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**The Autobiography of Sergeant
William Lawrence A Hero of the
Peninsular and Waterloo
Campaigns**

William Lawrence

Imprint

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THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
Sergeant William Lawrence,

*A HERO OF THE PENINSULAR AND WATERLOO CAM-
PAIGNS;*

EDITED BY
GEORGE NUGENT BANKES,
AUTHOR OF "A DAY OF MY LIFE AT ETON," ETC., ETC.
London
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET
1886

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London: SAMPSON LOW & CO., 188, Fleet Street, E.C.

(p. v) PREFACE.

Sergeant William Lawrence died at Studland in Dorsetshire in the year 1867, bequeathing the manuscript of the accompanying autobiography to the family one of whose members now submits it to the notice of the public. Circumstances, which perhaps may be too often interpreted as really meaning an unfortunate tendency to procrastination, have hitherto prevented it being put into shape with a view to publication: one thing after another has intervened, and the work has been passed on from hand to hand, until after these long years a final effort has been made, and the self-imposed task completed.

The book is simply sent forth on its own merits in the hope that there are yet some, if not indeed many whose hearts are never weary of the tales of England's glory in the past, and seek to find in them reason why that glory should be perpetuated. Many an account have we already had of the victories of the Peninsula and Waterloo, and this but adds one more to the list: though perhaps it (p. vi) may be regarded in somewhat of a supplementary light, as treating of the campaigns neither from an entirely outside and *soi-disant* unprejudiced standpoint, nor with the advantages possessed by one who may have had access to the councils of the authorities, but as they were seen by one who came and went and did as he was told, and was as it were nothing more than a single factor in the great military machine that won our country those battles of which she has so much right to be proud. What criticisms of the conduct of the war our veteran occasionally does indulge in are of course chiefly founded on the camp gossip current at the time, and in reading them it must always be borne in mind that events at the moment of their happening often do not present the same appearance as when viewed from the calmer security of after years, and they must be judged accordingly.

As to the style. Lawrence, though he never betrayed the fact to the authorities during his whole military career, being possessed of a wonderful aptitude for mental calculation, and always contriving to get some assistance in concealing his deficiency when his official duties necessitated his doing so, and though he has carefully avoid-

ed all direct allusion to it in this work itself, never learnt to write, and the first form in which his history was committed to paper was from dictation. The person who took down the words as he spoke them, one of his fellow-servants, was but imperfectly educated himself, so that it may be imagined that the result of the narrative (p. vii) of one illiterate person being written down by another was that the style was not likely to aspire to any very high degree of literary merit. Still, to preserve the peculiar character of the book, it has been thought better to leave it as far as possible in its original shape: some emendations have perforce had to be made to render it actually intelligible—for instance, in the original manuscript there is scarcely any punctuation from beginning to end, with the exception of at those places where the amanuensis evidently left off his day's work; but the language, with its occasional half-flights into a poetry of about the standard of an Eton boy's verses, its crude moralizings, and imperfect applications of old proverbs and fables, has not been altered, nor, so far as there can be said to be one, has the method. It is trusted, therefore, that, remembering that the main object in the editor's mind has been to let the venerable hero tell his story in exactly his own words so far as his meaning can be thereby made out, no one will take any unnecessary pains to count up how often the words "likewise" and "proceed" are repeated in these pages, or to point out that the general style of the book combines those of Tacitus, Caesar's Commentaries, and the Journeyings of the Israelites. Nor, it is to be hoped, will any one be too severe in his comments on the fact that to the mind of a man in Lawrence's position the obtaining of a pair of boots was apparently quite as important an event as the storming of Badajoz, or the finding (p. viii) of a sack with a ham and a couple of fowls in it as the winning of the battle of Waterloo.

Interesting perhaps the book will prove as giving some of the details of what our soldiers had to undergo in those old times of war. Hardships they now have to endure, and endure them they do well, but all must be thankful to know that they are far better off than their forefathers; who, unsuitably clad, half starved, and with their commissariat such even as it was disgracefully mismanaged, and yet forbidden very often under pain of death to pick up what they could for themselves, submitted on the shortest notice to punishments which would nowadays call forth the indignant protests of

hosts of newspaper correspondents; and still in spite of all fought stubbornly through every obstacle till they had gained the objects for which they had been sent out. What wonder can there be that under all these circumstances we should find our hero somewhat hardened in his estimate of human sympathies, and not altogether disinclined to view everything, whether it concerned life or death, or marriage, or parting or meeting, all in one phlegmatic way, as occurring as a matter of course? What ought to strike us as more curious is that he was only reduced to that level of intellect where he thought even that much of anything at all besides his actual eating, drinking, and sleeping.

