GORDON JOSEPH MARIA

THE CHRONICLES OF A GAY GORDON

Joseph Gordon

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The Chronicles of a Gay Gordon:

Содержание

J. M. Gordon
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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

By J. M. BULLOCH

José Maria Jacobo Rafael Ramon Francisco Gabriel del Corazon de Jesus Gordon y Prendergast – to give the writer of this book the full name with which he was christened in Jeréz de la Frontera on March 19, 1856 – belongs to an interesting, but unusual, type of the Scot abroad.

These virile venturers group themselves into four categories. Illustrating them by reference to the Gordons alone, there was the venturer, usually a soldier of fortune, who died in the country of his adoption, such as the well-known General Patrick Gordon, of Auchleuchries, Aberdeenshire (1635-1690), who, having spent thirty-nine years of faithful service to Peter the Great, died and was buried at Moscow. Or one might cite John Gordon, of Lord Byron's Gight family, who, having helped to assassinate Wallenstein in the town of Eger, in 1634, turned himself into a

Dutch Jonkheer, dying at Dantzig, and being buried at Delft.

Sometimes, especially in the case of merchants, the venturers settled down permanently in their new fatherland, as in the case of the Gordons of Coldwells, Aberdeenshire, who are now represented solely by the family of von Gordon-Coldwells, in Laskowitz. So rapid was the transformation of this family that when one of them, Colonel Fabian Gordon, of the Polish cavalry, turned up in Edinburgh in 1783, in connexion with the sale of the family heritage, he knew so little English that he had to be initiated a Freemason in Latin. To this day there is a family in Warsaw which, ignoring our principle of primogeniture, calls itself the Marquises de Huntly-Gordon.

Occasionally the exiles returned home, either to succeed to the family heritage, or to rescue it from ruin with the wealth they had acquired abroad. Thus General Alexander Gordon (1669-1751) of the Russian army, the biographer of Peter the Great, came home to succeed his father as laird of Auchintoul, Banffshire, and managed by a legal mistake to hold it in face of forfeiture for Jacobitism. His line has long since died out, as soldier stock is apt to do – an ironic symbol of the death-dealing art. But the descendants of another ardent Jacobite, Robert Gordon, wine merchant, Bordeaux, who rescued the family estate of Hallhead, Aberdeenshire, from clamant creditors, still flourish. One of them became famous in the truest spirit of Gay Gordonism, in the person of Adam Lindsay Gordon, the beloved laureate of Australia.

The vineyard and Australia bring us to the fourth, and rarest, category, represented by the writer of this book, namely, the family which has not only retained its Scots heritage, but also flourishes in the land of its adoption, for Mr. Rafael Gordon is not only laird of Wardhouse, Aberdeenshire, but is a Spaniard by birth and education, and a citizen of Madrid: and this double citizenship has been shared by his uncles Pedro Carlos Gordon (1806-1857), Rector of Stonyhurst; and General J. M. Gordon, the writer of this book, who will long be remembered as the pioneer of national service in Australia.

The Gordons of Wardhouse, to whom he belongs, are descended (as the curious will find set forth in detail in the genealogical table) from a Churchman, Adam Gordon, Dean of Caithness (died 1528), younger son of the first Earl of Huntly, and they have remained staunch to the Church of Rome to this day: that indeed was one of the reasons for their sojourning aboard. The Dean's son George (died 1575) acquired the lands of Beldorney, Aberdeenshire, which gradually became frittered away by his senior descendants, the seventh laird parting with the property to the younger line in the person of Alexander Gordon, of Camdell, Banffshire, in 1703, while his sons vanished to America, where they are untraceable.

From this point the fortunes of the families increase. Alexander's son James, IX of Beldorney, bought the ancient estate of Kildrummy in 1731, and Wardhouse came into his family through his marriage with Mary Gordon, heiress thereof.

This reinforcement of his Gordon blood was one of the deciding causes of the strong Jacobitism of his son John, the tenth laird, who fought at Culloden, which stopped his half Russian wife, Margaret Smyth of Methven, the great grand-daughter of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, in the act of embroidering for Prince Charles a scarlet waistcoat, which came to the hammer at Aberdeen in 1898.

This Jacobite laird's brothers were the first to go abroad. One of them, Gregory, appears to have entered the Dutch service; another, Charles, a priest, was educated at Ratisbon; and a third, Robert, settled at Cadiz. That was the first association of the Wardhouse Gordons with Spain, for, though Robert died without issue, he seems to have settled one of his nephews, Robert (son of his brother Cosmo, who had gone to Jamaica), and another, James Arthur Gordon (who was son of the twelfth laird), at Jeréz.

But the sense of adventure was also strong on the family at home, especially on Alexander, the eleventh laird, who was executed as a spy at Brest in 1769. A peculiarly handsome youth, who succeeded to the estates in 1760, he started life as an ensign in the 49th Foot in 1766. He narrowly escaped being run through in a brawl at Edinburgh, and, taking a hair of the dog that had nearly bitten him, he fatally pinked a butcher in the city of Cork in 1767. He escaped to La Rochelle, and ultimately got into touch with Lord Harcourt, our Ambassador in Paris. Harcourt sent the reckless lad to have a look at the fortifications of Brest. He was caught in the act; Harcourt repudiated all knowledge of him;

and he was executed November 24, 1769, gay to the end, and attracting the eyes of every pretty girl in the town. The guillotine which did its worst is still preserved in the arsenal at Brest, and the whole story is set forth with legal precision in the transactions of the Societé Academique de Brest.

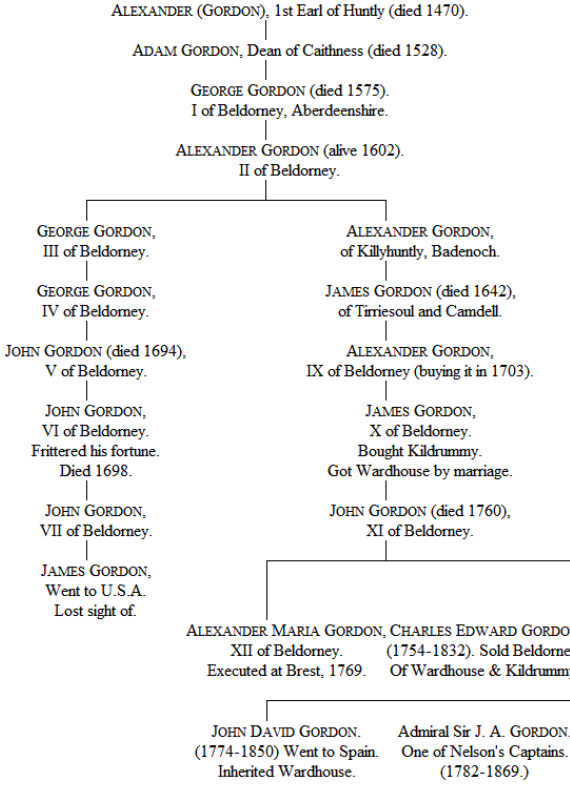
Poor Alexander was succeeded as laird by his younger brother Charles Edward (1750-1832), who became an officer in the Northern Fencibles, and was not without his share of adventure, which curiously enough arose out of his brother's regiment, the 49th. He married as his second wife Catherine Mercer, the daughter of James Mercer, the poet, who had been a major in that regiment. In 1797, his commanding officer, Colonel John Woodford, who had married his chief, the Duke of Gordon's, sister, bolted at Hythe with the lady, from whom the laird of Wardhouse duly got a divorce. That did not satisfy Gordon, who thrashed his colonel with a stick in the streets of Ayr. Of course he was court-martialled, but Woodford's uncle-in-law, Lord Adam Gordon, as Commander-in-Chief of North Britain, smoothed over the sentence of dismissal from the Fencibles by getting the angry husband appointed paymaster in the Royal Scots.

