prominently beautiful were the excise office, the Bank, Post-office, Somerset House, Admiralty, Horse Guards, Carlton House, Foreign and Home Department (here the eagles taken from the French were displayed), Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh's houses, etc. One house in St. James' was particularly fine. The whole front resembled a fortress, with cannon, flags, &c., formed by colored lamps. A publican who keeps a tavern with the sign of a cock, had a large transparency representing a game cock strutting over his fallen combatant, with the [p] inscription " England the cock of the walk ! " The crowd was very great, articularly in front of Somerset House. The mob would not suffer the coaches to pass excepting the coachmen and footmen took off their hats as an acknowledgment of the favor. Squibs and crackers were plentifully distributed into the carriages, and the alarm which the ladies were consequently thrown into appeared to delight John Bull exceedingly. I did not return to my lodging either night till one o'clock. This was early, as it is not customary to get to bed here until twelve upon ordinary occasions. Of course the whole morning is lost in bed. At six in the morning there are but very few persons seen in the streets. The customary breakfast hour in the house where I boarded was from nine to ten. This too was called an early one![138]

25 February 1819 The Emperor's travelling carriage is displayed in London:

One of the trophies of - Waterloo which lias excited a great share of popular curiosity in England, is Bonaparte's travelling carriage, with the various utensils for eating, sleeping, writing, kc. with which it was furnished.

Having gone the rounds of public exhibition in England and Scotland, it is now kept for show in an apartment of Bullock's Museum, where 1 have just seen it. It is surprisingly adapted to the multifarious purposes of a warrior who is constantly on the march. Scarcely an article of apparatus appertaining to the table or the bed chamber of a private gentleman could be named which had not its appropriate place in this imperial machine, and that too without rendering it in appearance much larger than a common private carriage. lt$ exterior is very neat, but so plain, that it might easily be mistaken for the vehicle of a common citizen. When every thing was in its place, a stranger might he conveyed in it a great distance without suspecting that it contained much more than the ordinary conveniences of a traveller; yet by an easy alteration it became a bed in which the great Emperor might repose at full length, or an arm chair, a writing-desk, or a dinner table, at the pleasure of the commander. It is an exemplification of the momentum in part surpassing anything I could readily have imagined to be possible, in the way of a travelling carriage. The cups, spoons, plates, &c. chiefly of gold and silver plate, are also models of convenience, and his firelock, pistols and other arms were within his reach. Many of the articles it contained, were exposed to public sale in London, and brought extravagant prices.

15th. Wrote to Luttrel to Panshanger to make my apology to the Cowpers, having promised to go down there on Saturday, but find I cannot. Let off my dinner with the Knight of Kerry to-day, on account of the death of some friend of his. Felt so low (both from exhaustion of stomach and some melancholy thoughts suggested by my task) that I could not help crying a little. Went with L. and the Montgomerys to the painter's, where she is sitting for her picture: from thence to see the picture of [316] Waterloo in the Park. They left me at Burgess's door, and Burgess having pressed Montgomery to stay for dinner, he did. A good deal of talk about Sheridan, but not many new lights on the subject. Went in the evening to Mrs. Montgomery's. [139]

Every child has the contents of the Spanish Armoury by heart. Like most visitants, I suppose, I handled the Spanish Ranceurs, made to stab, hew down, or cut the bridles of the cavalry — thrust my arm into the shield with a little pistol-barrel sticking out of the boss, and took aim through the grating; a very awkward and inefficient weapon — shook sundry long iron-shod pikes, which looked as though they might have belonged to the Macedonian phalanx — brandished Danish and Saxon war-clubs — flourished a two-edged, cross hilted Saxon broad-sword — felt the edge of the axe which beheaded the beauteous Ann Boleyn, and afterwards, the Earl of Essex, — an implement shaped like a housewife's chopping knife — rolled about divers star-shot, chain-shot, and link-shot, found on board the Armada — screwed up my thumb in a little trinket very prettily contrived for that operation, but found the screw too badly worn to hold — essayed to endue my neck in an iron cravat — poised a Spanish boarding-pike, with six spikes and a spear at one end, and a matchlock pistol at the other; and strutted about with Hal's walking-staff, armed with three match-lock pistols, which procured him the honour of being sent one night to the round-house, as he was taking his princely pastime in smashing windows and knocking down watchmen. I was not particularly struck with the figure of Queen Bess, speechifying to her troops at Tilbury, in her suit of armour and white silk embroidered petticoat; although the grey headed warder assured me, that the attentive and graceful attitude of the page was much admired.

In The House Armoury, I filed along in front of the wax figures of the Edwards, and Henrys, and James, and Charles, and Georges, all mounted on wooden horses, and in armour. [122] Save and except the armour in which the figures are clad, with reverence be it spoken, this is a very pitiful exhibition. Here is an immense collection of the spoils of Waterloo; and I tried on a steel helmet which once covered some poor fellow's skull — Who was slain in the great victory.

Here, too, is John of Gaunt's coat of mail, with all his armour complete — the wearer, by the by, must have been eight feet high at least; — besides an abundance of cuirasses, some perforated with bullet-holes — tilting armour, and horses' coats of mail; and, by some inexplicable fancy in classification, a model of the original machine for throwing silk, imported from Italy by Sir Thomas Loombe, in 1734. [140]

July 12 1827 Prince Pückler Muskau visits Vauxhall Gardens:

Yesterday evening I went for the first time to Vauxhall, a public garden, in the style of Tivoli at Paris, but on a far grander and more brilliant scale. The illumination with thousands of lamps of the most dazzling [156] colours is uncommonly splendid. Especially beautiful were large bouquets of flowers hung in the trees, formed of red, blue, yellow, and violet lamps, and the leaves and stalks of green; there were also chandeliers of a gay Turkish sort of pattern of various hues, and a temple for the music, surmounted with the royal arms and crest. Several triumphal arches were not of wood, but of cast-iron, of light transparent patterns, infinitely more elegant, and quite as rich as the former. Beyond this the gardens extended with all their variety and their exhibitions, the most remarkable of which was the battle of Waterloo. They open at seven: there was an opera, rope-dancing, and at ten o'clock (to conclude) this same battle. It is curious enough, and in many scenes the deception really remarkable.