But to go on further would be to depart from the original intention of letting the book speak for itself. To conclude therefore: there is much to (p. ix) wade through, though it is all more or less relevant to the progress of the story: some readers may like one part and some may prefer another; and if the pruning-hook had once been introduced it would have been difficult to decide what to leave and what to take, or whether it would not be better to publish another volume of the things pruned, since it had been determined to publish at all. But if the reader will accomplish the wading to the end, there will he find summed up in one simple paragraph the autobiographer's own ideas about the merits of his work. May it be received in the same spirit as it is sent forth!

(p. 001) THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SERGEANT WILLIAM LAWRENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Lawrence's Parentage – Birth and early training – Apprenticed – He falls out with his master – Is beaten and resolves to leave – A few words to masters in general – Finds a companion – Precautions against being forgotten too soon – To PooleviâWareham – Engages for a voyage to Newfoundland – Recaptured and sent back, but escapes again on the way – Receives some good advice, and starts to Dorchester, picking up some fresh company on the way.

As I have been asked to furnish as complete an account as I am able of my own life, and it is usual when people undertake to do so to start at as early a period as possible, I will begin with my parentage. My father and mother were of humble means, living in the village of Bryant's Piddle, in (p. 002) the county of Dorset. My father had been formerly a small farmer on his own account in the same village, but having a large and hungry family to provide for, he became reduced in circumstances, and was obliged to give up his farm, and work as a labourer.

I was born in 1791, and, being one of seven children, found myself compelled at a very early age to seek my own livelihood as best I could, so that I had not much opportunity for education, though I cannot say that I thought that much hardship at the time, being fonder of an open-air life. I was employed for some time in frightening the birds off the corn, for which I received the sum of twopence a day; after which I was advanced to sixpence a day as ploughboy, in which situation I remained until I was fourteen years of age. My father then obtained twenty pounds from a friend, with which he apprenticed me to Henry Bush, a builder living at Studland, a village in the same county, for seven years, the agreement being that my master was to find me in food, lodging, and clothes, and I was to receive no wages.

I had not been with him very long before I found that he did not suit me as a master at all well. Things went on pretty smoothly for

the first month or so, that is, while the money for my apprenticeship lasted; but after that he became rather difficult to please, and besides took to allowancing me in food, which was a much more serious matter both to my mind and palate.

(p. 003) However, I rubbed on for about nine months, until one Sunday, when I had gone out to church in the morning and had happened to stay in the village all day, on my return home at last after dark I found the house locked up. I accordingly proceeded to Swanage, the nearest town, and called on my master's sister, who lived there, who took me in and was giving me some supper, when my master chanced to come in himself, and was very angry with me and told me to come along with him, declaring that he would pay me out in the morning. When we got home he ordered me to see if the garden gate was closed, which I thought rather strange, as it was a thing I had never had to do before; but meanwhile he slipped upstairs with a horsewhip, which he produced suddenly in the morning, and gave me a good thrashing before I had well got my clothes on. I bundled downstairs pretty much as I was, and out of the house as quick as I could, saying to myself, "This is the last thrashing I will ever receive at your hands;" and sure enough it was, for that same week I planned with another apprentice near the same place, who was under very similar circumstances to myself, to take our departure on the following Sunday; so that was the end of my apprenticeship.

And I should like here to warn any master whose eye may fall on this story not to treat any lad who is put under his care too harshly, as it is very often the means of discouraging him in the occupation he is intended to follow, and (p. 004) of driving him from his home, and even from his country, and to his ruin. Thus even in my case it will be seen that it was all my master's want of kindness that forced me into a very different sort of life to that which my parents intended for me; into one which, though it was not altogether so ruinous, was perhaps more perilous than many others, and on which I can only now look back in wonder that I have been spared to tell my story at all.