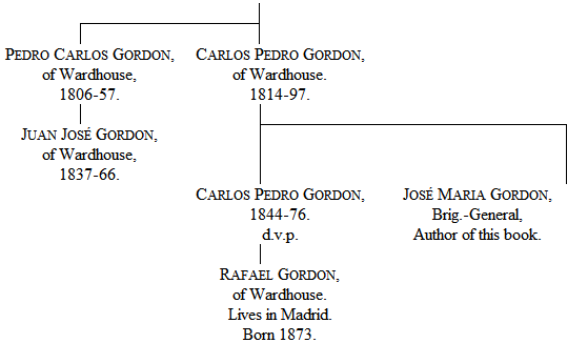
Gordon's eldest son John David, by his first marriage (with the grand-daughter of the Earl of Kilmarnock, who was executed at the Tower with Lord Lovat), had wisely kept out of temptation amid the peaceful family vineyards at Jeréz, from which he returned in 1832 to Wardhouse. But John David's half-brother

stayed at home and became Admiral Sir James Alexander Gordon (1782-1869), who as the "last of Nelson's Captains" roused the admiration of Tom Hughes in a fine appreciation in *Macmillan's Magazine*. Although he had lost his leg in the capture of the Pomone in 1812, he could stump on foot even as an old man all the way from Westminster to Greenwich Hospital, of which he was the last Governor, and where you can see his portrait to this day.

Although John David Gordon succeeded to Wardhouse, his family remained essentially Spanish, and his own tastes, as his grandson, General Gordon, points out, were coloured by the character of the Peninsula. The General himself, as his autobiography shows in every page, has had his inherited Gay Gordonism aided and abetted by his associations with Spain and with Australia. His whole career has been full of enterprising adventure, and, while intensely interested in big imperial problems, he has an inevitable sense of the colour and rhythm of life as soldier, as policeman, as sportsman, as actor, as journalist. He is, in short, a perfect example of a Gay Gordon.

BRIG. – GENERAL
J. M. GORDON'S
DESCENT AT A GLANCE


ALEXANDER (GORDON), 1st Earl of Huntly (died 1470).
ADAM GORDON, Dean of Caithness (died 1528).
GEORGE GORDON (died 1575).
I of Beldorney, Aberdeenshire.
ALEXANDER GORDON (alive 1602).
II of Beldorney.
GEORGE GORDON,
III of Beldorney.
GEORGE GORDON,
IV of Beldorney.
JOHN GORDON (died 1694),
V of Beldorney.
JOHN GORDON,
VI of Beldorney.
Frittered his fortune.
Died 1698.
JOHN GORDON,
VII of Beldorney.
JAMES GORDON,
Went to U.S.A.
Lost sight of.
ALEXANDER GORDON,
of Killyhuntly, Badenoch.
JAMES GORDON (died 1642),
of Tirriesoul and Camdell.
ALEXANDER GORDON,
IX of Beldorney (buying it in 1703).
JAMES GORDON,
X of Beldorney.
Bought Kildrummy.
Got Wardhouse by marriage.
JOHN GORDON (died 1760),
XI of Beldorney.
ALEXANDER MARIA GORDON,
XII of Beldorney.
Executed at Brest, 1769.
CHARLES EDWARD GORDON
(1754-1832). Sold Beldorney.
Of Wardhouse & Kildrummy.
JOHN DAVID GORDON.
(1774-1850) Went to Spain.
Inherited Wardhouse.
Admiral Sir J. A. GORDON.
One of Nelson's Captains.
(1782-1869.)


PEDRO CARLOS GORDON,
of Wardhouse,
1806-57.
CARLOS PEDRO GORDON,
of Wardhouse.
1814-97.
JUAN JOSÉ GORDON,
of Wardhouse,
1837-66.
CARLOS PEDRO GORDON,
1844-76.
d.v.p.
JOSÉ MARIA GORDON,
Brig.-General,
Author of this book.
RAFAEL GORDON,
of Wardhouse.
Lives in Madrid.
Born 1873.

PART I

CHAPTER I
MY SCOTS-SPANISH ORIGIN

At a period in the history of Scotland, we find that a law was passed under the provisions of which every landowner who was a Catholic had either to renounce his adherence to his Church or to forfeit his landed property to the Crown. This was a severe blow to Scotsmen, and history tells that practically every Catholic laird preferred not to have his property confiscated, with the natural result that he ceased – at any rate publicly – to take part in the outward forms of the Catholic religion. Churches, which Catholic families had built and endowed, passed into the hands of other denominations. Catholic priests who – in devotion to their duty – were willing to risk their lives, had to practise their devotions in secrecy.

My great grandfather, Charles Edward Gordon (1754-1832), then quite a young man, happened to be one of those lairds who submitted to the law, preferring to remain lairds. His younger brother, James Arthur (1759-1824), who chanced to be possessed in his own right of a certain amount of hard cash, began to think seriously. It appeared to him that, if a law could be

passed confiscating landed property unless the owners gave up the Catholic religion, there was no reason why another law should not be passed confiscating actual cash under similar conditions. The more he turned this over in his mind, the surer he became that at any rate the passing of such a second law could not be deemed illogical. He was by no means the only one of the younger sons of Scots families who thought likewise. It seemed to him that it would be wise to leave the country – at any rate for a while.

In those days there were no Canadas, Australias and other new and beautiful countries appealing to these adventurous spirits, but there were European countries where a field was open for their enterprise. My great grand-uncle – youthful as he was – decided that the South of Spain, Andalusia, La Tierra de Santa Maria, would suit him, and he removed himself and his cash to that sunny land. It is there that the oranges flourish on the banks of the Guadalquivir. It is there that the green groves of olive trees yield their plentiful crops. It is there that the vine brings forth that rich harvest of grapes whose succulent juice becomes the nectar of the gods in the shape of sherry wine. He decided that white sherry wine offered the best commercial result and resolved to devote himself to its production. Business went well with him. It was prosperous; the wine became excellent and the drinkers many.

By this time his brother had married and the union had been blessed with two sons. When the elder was fifteen years old,

it appeared to his uncle James Arthur that it would be a good thing if his brother, the laird, would send the boy to Spain, to be brought up there, with a view to his finally joining him in the business. He decided, therefore, to visit his brother in Scotland, with this object in view. He did so, but the laird did not appear to be kindly inclined to this arrangement. He was willing, however, to let his second son go to Spain, finish his education, and then take on the wine business. This was not what the uncle wanted. He wished for the elder son, the young laird, or for nobody at all. The matter fell through and the uncle returned to the Sunny South.

A couple of years later on, the laird changed his mind, wrote to his brother, and offered to send his eldest son, John David (1774-1850). A short time afterwards the young laird arrived in Spain. His father, the laird, lived for many years, during which time – after the death of his uncle – his eldest son had become the head of one of the most successful sherry wine firms that existed in those days in Spain. He had married in Spain and had had a large family, who had all grown up, and had married also in that country, and it was not till he was some sixty years of age that his father, the laird, died and he succeeded to the Scots properties of Wardhouse and Kildrummy Castle.

The law with reference to the forfeiture of lands held by Catholics had become practically void, so that he duly succeeded to the estates. The old laird had driven over in his coach to the nearest Catholic place of worship and had been received back

into the Church of his fathers. Afterwards he had given a great feast to his friends, at which plenty of good old port was drunk to celebrate the occasion. He drove back to his home, and on arrival at the house was found dead in the coach. So we children, when told this story, said that he had only got to Heaven by the skin of his teeth.

His successor, my grandfather, John David, died in 1850 in Spain, and my father's elder brother, Pedro Carlos (1806-1857), became the laird and took up his residence in the old home. He broke the record in driving the mail coach from London to York without leaving the box seat. And later on, in Aberdeen, he drove his four-in-hand at full gallop into Castlehill Barracks. Anyone who knows the old gateway will appreciate the feat.

On his death in 1857, his son, my cousin, Juan José (1837-1866), succeeded to the property. He, of course, had also been brought up in Spain, and was married to a cousin, and sister of the Conde de Mirasol, but had no children. When he took up his residence as laird, most of his friends, naturally, were Spanish visitors whom he amused by building a bull-fighting ring not far from the house, importing bulls from Spain and holding amateur bull-fights on Sunday afternoons. This was a sad blow indeed to the sedate Presbyterians in the neighbourhood. His life, however, was short, and, as he left no children, the properties passed to my father, Carlos Pedro (1814-1897), by entail.

