Zerchberg, at that time in the possession of the French ; and being informed by two Hanoverian officers, who had been in the town diſguiſed like peasants, that the garriſon were very remiſs in their duty, trolling to the vicinity of their army, and the distance of ours, the prince was reſolved to ſurprise them ; and after appointing a corps to suſtain him, he advanced in the night with Major Maclean of the 88th regiment ; and 200 Highlanders, with bayonets fixed and their arms not loaded; followed at a little distance. Upon the first gentry’s challenging, the prince anſwered in French, and the ſentry seeing but two persons advancing (whom he believed to be French), he had no distrust ; so that the major getting up to him, stabbed him, and prevented his giving the alarm. The Highlanders immediately rushing in, attacked the guard with their bayonets, and carried the town, having killed or taken the whole garriſon of 800 men.

The French officer who commanded at that time in Zerenberg conceited a ſcheme tor being amply revenged, which failed only by a most trivial accident. When almost every houſe in Bremen was filled with corn, being the grand magazine and grand hoſpital of our army, this officer held a ſecret correſpondence in the town, which informed him of the state of the garriſon, and that there was a general order to let couriers going to the army paſs out at all hours. He diſpatched about 20 hussars to ſcamper over the country, who were all that were heard of his party, while he march­ed 15,000 infantry from Duſſeldorp to Bremen (about 200 miles), concealing them in woods by day, and marching in the night. He arrived at the gate at the appointed hour ; when a perſon on horſeback blowing a horn came along the street, and desired to pass out to the army. The officer of the guard had the keys, and happened to be out of the way ; and while a messenger went for him, the people without growing impatient, began to break down the outer barrier, which made the ſentry fire at the place where he heard the noiſe ; and the guard taking the alarm, got upon the ram­part, and likewiſe fired at the same place : upon which the pretended courier galloped back ; and the French, belie­ving that they were discovered, relinquiſhed their ſcheme, and retired.

This example proves that no distance is a ſecurity from ſurpriſes, and that very considerable parties may pass over a great extent of country without being diſcovered. The following instance of that presence of mind ſo much the happineſs of all who possess it, and more particularly of a military man ſo expoſed to ſurpriſes, deserves to be re­corded.

In the month of February 1761, when Prince Ferdi­nand beat up the quarters of the French, they were obliged to retire a great way without being able to resist : How­ever, when they came to collect their force, and to recoil upon our army, Sir William Erskine with the 15th regi­ment of light dragoons was in a village in our front. In a very foggy morning, ſoon after the patroles reported that all was well, Sir William was alarmed by his vedettes having ſeen a great body of cavalry coming to ſurprise him. He instantly mounted his horſe, and ſallied out at the head of the picquet of 50 men, leaving orders for the regiment to follow as fast as they could mount, without beating a drum or making any noiſe. He attacked their advance-guard in the curſory manner of the light cavalry, and continued to do ſo, while his men were joining him by tens and twenties, and the French cavalry forming to resist an attack, till he collected the whole, and then retired, the ſurgeon of the regiment (Mr Elliot) having in the mean time carried off the baggage.

Strokes of this kind diſplay a ſuperiority of genius, and to that alone was the preſervation of the regiment owing. Had a drum beat to arms, the enemy must have known that they were unprepared, and probably would have rushed in and destroyed them ; but the attack convinced them that they were diſcovered, and made them think only of their own preſervation.

Among many instances in the courſe of the war, the success of this officer on another occasion, where he displayed the most singular address, likewiſe merits our attention. After a repulſe, and a march of 72 miles in one day, when the men were fatigued and scarcely a horſe able to trot, he ſaw a regiment of French infantry drawn up with a moraſs in their rear. He left his own corps, and advancing to the French, desired to ſpeak with the commanding officer, whom he entreated to ſurrender to prevent their being cut to pieces by a large body of cavalry that were advancing. The French officer desired leave to consult with his officers, which having done, they refuted to ſubmit ; but upon Sir William telling them that their blood must be on their own heads, and turning to move off to his own corps, they called to him, and laying down their arms surrendered to his harassed troops.

Such stratagems overleap the bounds of instruction, and no author will preſume to propoſe them for imitation. Here was the reaching out the hand to fortune which Vigetius recommends : but there are few who have the requisite talents from nature ; and we may as properly say of the ſoldier as of the poet, *nascitur non fit.*

Sect. VIII. Of *Ambuscades from the Partiſan.*

An ambuſcade may be formed in any place covered by art or nature in which a party may be concealed to ſurprise the enemy in passing ; and the proper uſe of them is, of all the stratagems in war, the best calculated to diſplay the genius, skill, ſpirit, and addreſs of a partiſan. They are easily carried into execution in woods, buildings, and hol­low places ; but require a more fertile imagination, and greater trouble, in a level country. Both ought to be re­gulated by the knowledge of the enemy’s march, and the extraordinary means that may be employed to ſurprise them.

When a partisan has information that can be depended on of the march of ſome part of the enemy ; whether a convoy of artillery, baggage, or provisions ; a body of re­cruits, or horſes to remount the cavaly ; an eſcort of a ge­neral officer going to rejoin, or reconnoitre ſome country ; he ought to apply directly to procure a sufficient knowledge of the route that the enemy is to take, the situation of the places he is to paſs, and of the post he goes to. The better to cover his design, he must get information of the roads that lead to oppoſite places, which he must pretend to be attentive about, as has been mentioned in the ſection of Reconnoitring.

Having perfectly concerted his plan, he should ſet out at the head of his detachment if possible, and leaving his post on the side oppoſite to his true route, the better to conceal his design. If the place where he intends to plant his am­buſcade is not distant, he ſhould come into his true route about half way, and there place half his infantry in ambuſh to favour his retreat. But when the country where he proposes going is distant, and the march requires at least two nights, he must conduct his party by meandring from wood to wood, if there are any. He must not forget to provide necessary refreſhments for the day, which must be passed in ſome concealed place where he may not be perceived, and must cauſe three rations of oats to be carried for each horſe.

The first night you must make to ſome wood or other place proper for passing the day near ſome rivulet, and, if possible, on the road of your retreat to leave a part of your