But I must go back to the day on which myself and my companion had resolved to leave our homes, which as I have before stated

was a Sunday, no better opportunity appearing by which we might get a few hours' start unbeknown to our employers. We met early in the morning, but finding that neither of us had either money or food, and I likewise wanting to get hold of my indentures, we waited until the family had left the house as usual to go to Swanage to chapel, when I made my entry into the house by the back door, which was only fastened by a piece of rope-yarn. I could not find my indentures, but in the search for them I came upon a seven-shilling piece, which I put into my pocket, as I thought it might be useful. I also cut about three or four pounds off a flitch of bacon that hung in the chimney corner, nicely marked to prevent any being lost on account of my late allowed state. I did not study that much at the time, however, but took what I thought we should require, and when I had put it into a bag with the necessary amount of bread, (p. 005) we marched off together up to a place near called King's Wood, where we put a little of our bread and raw bacon out of sight, for we were both hungry. Then we went on to Wareham, a distance of about ten miles, where we changed our seven-shilling piece, and had a pint of small beer to help us in again lightening our bundle; and, after about an hour's rest, proceeded on for Poole, about nine miles from Wareham. We felt very tired, but still walked on, and gained our destination at a very late hour, owing to which we had some trouble in obtaining a lodging for the remaining part of the night; but at last we found one in a public house, where we finished our bread and bacon, together with some more beer, the best day's allowance we had had for some time past.

We slept very soundly, and in the morning went round to inquire for service on board the Newfoundland packets. We soon found a merchant of the name of Slade, who engaged us for two summers and a winter, myself for 20*l.* and my companion for 18*l.* for the whole time, and our food and lodging till the ship left the harbour. But we were not long in finding that our destination was not to be Newfoundland, for on the very next day my companion's master came to Poole in search of us, and meeting his own boy wandering about the market, soon wished to know what business he had there, and took him into custody. He likewise asked him if he had seen anything of me, and the boy told him I was in Poole, but he (p. 006) did not know where. I at the time was at work on board the ship,

but in the evening, having fallen in with the mate, he asked me where I was going. When I said to my lodgings, beginning rather to shake, for I thought by his manner that there was something up, he told me that I had better come with him. I did so, and presently found myself with my companion's master, who finished up for the night by having me put into gaol.

Next day we were both taken on board the Swanage market-boat to go back, but when we had got as far as South Deep, near Brownsea Castle, we had to anchor, as the wind was contrary. A number of stone-boats were lying there at the time, and one of the boatmen, named Reuben Masters, took charge of me to convey me back to my master's house, as he was going by it; so we landed, and proceeded towards home. When we were about half a mile off it, however, we met my mistress, who, after inquiring where I had been, told me that her husband would have nothing more to do with me, but would send me to prison. I could have told her I did not want to trouble him any more, but I thought I would leave that for them to find out; so I went on with the man to the next gate, when, seeing an opportunity to bolt; I took it and popped over to the other side; and all I heard the man say was, "Well, you may go, and your master may run after you for himself if he likes;" so I knew there was not much to fear from him.

(p. 007) I ran down into the common, to a place called Agglestone, which I knew had once been a great place for foxes, and there I crawled into a hole and remained till dusk. Then I came out of my den, and again made my way to Wareham. I called this time at the "Horse and Groom," where, having related my story to the landlady, she kindly gave me food and lodging for the night, advising me to go back to my parents and state my master's behaviour. So next morning, after she had provided me with breakfast, and some bread and cheese to eat on the way, I set off for Dorchester.

On the road I met with two boys who were going to Poole to try and get a ship bound for Newfoundland. I wanted some companions on my journey, so I told them not to go to Poole, as the press-gang was about, and, when I had been there myself a few days before, had fired a blunderbuss at me, but I happened to pop round the corner and so had escaped. The boys did not seem fit for sol-

diers, or sailors either, for they looked as if they had lain in the sun for some time, and one of them was warped. When they heard my story, they turned back and kept with me. They soon began to complain of hunger, but when I asked them if they had got any money, they said they had only one shilling and a farthing, with a hundred miles to travel before they reached their home again; so I took out my bread and cheese and divided it amongst us. We were very tired and hungry when we arrived at Dorchester, and I tried (p. 008) to persuade them to change the shilling, but they would not. However, they gave me the farthing; it was not much certainly for a hungry boy, but it served to purchase a cake for me to devour; and then I and my companions parted, and what became of them afterwards I do not know.

(p. 009) CHAPTER II.

Lawrence's forlorn state of mind in Dorchester — He meets with a friend in need, who takes him to enlist — Is discovered and recovered by his parents, and ordered back sharp to his master — His military spirit proves too strong for him on the way, and carries him, through the agency of a friendly soldier, first to Bridport, and then to Taunton — Various further attempts at enlisting, slightly influenced by the disinterestedness of his friend, and ending in his joining the Fortieth Regiment — Subsequent changes of quarters, and final orders for foreign service.