It is necessary to have written this short history of the family, from my great grandfather's time, to let you know how I came

to be born in Spain, and how our branch of the family was the only one of the clan which remained Catholic in spite of the old Scots law.

I would like to tell you something now about Jeréz, the place where I was born, and where the sherry white wine comes from. Yet all the wine is not really white. There is good brown sherry, and there is just as good golden sherry, and there is Pedro Ximenez. If you haven't tasted them, try them as soon as you get the chance. You'll like the last two – and very much – after dinner. I am not selling any, but you'll find plenty of firms about Mark Lane who will be quite willing to supply you if you wish.

Well, Jeréz is a town of some sixty thousand inhabitants. Don't be afraid. This is not going to be a guidebook, for Jeréz has not a single public building worth the slightest notice, not even a church of which it can be said that it is really worth visiting compared with other cities, either from an architectural or an artistic point of view. It is wanting in the beautiful and wonderful attractions which adorn many of the Andalusian towns that surround it. In Jeréz there are no glorious edifices dating back to the occupation of the Moors (except the Alcazar – now part cinema-show). There are no royal palaces taken from the Moors by Spanish kings. There is no Seville Cathedral, no Giralda. There is no Alhambra as there is in Granada. There are only parts of the ancient walls that enclosed the old city. The Moors apparently thought little of Jeréz; they evidently had not discovered the glories of sherry white wine.

Jeréz seems to have devoted all its energies to the erection of wine-cellars, the most uninteresting buildings in the world. A visitor, after a couple of days in Jeréz, would be tired of its uninteresting streets, badly kept squares and absence of any places of interest or picturesque drives. Probably he would note the presence of the stately and silent ciguenas, who make their home and build their nests upon the top of every church steeple or tower. They are not exciting, but there they have been for years, and there they are now, and it is to be presumed that there they will remain. Yet, Jeréz is a pleasant place to live in. Although there is only one decent hotel in it, there are excellent private houses, full of many comforts and works of art, though their comfort and beauty is all internal. They are mostly situated in side streets, with no attempt at any outside architectural effects.

The citizens of Jeréz are quite content with Jeréz. They love to take their ease, and have a decided objection to hustle. The womenkind dearly love big families: the bigger they are the better they like them. They are devoted to their husbands and children, and live for them. The men cannot be called ambitious, but they are perfectly satisfied with their quiet lives, and with looking after their own businesses. They love to sit in their clubs and cafés, sit either inside or at tables on the pavements in the street – and talk politics, bull-fights, and about the weather, in fact any topic which comes handy; and they are quite content, as a rule, to talk on, no matter if they are not being listened to. This habit of general talk without listeners is also common to the ladies.

To be present at a re-union of ladies and listen to the babble of their sweet tongues is a pleasure which a lazy man can thoroughly enjoy.

The local Press is represented principally by three or four – mostly one-sheet – newspapers, which you can read in about three minutes. Of course their all-absorbing interest, as regards sport, is centred in the bull-fights. For three months before the bull-fighting season begins – which is about Easter – people talk of nothing but bulls and matadors. The relative merits of the different studs which are to supply, not only the local corridas, but practically the tip-top ones throughout the chief cities of Spain, are discussed over and over again, while the admirers of Joselito (since killed) are as lavish in words and gestures of praise as are those of Belmonte, while, at the same time, the claims of other aspirants to championship as matadors are heard on every side.

Once the season begins – it lasts until towards the end of October – the whole of everybody's time is, of course, mostly taken up in commenting upon the merits or demerits of each and every corrida. There does not appear to be time for much else to be talked about then; unless an election comes along, and that thoroughly rouses the people for the time being. It is of very little use for anyone to attempt to describe upon what lines elections are run in Spain. One has to be there to try and discover what principles guide them. For instance, the last time I was in Spain Parliamentary elections were to take place the very week after

Easter Sunday. On that day the first bull-fight of the season was to take place at Puerto Santa Maria, a small town about ten miles from Jeréz. Of course a large number of sports, with their ladies, motored or drove over for the occasion.

There was an immense crowd at Puerto Santa Maria. In the south of Spain, especially at a bull-fight, Jack is as good as his master, and each one has to battle through the crowd as best he can. I personally was relieved of my gold watch, sovereign case and chain in the most perfect manner; so perfect that I had not the least idea when or how it was taken. I must confess I felt very sad over it; not so much over my actual loss, but, I *did* think it most unkind and thoughtless of my fellow townsmen to select me as their victim. The next morning I reported my loss to the Mayor of Jeréz. He didn't appear to be much concerned about it, and he informed me that he had already had some forty similar complaints of the loss of watches, pocket-books, etc., from visitors to Puerto Santa Maria from Jeréz the day previous. He had had a telegram also from the Mayor of Puerto Santa Maria to the effect that some seventy like cases had been reported to him in that town.

"So that, after all," he said, "I don't really see any particular reason why you should be hurt. I may tell you that you are in good company. General Primo de Rivera" (who was then Captain-General Commanding the Military District) "was with a friend when he saw a man take the latter's pocket-book from inside his coat. He fortunately grabbed the thief before he could make off.

One of the Ministers of State was successfully robbed of some thirty pounds in notes; while a friend of yours" (mentioning a business man in Jeréz who hadn't even been to the bull-fight, but had been collecting rents at Cadiz, and was returning through Puerto Santa Maria home) "was surprised to find on his arrival there, that the large sum, which should have been in his pocket had evidently passed, somehow or other, into some other fellow's hands."

This, of course, somewhat cheered me up, because, after all, there is no doubt that a common affliction makes us very sympathetic. I asked him how he accounted for this wonderful display of sleight-of-hand.

"Oh," he said, "don't you know that the elections are on this week, and that usually, before the elections, the party in power takes the opportunity of letting out of gaol as many criminals as it dares, hoping for and counting on their votes? Of course, the responsibility falls on the heads of the police for making some effort to protect our easy-going and unsuspicious visitors at such times. The job is too big for us at the time being, with the result that these gentry make a good harvest. But yet, after all, we are not really downhearted about it, because, after the elections are over, especially if the opposition party gets in, we round them all up and promptly lock them up again."

The explanation, though quite clear, didn't seem to me to be of much help towards getting back my goods and chattels, so I ventured to ask again whether he thought there was any chance

at all of my recovering them, or of his recovering them for me. He smiled a sweet smile, and – shaking his head, I regret to say, in a negative way – answered that he thought there was not the slightest hope, as, from the description of the watch, chain, etc., which I had given him, he had no doubt that they had by that time passed through the melting pot, so that it was not even worth while to offer a reward.

The house where I was born was at that time one of the largest in the city. It is situated almost in the centre of Jeréz, and occupies a very large block of ground, for in addition to the house itself and gardens, the wine-cellars, the cooperage, stables and other accessory buildings attached to them, were all grouped round it. To-day a holy order of nuns occupies it as a convent. No longer is heard the crackling of the fires and the hammering of the iron hoops in the cooperage. No longer the teams of upstanding mules, with the music of their brass bells, are seen leaving the cellars with their load of the succulent wine. No longer is the air filled with that odour which is so well known to those whose lives are spent amidst the casks in which the wine is maturing. Instead, peace and quiet reign. Sacrificing their time to the interests of charity, the holy sisters dwell in peace.

Two recollections of some of my earliest days are somewhat vivid. I seem to remember hearing the deep sound of a bell in the streets, looking out of the window and seeing an open cart – full of dead bodies – stopping before the door of a house, from which one more dead body was added to the funeral pile. That was

the year of the great cholera epidemic. And again, I remember hearing bells early, very early, in the morning. We knew what that was. It was the donkey-man coming round to sell the donkeys' milk at the front door, quite warm and frothy.

My early school days in Spain were quite uneventful. After attending a day-school at Jeréz, kept by Don José Rincon, I went into the Jesuit College at Puerto Real for a year. A new college was being built at Puerto Santa Maria, to which the school was transferred, and it has been added to since. It is now one of the best colleges in the south of Spain.

On the death of my cousin, the entailed properties – as I have said – became my father's, and the family left Spain to take up its residence in Scotland.