An open part of the gardens is the theatre, surrounded by venerable horsechesnuts mingled with shrubs. Between four of the former, whose foliage is almost impervious, was a ' tribune,' with benches for about twelve hundred persons, reaching to the height of forty feet. Here we took our seats, not without a frightful sqeeze, in which we had to give and take some hearty pushes. It was a warm and most lovely night: the moon shone extremely bright, and showed a huge red curtain, hung, at a distance of about fifty paces from us, between two gigantic trees, and painted with the arms of the United Kingdom. Behind the curtain rose the tops of trees as far as one could see. After a moment's pause, the discharge of a cannon thundered through the seeming wood, and the fine band of the second regiment of Guards was heard in the distance. The curtain opened in the centre, was quickly drawn asunder; and we saw, as if by the light of day, the outwork of Houguemont [Hougoumont] on a gently rising ground, amid high trees. The French ' Gardes' in correct uniform now advanced out of the wood to martial music, with the bearded ' Sapeurs' at their head. They formed into line; and Napoleon on his gray horse, and dressed in his gray surtout, accompanied by several marshals, rode past them en revue.' A thousand voices shout ' Vive l'Empereur !' the Emperor touches his hat, sets off at a gallop, and the troops bivouac in dense groups. A distant firing is then heard; \he scene becomes more tumultuous, and the French march out. Shortly after, Wellington appears with, his staff, all very good copies of the individuals, harangues his troops, and rides slowly off.

The great original was among the spectators, and laughed heartily at his representative. The fight is begun by the * tirailleurs;' whole columns then advance upon each other, and charge with the bayonet;, the French cuirassiers charge the Scotch Grays; and as there are a thousand men and two hundred horses in action, and no spare of gunpowder, it is, for a moment, very like a real battle. The storming of Houguomont, which is set on fire by several shells, was particularly well done: the combatants were for a time hidden by the thick smoke of real fire, or only rendered partially visible by the flashes of musquetry, while the foreground was strewed with dead and dying. As the smoke cleared off, Houguemont was seen in flames, the English as conquerors, the French as captives: in the distance was Napoleon on horseback, and behind him his carriage-and- four hurrying across the scene. The victorious Wellington was greeted with loud cheers mingled with the thunder of the distant cannon. The ludicrous side of the exhibition was the making Napoleon race across the stage several times, pursued and fugitive, to tickle English vanity, and afford a triumph to the plebs' in good and bad coats. But such is the lot [158] of the great ! The conqueror before whom the world trembled, for whom the blood of millions was freely shed, for whose glance or nod kings waited and watched, is now a child's pastime, a tale of his times, vanished like a dream, the Jupiter gone, and as it seems, Scapan only remaining.

Although past midnight it was still early enough to go from the strange scene of illumination and moonlight to a splendid ball at Lady L 's, where I found a blaze of diamonds, handsome women, dainty refreshments, a luxurious supper, and gigantic ennui; I therefore went to bed as early as five o'clock. [141]

I reached the Rose Hotel, Wiesbaden, on the 1st of July, and remained there doing a strict "cure" and, thank God, getting gradually better, so that within three weeks I was able to walk a considerable distance. About the middle of July I removed to Homburg and joined my wife and our sons there, where we all remained until August 20th.

At Homburg I met a very interesting man - Sir William Fraser. He was engaged at the time in trying to fix for certain the place in Brussels where the famous ball given by the Duchess of Richmond was held before Waterloo. It is strange that the date of this ball has been nearly always given as "the eve of Waterloo"; as a matter of fact it took place on the eve of Quatre Bras, that is, on the night of the 15th of June. The Duke of Wellington and his staff were not in Brussels between the 16th and the 18th, and the Duke of Brunswick - "Brunswick's fated chieftain" who, according to Byron, sat "within a windowed niche of that high hall" - fell on the 16th at Quatre Bras.

The point, however, on which Sir William Fraser was making inquiries, was the identification of the house where the ball was held. He believed that he had discovered it in the Rue de la Blanchisserie. I was able to give him some information which confirmed his view - that the ball had not been given in the house itself, but that the house being a small one communication [137] had been opened with a large warehouse behind, belonging to a coachmaker, and that there the great event took place. What I was able to tell him is recorded in his book Words on Wellington; he says:

Mr. Teignmouth-Shore writes to me "Some years ago I was going to Brussels, and spoke to my friend Lord William Pitt Lennox as to the ball which his mother had given there, and at which he had been present. I inquired whether he could give me any indication of where the house was, as I had on other occasions failed to find it. He told me that the ball had not taken place actually in the residence of the Duchess of Richmond (which was in a turning off the Rue Neuve near the end of that street), but in some sort of a place at the back of behind. This rough and ready description seems to correspond with your view, and to confirm its truth,"

There was a good deal of correspondence in The Times on this subject, and Mr. Richard Edgecumb in a letter to that paper dated September the 18th, he having given much attention to the subject, quotes my evidence as conclusive. I may thus claim to have taken some part in the settlement of a question of historic interest.

The house referred to is No. 40-42, Rue de la Blanchisserie, and the former carriage depot at the back is now a granary.[142]

Second Issue complete document	22 November 2013	Kevin Rogers
Third Issue completed document, additional accounts	9 December 2013	

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