Dorchester was only about eight miles from my parents' house, but I had never really had one serious thought of going to them. I seemed to myself to be completely friendless, and wandered through and through the town, watching the preparations for the fair, which was to take place the next day, not being able to make up my mind what to do or where to go.

(p. 010) At length, more by instinct than aim, I wandered into the stable-yard of one of the principal inns, where I was brought nearer to my senses by hearing the ostler sing out sharply, "Hullo, my man, what is your business?" I told him I was a friendless boy in search of some employment by which I might get a livelihood, as I was very hungry and had no money, or something to that effect; to which he replied that if I would brush about a bit, and help him rub over the

horses, he would find me plenty to eat. I soon went to work, and finished the task he gave me; and sure enough he fulfilled his share of the bargain by bringing the requisite article in the shape of a lump of bread and beef enough for two or three meals. After eating as much as I wanted, as I felt very tired, I made up a bed for myself with some straw, and putting the remainder of my meal into my handkerchief to serve as a pillow, laid myself down, and the ostler having given me a rug to pull over me, I slept soundly there the whole night.

In the morning, after I had done a little more in the stable, I walked out with my new friend into the street, where seeing some soldiers, I told him I should like to become one. He said he knew where he could enlist me, and took me straight to the rendezvous, which was in a public-house, where we met a sergeant of artillery, who gave him two guineas for bringing me and myself five for coming, and when my measurement had been taken, a proceeding (p. 011) which was accompanied with no small amount of joking, I was put into an old soldier's coat, and with three or four yards of ribbon hanging from my cap, paraded the town with other recruits, entering and treating some one or other in almost every public-house.

It almost seemed, however, as if my hopes were again to be blighted, for in the very first house I entered, there sat a farmer from my home who knew me very well, and exclaimed on seeing me, "Hullo, young fellow, as you make your bed so you must lie on it." I entreated him not to tell my father and mother where and how he had seen me, and made my exit as quickly as possible; but later in the day I encountered another man, my father's next-door neighbour, who also recognized me immediately. I offered him the price of a gallon of ale not to say anything, and he promised, taking the money, but as soon as he got home he went to my father and acquainted him with what I was up to.

How I was spending the rest of the night meanwhile can better be conceived than described; but next morning, as I was going up to the Town Hall with an officer to be sworn in, who should meet us but my father and mother. On their telling the officer that I was an apprentice, he gave me up to them without any further trouble, except that he asked me what had become of my bounty money,

and on finding that I had only seventeen shillings and sixpence left out of my whole five guineas, (p. 012) kindly took the care of even that off my hands. Then we marched off home, and my father went to find out what was to be done in the matter from a magistrate, who advised him to take me back to Dorchester to be tried at the next sittings; which advice being acted on, I was severely reprimanded by the bench, and given my choice of serving my time or else going to prison. Of course I chose the former, and they gave me a letter to take with me to my master. When I got downstairs I met the officer who had enlisted me, who told me that if my master was unwilling to take me back, he would enlist me again; and finding on asking me if I had any money that he had taken all I possessed, he gave me a shilling and wished me well.

My father sent me off at once with strict orders to get back to Studland as quickly as I could, and that was all I received from him either in the way of blessing or anything: so with a heavy heart I set out on my retreat from Dorchester. I had not gone very far when I was overtaken by a dairyman's cart, in which the owner gave me a lift, asking me where I was bound for. I told him a little of my story, and showed him the letter, that he might open it and see what was inside: which, when he had done, he said I could go back quite safely, for my master would not be able to hurt me. That put me into rather better spirits, though I did not intend to go back all the same.

I rode along with the man as far as he went, (p. 013) and then continued on foot to a village called Winfrith, where I went into a public-house, and feeling hungry, ordered some bread and cheese. A soldier happened to be in there, who was on furlough, bound for Bridport, and the very sight of him again revived my old spirit and made me long to be like him. I got into conversation with him, and said how much I wished to be a soldier, to which he straightway answered that he could enlist me for the Fortieth Regiment Foot, which gave sixteen guineas bounty. I thought that was a great deal, and that if I got it I should not want for money for some time, so I quickly accepted his proposal: I soon found out, though, that I was very mistaken in my views about the money lasting.

I was rather afraid of finding myself in Dorchester again, so tried to persuade him to go round another way, but we at last slipped

through at night, and got to Winterborne, where we put up, going on next morning in the coach to Bridport. I was again baffled for a time on arriving there, for the coachman knew all about me, and remarked in a way that was no doubt meant well, that it was but yesterday that my father had got me out of the artillery. The soldier then asked me if I was an apprentice, and I thought there seemed nothing to do but to tell him I was: on which he promptly made me get down, and taking me across some fields to his home, kept me there quietly for three days.