CHAPTER II
MY SCHOOLING

The journey from Jeréz to Scotland must have been full of interest and excitement for my father. Our party numbered about thirty of all ages, down to a couple of babies, my sister's children. My father found it more practicable to arrange for what was then called a family train to take us through Spain and France. We travelled during the day and got shunted at night. Sometimes we slept in the carriages; other times at hotels. In either case, as a rule, there were frequent and – for a time – hard-fought battles among us young ones of both sexes for choice of sleeping places.

At meal times there were often considerable scrambles. We all seemed to have the same tastes and we all wanted the same things. My parents (who, poor dears, had to put up with us, and the Spanish nurses and servants, who had never left their own homes before, and who, the farther we got, seemed to think that they were never going to return to them) at last came to the conclusion that any attempts at punishing us were without satisfactory results, and that appealing to our love for them (for it was no use appealing to our love for each other) and our honour paid better.

My elder sisters and brothers, who were in the party, knew English. I did not. Not a word except two, and those were "all right," which, immediately on arrival at Dover and all the way to

London, I called out to every person I met.

On reaching Charing Cross the party was to have a meal previous to starting up to Scotland. The station restaurant manager was somewhat surprised when my father informed him that he wanted a table for about thirty persons, which, however, he arranged for. The Spanish nurses and women-servants were dressed after the style of their own country. They, of course, wore no hats, their hair being beautifully done with flowers at the side (which had to be provided for them whether we wished it or not), and characteristic shawls graced their shoulders. So that the little party at the table was quite an object of interest, not only to those others who were dining at the time, but also to a great many ordinary passengers who practically were blocking the entrance to the restaurant in order to obtain a glimpse of the foreigners.

All went well until the chef, with the huge sirloin of beef upon the travelling table, appeared upon the scene. No sooner did he begin to carve and the red, juicy gravy of the much under-done beef appeared, than the nurses rose in a body, dropped the babies and bolted through the door on to the platform. They thought they were going to be asked to eat raw meat. Of course, they had never seen a joint in Spain. On their leaving, we, the younger members of the family, were told to run after them and catch them if we could. So off we went, and then began such a chase through the station as I doubt if Charing Cross had ever witnessed before or has since. The station police and porters, not understanding what was going on, naturally started chasing and catching us

youngsters, much to the amusement and bewilderment of those looking on. Meanwhile my father stood at the entrance of the restaurant, sad but resigned, and it was after some considerable time and after the removal of the offending joint, that the family party was again gathered together in peace and quiet, and shortly afterwards proceeded on the last stage of its journey and arrived safely at the old family home, which stands amidst some of the most beautiful woods in Scotland. It is very old, but not so old as the family itself.

My father decided that it would be better for me to get a little knowledge of the English language before he sent me to school, so that I might be able to look after myself when there. I was handed over to the care of the head gamekeeper, Thomas Kennedy. Dear Tom died three years ago, at a very old age; rather surprising he lived so long, as he had for years to look after me. To him, from the start, I was "Master Joseph," and "Master Joseph" I remained until I embraced the old chap the last time I saw him before he died. It was from Tom Kennedy that I first learnt English, mixed with the broad Aberdeen-Scots, which when combined with my Spanish accent was practically a language of my own.

I wonder if Britons have any idea how difficult it is, especially for one whose native tongue is of the Latin origin, to get a thorough knowledge and grasp of their language. To my mind, the English language is not founded on any particular rules or principles. No matter how words are spelt, they have got to

be pronounced just as the early Britons decided. There is no particular rule; if you want to spell properly, you pretty well have to learn to spell each word on its own. This is proved by the fact that the spelling of their own language correctly is certainly not one of the proud achievements of their own race. In the good old days before the War it may be stated without exaggeration that one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the public examinations – especially those for entrance into Woolwich and Sandhurst – was the qualification test in spelling. There must be thousands of candidates still alive who well remember receiving the foolscap blue envelopes notifying them that there was no further necessity for their presence at the examination as they had failed to qualify in spelling. As regards the pronunciation of words as you find them written, it is quite an art to hit them off right. Still, perseverance, patience and a good memory finally come to the rescue, and the result is then quite gratifying.

It was from Tom Kennedy that I also learnt to shoot, fish, ride and drink, for Tom always had a little flask of whisky to warm us up when we were sitting in the snow and waiting for the rabbits to bolt, or – what often took a great deal longer time – waiting for the ferrets to come out. And – last but not least – he taught me to smoke. I well remember Tom's short black pipe and his old black twist tobacco. I shall never forget the times I had and the physical and mental agonies I endured in trying to enjoy that pipe.

So six months passed away and I was sent, with my two elder brothers, to the Oratory School in Edgware Road, Edgbaston,

Birmingham. The head of the school was the celebrated Doctor, and later on Cardinal, Newman. Even to this day my recollections of that ascetic holy man are most vivid. At that time his name was a household word in religious controversy. He stood far above his contemporaries, whether they were those who agreed with or differed from his views. He was respected by all, loved by those who followed him; never hated, but somewhat feared, by those who opposed him. I remember that one of the greatest privileges to which the boys at our school at that time looked forward, was being selected to go and listen to Doctor Newman playing the violin. Five or six of us were taken to his study in the evening. In mute silence, with rapt attention, we watched the thin-featured man, whose countenance to us seemed to belong even then to a world beyond this, and we listened to what to us seemed the sweetest sounding music.

But yet there are other recollections which were not so pleasant. The head prefect was a man of very different physical qualities. Dear Father St. John Ambrose erred on the side of physical attainments. He was by no means thin or ascetic. He possessed a powerful arm, which he wielded with very considerable freedom when applying the birch in the recesses of the boot-room. I must admit that my interviews with Father St. John in the boot-room were not infrequent. But, after all, the immediate effect soon passed away and the incident was forgotten. Still, to my surprise, when the school accounts were rendered at the end of the year, my father was puzzled over one

item, namely, "Birches – £1 2s. 6d." (at the rate of half a crown each)! He asked me what it meant, and I explained to him as best I could that dear Father St. John was really the responsible person in the matter, and I had no doubt my father would get a full explanation from him if he wrote. But it brought home to me the recollection of nine visits to the boot-room with that amiable and much-respected Father St. John. I have within the last few months met again, after my long absence in other countries, several of my school mates. They are all going strong and well, holding high positions in this world, and as devoted as ever to the old school at Edgbaston. One of them is now Viscount Fitzalan, Viceroy of Ireland.

When my two elder brothers left the Oratory, which I may say was a school where the boys were allowed very considerable liberty, my father must have thought, no doubt, when he remembered the twenty-two and sixpence for birches, that it would be wise to send me somewhere where the rules of the college were, in his opinion, somewhat stricter. So off I was sent, early in 1870, to dear old Beaumont College, the Jesuit school, situated in that beautiful spot on the River Thames just where the old hostelry The Bells of Ouseley still exists, at the foot of the range of hills which the glorious Burnham Beeches adorn. The original house was once the home of Warren Hastings. Four delightful years of school life followed. It was a pleasure to me to find that there was no extra charge for birches. The implement that was used to conserve discipline was not made out of the

pliable birch tree, but of a very solid piece of leather with some stiffening to it – I fancy of steel – called a "ferrula." This was applied to the palm of the hand, and not to where my old friend the birch found its billet. As the same ferrula not only lasted a long time without detriment to itself, but, on the contrary, seemed rather to improve with age, the authorities were kind enough not to charge for its use.

No event of any particular interest, except perhaps being taught cricket by old John Lillywhite, with his very best top hat of those days, and battles fought on the football ground against rival colleges, occurred until the end of the third year. I happened to have come out, at the end of that year, top of my class. I had practically won most of the prizes. It was the custom of the school that the senior boys of the upper classes were permitted to study more advanced subjects than the school had actually laid down for the curriculum of that particular class for the year. These extra subjects were called "honours." They were studied in voluntary time; the examinations therein and the marks gained in no way counted towards the result of the class examinations for the year.