It seemed best after that to go on to Taunton (p. 014) in Somersetshire, where we went to the barracks and saw the colonel, who on the soldier telling him that he had brought me up as a recruit, asked me of what trade I was. I replied that I was a labourer, which he said was all right, for labourers made the best soldiers: but he could only give me two and a half guineas bounty: at which point we parted from him, and went to try the recruiting sergeant of the Marines, who promised us sixteen guineas bounty when I arrived at the Plymouth headquarters. This did not suit my conductor, however, as there was nothing for him after paying my coach expenses, so he asked me what I intended to do, and for his part advised me to go back to my master, saying he would not mind the expenses he had gone to for me. But as I had by this time destroyed the letter, I preferred going back to the Fortieth Regiment, so we went and again saw the colonel, who gave my companion two guineas, and sent me into barracks.

Next day I received my clothes, and in about a week more was sworn in before a magistrate, receiving my bounty at the same time. Very shortly afterwards orders came for the regiment to march to Winchester, where we remained for about a month without anything of any note occurring. I began to drill twice a day directly I joined, and soon learnt the foot drill, after which I was put on to musketry drill.

From Winchester we removed to Portsmouth, where we lay for a week, and were then ordered to (p. 015) Bexhill barracks in Sussex, where our First battalion was lying, and on our arrival a number of men were drafted out of our battalion, which was the Second, into the First, to make it a thousand strong, myself being one of the

number. Then orders came for us to proceed to Portsmouth to embark on foreign service, our country being at the time at war with France and Spain.

(p. 016) CHAPTER III.

Embarkation of the regiment at Portsmouth — Lawrence's feelings at the time beginning to be rather mixed — Heartrending partings witnessed and somewhat moralized upon by him — A few more words of advice, this time intended for apprentices — Ample opportunity for self-introspection afforded during the first week of the voyage — Incidents while becalmed — Arrival at Rio, and entertainment of the troops by the Queen of Portugal — Monte Video — Disembarkation and first brushes with the enemy — Barbarity of the Spaniards — Lawrence's feelings at last definitely uncomfortable — Sir Samuel Auchmuty's dislike to finery in soldiers — The town invested and subsequently stormed — Lawrence in the forlorn hope — Surrender of the Citadel.

We passed the night before our embarkation in the town: a night to many perhaps the bitterest they had ever experienced, but to myself, on the (p. 017) other hand, one mainly of joy, for I felt that I had at last outwitted my pursuers. But though I cannot say that I was yet at all repentant, it must not be thought that I felt altogether comfortable on leaving my country with all my friends and relations in it, so young as I was at the time: more especially when I considered the errand we were on, and thought that I might never return to see them again, knowing that they had not the slightest idea of where I was. I naturally felt rather timid, as all young recruits must feel on entering so soon on foreign service as I then found myself obliged to do.

But the worst and most disheartening spectacle of all was in the morning when the bugle sounded for the assembly of the regiment; for only about six women to a company of a hundred men being allowed to go with us, many who were married had to leave wives and children behind, with the thought that it might never be their lot to see them again. When the order was given to embark, the scene was quite heartrending: I could not see a dry eye in Portsmouth, and if the tears could have been collected, they might have

stocked a hospital in eye-water for some months. Husband and wife, father and child, young man and sweetheart, all had to part, and perhaps none were more affected than the last, though with least cause: it indeed was dreadful to view.

I myself was much affected, but it was at the woes of others, for I had not one to throw so much (p. 018) as a parting glance at myself; and thus, amid the cheers of the crowd, and with the band playing the tune of "The Girl I left behind me," we embarked.

Then I felt quite freed from my pursuers; but in getting out of the frying-pan I soon found myself into the fire, for as it afterwards proved I had many men to deal with more difficult than even my old master had been. Thus it is that many are apt to dislike and leave their employment through trifles, and in the search for a better often only get a worse one, much to their disappointment.

The next day we drew out of Portsmouth harbour on our route to South America, and sea-sickness soon commencing on board, I was, the worse luck for myself, one of the number that succumbed to it. This lasted for nearly a week, during the whole of which time we scarcely ate anything; but when we got better, I think our appetites were such that we could have readily finished a donkey with a hamper of greens.