These class examinations were held before the "honours" examination. A friend of mine in a higher class, who was sitting behind me in the study room, asked me if I'd like to read an English translation of "Cæsar." I promptly said "Yes" and borrowed it, and was soon lost in its perusal, with my elbows on my desk and my head between my hands. Presently I felt a gentle

tap on my shoulder. I looked up to see the prefect of studies standing by me. He told me afterwards that he had thought, from the interest I was taking in my book, that I was reading some naughty and forbidden novel, which he intended to confiscate, of course, and probably read. He was surprised to find it was an old friend, "Cæsar." Being an English translation it was considered to be a "crib." He asked me where I had got it. I couldn't give away my pal, just behind me, so I said I didn't know. "Don't add impertinence to the fact that you've got a 'crib.' Just tell me where you did get this book," he remarked. "I don't want to be impertinent," I said, "but I refuse to tell you." "Very well, then," he said, "go straight to bed."

I heard nothing more on the subject till a few days afterwards, at the presentation of the prizes, the breaking-up day, on which occasion the parents and friends of the scholars were invited to be present. At an interval in the performance the prizes were presented. The prefect of studies would begin to read from the printed prize list, which all the visitors were supplied with, the names of all the fortunate prize winners in succession, from the highest to the lowest. As the name of each prize winner was called he stood up, walked to the table at which the prizes were presented, received his, and, after making a polite bow, returned to his seat.

When the prefect of studies reached the class to which I belonged he called out: "Grammar, first prize. Aggregate for the year, Joseph M. Gordon." Upon which I rose from my seat,

and for a moment the applause of the audience, which was freely given to all prize winners, followed. I was on the point of moving off towards the table in question, when, as the applause ceased, the voice of the prefect of studies once more made itself clearly heard. It was only one word he said, but that word was "Forfeited." No more. I sat down again. Then he continued: "First prize in Latin, J. M. G." I must admit I didn't know what to do, but I stood up all right again. The audience didn't quite appear to understand what was going on, but the prefect of studies gave them no time to commence any further applause, for that one word, "Forfeited," came quickly out of his mouth. Down again I sat. However, I immediately made up my mind, though, of course, not knowing how many prizes I had won, to stand up every time and sit down as soon as that old word "Forfeited" came along, which actually happened about four times.

I often wonder now how I really did look on that celebrated occasion. But I remember making up my mind there and then that I would remain in that school for one year more, but no more, even if I was forced to leave the country, and to win every prize I could that next year, and make sure, as the Irishman says, that they would not be "forfeited." So I remained another year. I was fortunate enough to win the prizes – I even won the silver medal, special prize for religion – and it was a proud day for me when I got them safely into my bag, which I did as soon as possible after the ceremony, in case someone else should come along and attempt to "*forfeit*" them. I had taken care to order a special cab

of my own and to have my portmanteau close to the front door, so that I could get away at the very earliest opportunity to Windsor Station.

But I had not forgotten that I had made up my mind to leave the school then, so on my arrival at home I duly informed my venerable father that I had made up my mind to be a soldier, and that as I was then over 17, and as candidates for the Woolwich Academy were not admitted after reaching their eighteenth birthday, it was necessary that I should leave school at once and go to a crammer. My father made no objection at all, but he said, "As your time is so short to prepare, we will at once go back to London and get a tutor." Considering this was the first day of my well-earned holidays, it was rather rough; but I was adamant about not returning to school, so turned southwards with my few goods and chattels, except my much-cherished prizes, which I left with the family, and proceeded to London on the next day.

So I lost my holidays, but I got my way.

My father selected a man called Wolfram, who up to that time had been master at several old-fashioned crammers', but was anxious to start an establishment of his own, and I became his first pupil at Blackheath. As I had practically only some five months odd to prepare for the only examination that would be held before I reached my eighteenth birthday, I entered into an agreement with Mr. Wolfram that I would work as hard as ever he liked, and for as many hours as he wished, from each Monday

morning till each Saturday at noon, and that from that hour till Sunday night I meant to enjoy myself and have a complete rest, so as to be quite fresh to tackle the next week's work. This compact was carried out and worked admirably, at any rate from my point of view. All went quite satisfactorily, for when the results of the examination were published I had come out twenty-second on the list out of some seventeen hundred candidates, and as there were thirty-three vacancies to be filled, I was amongst the fortunate ones. As I had found it so difficult to learn the English language, I was surprised that I practically received full marks in that subject.

There was generally an interval of six weeks from the time when the actual examination was completed till the publication of the results. The examination took place late in the year, and as my people generally went to Spain for the winter, they decided to take me with them, which pleased me immensely. We arrived back at Jeréz, which I had not seen since our departure from there in the family train some seven years before, and, considering myself quite a grown-up young man, I looked forward to a lot of fun. The journey took some time. We stayed in Paris, Bayonne, Madrid, and finally reached Jeréz. The Carlist War had then been going on for three or four years (of this more anon), and caused us much delay in that part of the journey which took us across the Pyrenees, as the railways had been destroyed.

By the time we arrived in Jeréz some five weeks had elapsed, with the result that, a very few days after our arrival, just as I was beginning to enjoy myself thoroughly, a telegram arrived from

the War Office, notifying me that I had been one of the successful candidates at the recent examinations and that I was to report myself at Woolwich in ten days' time.

This telegram arrived one evening when a masked ball was being held at one of the Casinos. Being carnival time, it was the custom at these balls for the ladies to go masked, but not so the men. This was a source of much amusement to all, as the women were able to know who their partners were and chaff them at pleasure, while the men had all their time cut out to recognize the gay deceivers. At the beginning of the ball I had seen a masked lady who appeared to me just perfection. She was sylph-like; her figure was slight, of medium height, feet as perfect as Spanish women's feet can be; a head whose shape rivalled those of Murillo's angels, blue-black tresses adorning it, and eyes – oh! what eyes – looking at you through the openings in the mask. I lost no time in asking her to dance. I did not expect she would know who I was, but *she* lost no time in saying "Yes," and round we went. I found I didn't like to leave her, so I asked her to dance again – and again. She was sweetness itself. She always said "Yes." It was in the middle of this that I was informed by my father of the telegram to return to Woolwich. I wished Woolwich in a very hot place. Soon came the time for the ladies to unmask. She did so, and I beheld, in front of me, a married aunt of mine! Going back to Woolwich didn't then appear to me so hard.

CHAPTER III
A FRONTIER INCIDENT

I was finishing my second term at Woolwich and the Christmas holidays were close at hand.

I had, during the term, been closely following the fortunes of Don Carlos and his army in the northern provinces of Spain. Year after year he had been getting a stronger and stronger hold, and the weakness of the Republican Governments in Madrid had assisted him very materially. There was no one – had been no one – for some years to lead the then so-called Government troops to any military advantage in the field against him.

General Prim, the Warwick of Spain, had been assassinated in Madrid. The Italian Prince, Asmodeus, to whom he had offered the Crown and who for just over a year had reigned as King of Spain, was glad to make himself scarce by quietly disappearing over the borders to Portugal. A further period of Republican Government was imposed upon the country, equally as inefficient as it had been before. The star of the Carlist Cause seemed to be in the ascendant. Never – up to that date – had Don Carlos's army been so numerous or better equipped. The Carlist factories were turning out their own guns and munitions. They held excellent positions from which to strike southwards towards Madrid, and on which to fall back for protection if necessary.

Everything pointed to a successful issue of their enterprise,

backed up as it was by the Church of Rome, and tired and worn out as the country was by successive revolutions, mutinies of troops, unstable Governments and hopeless bankruptcy. So I thought my chance had come to see some fighting of real ding-dong nature by paying Don Carlos a personal visit. Not that I thought my military qualifications, attained by a few months' residence at the "Shop" as a cadet, in any way qualified me to be of any real military value to Don Carlos, but rather because I thought that Don Carlos's experience, after several years of the waging of war, would be of some considerable value to myself. Thus it came about that I decided to spend the forthcoming Christmas holidays attached to his army, being satisfied that I should be welcome, for I had a first cousin and two other relations who had been A.D.C.'s to Don Carlos from the beginning of the campaign.

I duly made application to our Governor at the "Shop," General Sir Lintorn Simmons, R.E., for permission to proceed to Spain during the holidays and be accredited as an English officer. This, of course, was refused, as I was not an officer, only a cadet, and fairly young at that. But I was told that if I chose to proceed to Spain on my own responsibility I was at liberty to do so, provided I returned to Woolwich on the date at which the new term began.