We had good weather until we reached the tropics, when a dead calm followed for a fortnight. As we were nearly upon the Equinocial line, the usual ceremony of shaving took place, which was no doubt very amusing to those who escaped by treating the sailors to a bottle of rum, or those who had crossed the Line before; but to us on whom the barber, who was the sailor who had crossed the Line most often, operated, it was not so pleasant. For the satisfaction of some who may not (p. 019) quite understand the method of that interesting custom, I will give the routine, at least as it happened on board our ship, though I cannot altogether say whether the same is pursued universally, A large tub of water was placed on deck, and each one who was to be performed on, sat in turn on the edge; then the barber stepped forward and lathered his face all over with tar and grease, and with a piece of iron hoop as a razor scraped it off again; after which he pushed him backwards into the tub, leaving him to crawl out anyhow and sneak off to clean himself. All passed

off very well, however, as there was plenty of rum provided to drink from those officers and men who were more disposed to join in the play than the play.

During the calms, we amused ourselves fishing for dolphins, and practising for the first time with ball-cartridge, a bottle being corked and flung overboard as far as possible to serve as a target, and a dollar being offered to the first man who could break it, each one firing once. No one broke it, but I got a glass of grog from the major for being the nearest; so near that I made the bottle spin round. The major remarked that if I went so close as that to a Spaniard I should make him shake; and he likewise asked me what trade I was in before I joined the army. As I knew I was too far from England now to be sent back, I told him that I was a builder's apprentice; and he only said, "Well done, my boy, so you prefer knocking down houses in the enemy's country to putting them up in your (p. 020) own?" Certainly at this moment we were having an easy place, but there was many a time afterwards when I should like to have been given the choice of laying bricks again.

After spending about a fortnight in this way, a fair wind blew up, and we proceeded on our voyage. We called in at Rio Janeiro, the capital of the Brazilian Empire, lying upon the western side of the entrance to a fine bay which forms the harbour. Our chief object for putting in there was to take in water and provisions; and whilst we were anchored there we went on shore, and the Queen of Portugal reviewed us. Next day she sent a quantity of onions and pumpkins on board as a present, which we found very acceptable. We stayed there about a fortnight, sailing on next further south to Maldonado, the rendezvous of the fleet, whence after being joined by five thousand troops under Sir Samuel Auchmuty, the whole fleet moved on to Monte Video and anchored.

We lost no time on our arrival there, but early the next morning boats were ordered alongside the troopships to convey us on shore, which movement, as the enemy was on the banks about fifteen thousand strong to receive us, put rather a nasty taste into our mouths, there seeming nothing but death or glory before us. The signal was hoisted from the admiral's ship, and we started for the shore amid the fire of the enemy's artillery. They killed and wound-

ed a few of our men, and sank some of the boats, but as soon as we struck the shore, we (p. 021) jumped out, and forming line in the water, fired a volley and charged, soon driving them from their position on the bank. We found even as early as then that Spaniards were not very difficult to encounter. In case of a retreat, our boats were still within our reach, but having gained the victory, we had no need of them, stopping where we were on the banks all night.

Some field-pieces were next sent on shore, and likewise a number of sailors with drag-ropes to work them, as we had no horses with us, and up to this time no artillery. The country was rather favourable for the sailors, being very level and mostly green pasture, so that they kept along pretty easily, seeming just in their glory, all this being new work to them. After some little firing from the cannon the enemy retreated into the town, which was well fortified. We placed an outlying picket of some three hundred men to watch the enemy's manœuvres, while the body of our army encamped in the rear in a line stretching from sea to sea, so that the town standing upon a projecting piece of land, all communication from the mainland was cut off. The country around meanwhile abounded with ducks, geese, turkeys, fowls, and plenty of sheep and bullocks, which it may be made sure our men found oftentimes very providential.

On the third day of our encampment the Spaniards sallied out of the town to surprise our picket, which being overpowered was obliged to (p. 022) retreat, leaving two grenadiers wounded on the field, whom the Spaniards much to our horror deliberately cut into pieces. But on the body of our army coming up and charging them, a terrible slaughter ensued on their retreat to the town, which amply repaid us for our two grenadiers; as far as I am able to state, there could not have been less than three thousand killed and wounded, for the next day we had actually to bury two thousand of them. Our loss was a mere nothing.

I remember that I happened to be placed that night on sentry at the road leading to the town, and not far from a hole where we had buried five or six hundred of the enemy. It was the most uncomfortable two hours' sentry I had ever spent as yet, and I kept my eyes more on the place where the dead were than on the road I was