I have my doubts whether any young fellow of eighteen ever felt so elated, so important, so contented as I did on my journey from London to Bayonne. As I had my British passport I did not feel in the least concerned as to not being allowed to cross

the frontier, which happened to be at the time in the hands of the Government troops, into Spain. The railways in the north of Spain had practically ceased to exist. The journey was made along the old roads in every kind of coach that had been on the road previous to the construction of the railways across the Pyrenees. One particular coach I travelled in was practically a box on four wheels, with a very narrow seat running on each side, and very low in the roof. Going downhill the horses – such as they were – went as fast as they could, and every time we struck a hole in the road down went the box, up we banged our heads against the roof, and then we collapsed quietly on to the floor, beautifully mixed up.

This little affair happened often, and it was made especially interesting by the fact that we had two apparently youthful lady travellers. They had started with us from Bayonne. They were very quietly dressed, and – so far as we could see, through the extremely thick veils which they wore about their heads, and from occasional ringlets of hair peeping out here and there – they were quite the type of the dark Spanish beauties. They had chosen the two innermost seats inside the coach, and I happened to occupy the seat on one side next to one of them.

In those days cigarette-smoking by ladies was quite uncommon, much less was the smell of a strong cigar acceptable to them. However, the journey from Bayonne to the border was somewhat long. I wanted a smoke. I had a cigar. I politely asked the ladies whether they objected to my lighting up. They did

not speak, but they – as it seemed to me – gracefully nodded "Yes." So I lit up, and presently I began to notice that the one next to me, towards whose face the smoke sometimes drifted, seemed to like it very much, and, I would almost have said that she was trying to sniff some of it herself. A little later on, when we came to an unusually big rut in the road, we all went up as usual against the roof, and all came down again, missing the narrow seat. Extracting ourselves from our awkward positions, I came across a foot which certainly seemed to me not to belong to a lady, but, as it happened, it *was* a foot belonging to one of the ladies. I began to think but said nothing, and I also began to watch and look. Their hands had woollen gloves on, very thick, so that it was difficult to say what the hand was like inside. I may say that the three other passengers were Frenchmen, two of whom were very young and apparently unable to speak Spanish. As we were nearing the frontier I spoke to the ladies on some trivial matter, and mentioned the fact that I was going into Spain and that I hoped to see something of the fighting; that I was an Englishman, but that I had been born in Spain and that I knew personally Don Carlos and several of his officers, as well as many officers belonging to the Government troops. I noticed them interchanging looks as I told them my story, and presently we pulled up by the roadside at a little inn on the French side of the frontier. We were to wait there for some little time while the horses were changed, and we were glad to get out and stretch our limbs after our bumping experiences.

I watched them getting out of the coach, and it was quite evident to me that, considering they were ladies, they were blessed, each of them, with a very useful, handsome pair of understandings. I went inside the little inn, which boasted only, as far as I could see, one little room besides the big kitchen, and was having some tea when one of the ladies came into the room and, to my surprise, closed the door, put her back against it and said, "Will you promise not to give us away if we confide in you?" I said, "Certainly. I am not old enough yet to have given any ladies away, and I am not going to begin just now; so tell me anything you like. If I can help you I will."

For an answer her woollen gloves were whipped off, her hands, which were a very healthy brown colour, went up to her face, and – quite in a very awkward manner for a lady – she battled with her veil. Up it went, finally. A very, very clean-shaved face, but showing that very dark complexion which many black-bearded men have, no matter how very, very cleanly they shave, was looking right at me. There was no need for much further explanation. He told me that she and her companion were two Carlist officers who were hoping to join their regiments but had to cross the belt of the Government troops to do so, and had decided to disguise themselves as women and take the risk. I suggested that the other lady should be asked to come in and hold a council of war. I told them that I myself was going to Don Carlos's headquarters as soon as I got the opportunity, and that the only trouble I foresaw was in dealing with the sentries

and the guard at the frontier. Once past that it would be easy enough for them to get away unmolested. My next question was, "How much money have you ladies got? We all know the Spanish sentries, and I think their hands are always ready to receive some little douceur. There is but little luggage to be examined by them. If you two ladies remain inside the coach and be careful to cover your feet up, I'll keep them employed as far as possible in overhauling the luggage. I'll square, as far as I can, the driver not to leave his box, but to be ready to start as quick as I tell him to, and, by generous application of douceurs, I'll try to so interest the guards that they will have but little time to make any inquiries as regards your two selves." All went well. We got to the frontier, the commandant of the guard and the sentries were so taken up in counting the tips I gave them and dividing them equitably amongst themselves that they neither examined the luggage nor did they even look inside the coach. I hustled the three Frenchmen into the coach, after telling them that it was very, very important that we should proceed at once, shouted to the driver, "Anda, amigo – corre!" with the result that the horses jumped off at a bound, and I just managed to throw myself into the inside of the coach, very nearly reaching the ample laps of my two delicate lady friends.

The next day we arrived without incident at a small village, somewhat north of Elisondo, which village was then in the hands of the Carlists. Here my two lady friends changed their sex, and we passed a very pleasant evening with the Mayor of the

town, who had been able for some months previously, to be a Republican of the most determined character while the town was occupied by the Government troops, and to be a Carlist, second to none in his enthusiasm for the Carlist cause, as soon as the Carlist troops took possession of it again.

CHAPTER IV
FIRST WAR EXPERIENCE

I arrived at the headquarters of the Carlist Army, the stronghold of Estella, about the middle of January, 1875. Estella had been the seat of Government of the first Don Carlos in the earlier war.

On December 31, 1874, young Alfonso had been proclaimed King of Spain. His accession to the throne had taken place earlier than the Civil Government, then in power in Madrid, had intended. Its members were Royalists, and were preparing the way for the restoration of Alfonso to the throne, but were not anxious to hasten it until their plans were matured. Sagasta was their Civil Head; Bodega, Minister for War; Primo de Rivera, Captain-General of New Castile, all powerful with the soldiers then under his command. The man who forced their hands was General Martinez Campos, a junior general. A mile outside a place called Murviedro he harangued 2,000 officers and soldiers, then camped there, on December 24, 1874. The officers were already known to him as favourable to Alfonso. They applauded him enthusiastically, the men followed, and they there and then swore "to defend with the last drop of their blood the flag raised in face of the misfortunes of their country as a happy omen of redemption, peace and happiness." (December 24, 1874.) The fat was in the fire. Those who were delaying the Pronunciamento

had to give it their support, however much they considered it inexpedient. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army in the Field, Jovellar, and his Chief of the Staff, Arcaguarra, were also Royalists at heart. Jovellar hastened to instruct his generals openly to acknowledge Alfonso as their King, as King of Spain.

One general, the Marquis del Castillo, was then commanding the Government troops in Valencia. He was a loyalist too, but he did not think it right to assist with the troops under his command in effecting a change of Government, practically to take part in a rebellion while facing the common enemy. Castillo prepared to resist the Pronunciamento and march against the troops at Murviedro. Jovellar frustrated his intentions and marched at the head of his troops against him. Castillo's officers and soldiers fraternized with Jovellar's troops, and Castillo was ordered back to Madrid.

Alfonso XII reached Barcelona January 9, 1875. Official functions, his entry into Madrid, the issuing of Proclamations, fully engaged his time. But he was most anxious to proceed north and place himself at the head of his troops to whom he owed so much. Amongst the Proclamations was one practically offering the Carlists complete amnesty and the confirmation of the local privileges of the Provinces where the Carlist cause was most in favour. Don Carlos rejected the offer with disdain. Alfonso then, early in February, 1875, proceeded north to the River Ebro, reviewed some 40,000 of his best troops and joined General Morriones.

Such was the political situation. The military situation was as follows: Don Carlos's Army numbered some 30,000 men. The provinces from which they had been fed were becoming exhausted. On the other hand, Alfonso's troops numbered about twice their strength, and their moral had been improved by the success of their Pronunciamento and the return of some of the best leaders to the command of groups of the Army. The Carlist mobile forces had been much weakened in numbers by the blockade of the old fortress of Pamplona, which had lasted a long time.

Alfonso, with the Army of General Morriones, marched to the relief of Pamplona and successfully raised the blockade, February 6, 1875, forcing the Carlists backwards. The situation became most critical for the Carlists, as another Royalist Army, under General Laserta, was on the move to join Morriones in an attack on Estella. If this plan had succeeded it is probable that the war would have been finished there and then. Don Carlos, however, succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat on Laserta and completely upset the intentions of the Royalists. Alfonso returned to Madrid, having been only a fortnight with the Army. His presence was a source of embarrassment to the High Command.

I was able to be present at the retreat of the Carlist troops from the blockade of Pamplona, as well as the capture of Puente de Reina by Morriones, the defeat of Laserta, and other guerilla engagements. I had become so interested in the work in hand

that I had over-stayed my leave by a very considerable period, and would either have to return at once and take my gruelling at the hands of our Governor at the "Shop," or make up my mind to join the Carlists and become a soldier of fortune. I thought it out as best I could, and it seemed to me then that the experiences I had gained – of perhaps the most varied fighting that any similar campaign has supplied – might be considered of more advantage to my career as a soldier than a couple of extra months of mathematics, science and lectures at Woolwich, and that if I promptly returned and surrendered myself to the authorities I might perhaps be pardoned. So I collected my few goods and chattels, said good-bye to Don Carlos and my friends, and returned home by no means feeling so elated, happy and contented as I did on my outward journey.

On arriving in London I duly wrote to the Adjutant at Woolwich, informing him that I had arrived safely in England after my campaign in the North of Spain, and that the next day, which happened to be Tuesday, I would deliver myself as a prisoner, absent without leave, at the Guard Room at 12 o'clock noon. This I did, and I was met by the gallant Adjutant, and a guard, and was promptly put under arrest. Some of my contemporaries may still remember the occasion of my return. Numerous had been the rumours about my doings. At times I was reported dead. At other times I was rapidly being promoted in the Carlist Army. I had also been taken prisoner by the Government troops, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to durance vile in

the deep dungeons of some ancient fortress. Their sympathies for me had risen to enthusiasm or were lowered to zero, according to the rumours of the day, but they were all glad to see me back. Still they pitied me indeed, as they wondered amongst themselves what my fate was now to be.

The preliminary investigation into my disorderly conduct took place before the Colonel Commanding, and I was then remanded to be dealt with by the Governor. I was duly marched in to his august presence, under armed escort, and, after having had the charge of being absent without leave duly read to me, I was called upon by him to make any statement I wished with reference to my conduct.

As I have already said, I had learnt English only after I was thirteen years of age, and on joining at Woolwich I still spoke English with a considerable foreign accent, which perhaps had become more marked during my recent protracted visit to Don Carlos and his Army. I have always noticed that when one gets excited a foreign accent becomes more accentuated. It undoubtedly did on this occasion, especially when I endeavoured to give a description of some of the fighting in the course of my statement. I even ventured to ask that I might be given a piece of paper and a pencil to jot down the dispositions of the opposing forces which took part in one of our biggest fights. I had barely made the request when the Governor stopped me and said: "Do you mean to tell me that you have picked up a foreign accent like this during the short time that you have been in Spain?" "Oh, no,

sir, I have always had it. I mean, I've had it ever since I learnt English."

Sir Lintorn looked serious when I said this. A smile flitted across the countenances of the Colonel Commanding and the Adjutant – and even of the escort. "When did you learn English – and where? And where do you come from?" "I learnt English," I answered, "about five years ago at the Oratory at Edgbaston, Birmingham, and I spoke Spanish before that." "What countryman are you, then?" "Well," I said, "my father is Scotch, my mother is Irish, and I was born in Spain. I'm not quite sure what I am."

This time the smile turned into suppressed laughter. General Simmons looked at me for a short instant. Then he, too, smiled and said, "Well, I am going to let you off. You must take your chance of getting through your examination, considering the time you've lost. I let you off because I feel that the experiences you have gained may be of good value to you." Turning to the Adjutant he said, "March the prisoner out and release him. Tear up his crime sheet."

I forget now the wonderful escapes from tight corners in the field, the glowing descriptions of the valour of the Carlists, the number of times that Staff Officers had asked for my advice as to the conduct of the war, and the many other extraordinary tarradiddles that I poured, night after night, into the willing ears of my astounded and bewildered fellow cadets. One curiosity, however, may be mentioned. Amongst the most energetic of

Don Carlos's officers was his sister, Princess Mercedes, who personally commanded a cavalry regiment for some considerable time during the war.

The rest of my stay at Woolwich was uneventful. I *did* manage to get through the examination at the end of the term, but this was chiefly owing to the generous help of those cadets in my term who personally coached me in such subjects as I had missed. A year afterwards, at the end of the fourth term, the Royal Regiment of Artillery was short of officers. The numbers of cadets in the A Division leaving the "Shop" was not sufficient to fill the vacancies. Some eight extra commissions were offered to the fourth term cadets who were willing to forgo their opportunities of qualifying for the Royal Engineers by remaining for another term. A gunner was good enough for me, and I was duly gazetted to the regiment.

I am just here reminded of an incident which took place on the day on which His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge attended the Academy to bestow the commissions and present the prizes on the breaking-up day. The Prince Imperial of France had been a cadet with us. On that particular occasion he was presented with the prize for equitation, of which he was very proud. He was a good sport. He was very keen on fencing, but he had been taught on the French lines, and, as the French system was different from our English system he did not enter his name for the fencing prize. But he said that he *would* like to have a go with the foils against the winner of the prize. I had happened

to win it. The little encounter was arranged as an interlude in the athletic exhibition forming part of the day's function. We masked. We met. I was just starting to do the ceremonial fencing salute which generally preceded the actual hostilities, when he came to the engage, lunged, and had it not been for the button of the enemy's foil and my leather jacket, there would have been short shrift for J. M. G. He quickly called "One to me." Then I quickly lunged, got home, and called out, "One to me." Next instant we both lunged again, with equal results. We would have finished each other's earthly career if there had been no buttons and no leather jackets. The referee sharply called "Dead heat. All over." We shook hands in the usual amicable way and had a good laugh over the bout.

We parted on that occasion on our different roads in life – he shortly afterwards to meet his untimely end in the wilds of South Africa. Later on I remember attending his funeral. His death was indeed a sad blow to his mother, the Empress Eugénie, whose hopes had been centred on him her only son. I well remember, as a youngster, when visiting Madrid with my mother, looking forward to be taken to see her mother, the Countess of Montijo, who, with my grandmother, had been lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty Queen Christina.

Just lately I was at Jeréz again, when the ex-Empress Eugénie motored from Gibraltar to Seville, accompanied by her nephew the Duke of Alba. They stopped for luncheon at the Hotel Cisnes. I had the honour of a conversation with her. Her brightness and

her memory were quite unimpaired though in her ninety-fifth year. She recollected the incident of the fencing bout at which she had been present. Now she has passed away to her rest.

Gazetted Lieutenant, Royal Artillery, March, 1876, I was ordered to join at the Royal Artillery Barracks, Woolwich, in April.

CHAPTER V
MY MEETINGS WITH KING ALFONSO

While the exiled Prince Imperial was at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich another exiled Royal Prince, in the person of Alfonso XII, father of the present King and the successful claimant in the great Carlist struggle, who came to his own in 1875, was undergoing training in the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. I came to know him intimately during his stay in England owing to the fact that the Count of Mirasol, whose sister married my eldest brother, was his tutor and factotum.

I well remember what pleasure it was to me every time Mirasol asked me to spend the week-end with Alfonso in town. It was winter time, and one of our favourite resorts was Maskelyne and Cook's. We were never tired of watching their wonderful tricks. One afternoon we went to their theatre, the Hall of Mysteries, with two young nephews of mine who had just come from Spain and did not know English. One of the feats we saw was that of a man standing on a platform leading from the stage to the back of the audience, and then rising when the lights were lowered towards the roof of the building. The audience were warned to keep quiet and still while this wonderful act took place. One of my young nephews, who had not understood the warning given,

happened to be next the platform. When the lights were lowered and the man started on his aerial flight, my young nephew took my walking stick and struck the uprising figure. The lights went up and we were requested to leave the theatre. Alfonso protested, but Mirasol assured him that discretion was the best part of valour.

On the evening of December 30, I think, I was invited to dinner by Mirasol at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street. I was surprised that the dinner-hour had been fixed at a quarter-past six p.m. I wondered where we were going afterwards. Was it a theatre, or was it one of those quiet but most enjoyable little dinners and dances which Alfonso's friends arranged for him? In addition to the large number of wealthy Spaniards then living in London, many families whose sympathies had bound them to the monarchical cause had left Spain during the Republican *régime* and made London their home. I noticed when I arrived that Alfonso and Mirasol were in ordinary day dress. I again wondered how we were to finish up the evening.

It was at dinner that Mirasol said to me, "José Maria, you are in the presence of the King of Spain." I rose and bowed to His Majesty. He stood up and, taking both my hands in his, said, "At last I have attained my throne. To-night I leave for Paris. My country wants me for its king. You, José Maria, my friend, are the first in England to be told the good news. I want you, my friend, to wish me 'todas felicidades' (all happiness). We leave to-night. To-morrow my Army will proclaim me King of Spain.

Welcomed by the Army and the Civil Government, I will be received at Barcelona with the acclamations of my subjects, and thence to my capital, Madrid. To the members of your mother's family who, during the sad years of my exile have so zealously devoted themselves to my cause, I owe a deep debt of gratitude which I shall never forget."

I then told Alfonso that I had leave to go to Spain, my wish being to see the fighting and to be in it; but that, quite in ignorance of the fact that his succession to the throne was imminent, I had arranged to attach myself to Don Carlos, as my cousins on my father's side were with him. "Go, by all means," said Alfonso; "I know well that your father's family have been zealous supporters of Don Carlos's cause. My country has been rent for years by the devotion of our people whose sympathies have been divided between Don Carlos and myself. Please God I may be able to unite them for the future welfare of Spain. My first act as King of Spain will be to offer a complete amnesty to all and one who cease their enmity to myself and my Government and are willing to assist me in establishing law and order and ensuring the happiness and prosperity of my countrymen, of our glorious Spain. Go to Carlos, certainly, but in case you wish to leave him and get some experience of our loyalist soldiers, Mirasol will give you a letter now, which I will sign, and which will make you a welcome guest of any of my generals. Good-bye. Come and see me, if you have time, in Spain."

Mirasol gave me the letter and, with it in my pocket, I felt

more than satisfied that I had the chance of my life, a chance given to few men to be a welcome guest in the field of battle of two opponents, one a king, the other one who, for long years, had striven hard to be a king.

The carriage was waiting and we left Brown's Hotel for Charing Cross Station. Next day, December 31, 1874, Alfonso was proclaimed King of Spain. He landed at Barcelona on January 9, 1875.

For just a moment let me tell of Mirasol's sad end. For some time after Alfonso's restoration to the throne mutinies of soldiers and civil disturbances occurred throughout Spain. One of these mutinies took place in the Artillery Barracks in Madrid. Mirasol was an Artillery officer, and after the Coronation of Alfonso had again taken up his regimental duties. He received a message at his home one morning that the men at the barracks had mutinied. He started at once to the barracks, telling his wife not to be anxious and by no means to leave the house till his return. As he was approaching the barracks he was met by some of the mutineers. They stabbed him to death on the pavement. His wife had not paid heed to his request. She waited for a little time, and could not resist her desire to follow him in spite of his advice. As she was nearing the entrance to the barracks she met a crowd. She asked what was happening. A bystander said, "The mutineers have just murdered the Count of Mirasol. There he lies." Poor woman. Sad world, indeed.

CHAPTER VI
WITH DON CARLOS AGAIN

When I left Don Carlos in Spain after my visit to his Army I little thought that we were again to come into close touch and I was to spend much time with him and my cousin, Pepe Ponce de Leon, his A.D.C. It was a few days after I had received my commission and I was enjoying my leave previous to joining up at Woolwich in April (1876), when (I think it was the morning of March 8) I received a telegram from the War Office asking me to call there as soon as possible.

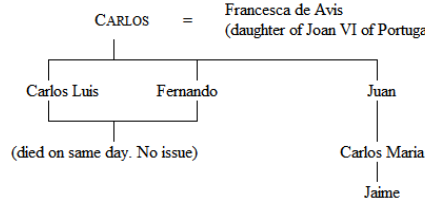
As, for the next four or five months, I was a great deal with Don Carlos in London and in France, I think it will be of interest to my readers if I describe shortly the validity, or otherwise, of his claim to the throne of Spain. Ferdinand VII of Spain, when an old man, married in 1830 Dona Maria Cristina, a young girl, sister of Dona Carlota, wife of his brother, Francisco de Paula. Cristina was not only young but also clever and beautiful. Contrary to expectation, it was announced later on that the Queen was about to become a mother. If the expected child was a son, then of course that son would be the heir to the throne. If it was a daughter, the question of her right to the succession would arise! In 1713 Philip V had applied the Salic Law; Carlos IV had repealed it in 1789. Now Don Carlos, brother of Ferdinand VII, had been born in 1788 and therefore claimed the succession in

case his brother Ferdinand died without male issue. On October 10, 1830, Cristina gave birth to a girl, the Infanta Isabella. In March of that same year Ferdinand had made a will bequeathing the Crown of Spain to the child about to be born, whether male or female.

Ferdinand, who had become very ill, fell again under the influence of the clerics and of the supporters of his brother, Don Carlos, who induced him to revoke his will. However, to the surprise of everybody, Ferdinand recovered, and under the direct influence of Dona Carlota, Cristina's sister, he tore up the document and, before a representative assembly of his Ministers of State, swore that he had repealed his will only under direct pressure while sick to death. Ferdinand's illness had become so severe that Cristina was appointed Regent, and acted as such till January 4, 1833, when Ferdinand recovered. On June 20, 1833, Ferdinand, still most anxious to secure the throne to his offspring, whether male or female, convened a Cortes at Madrid which confirmed his wishes. On September 29 he died. Cristina became Regent and the Infanta Isabella Queen of Spain. Don Carlos refused to recognize Isabella's rights to the throne. The enactments of Philip V and Ferdinand – no matter by whom made – could not affect his own divine rights, as all such enactments had been given effect to after he himself was born.

I must admit that it appears to be most difficult to convince the direct descendants of Don Carlos that they have not been deprived of their just rights. My readers are at full liberty to

decide this difficult problem. This does not matter to us, it is an interesting episode in the history of one of the oldest reigning families, the Bourbons. The first formidable rising took place at about November 14, 1833. Estella became the seat of Government of Don Carlos during the war, which lasted till the middle of the year 1840. Our Don Carlos was the son of his grandfather's third son, Juan.



If you remember, I had left Don Carlos shortly after he had frustrated Alfonso's plans early in 1875 by the decisive defeat of the Royalist Army under General Laserta. The success he achieved there did not prove of much value, in spite of the fact that the Royalist Army were very slow in reorganizing. The result of King Alfonso's accession caused many of the supporters of Don Carlos, who were fighting chiefly against the Republic, to become lukewarm. The war continued to drag on. Finally, weakened by the desertion of some of his chief supporters and the recantation of the famous Cabrera, and being completely outnumbered by the Royalist forces, Don Carlos, accompanied

by a few of his staunchest friends and one battalion of men from Castile, crossed over the border into France. The second Carlist war was over February 29, 1876.

As they had been decreed rebels, the French Government of the day refused Don Carlos and his officers permission to remain in France. They were, however, allowed to proceed to England, provided no halt took place on the way. Don Carlos notified the British Government of his intended arrival in England, hoping he would receive the requisite permission to proceed thither. It was the receipt of this telegram from Don Carlos that was the cause of my being sent for by the War Office early in March, 1876.

On my calling at the War Office on receipt of their wire the Military Secretary informed me that it was expected that Don Carlos, accompanied by several officers, might arrive at any time in London, and instructed me to make all the necessary arrangements for his comfort and welfare. Soon after receiving these instructions I got a further telegram advising me that Don Carlos would arrive that very same evening at about 8 p.m. at Charing Cross Station, and further, that he and his party would actually arrive in the very clothes in which they had left the field of battle, for they had had no time or opportunity to obtain any personal effects during their flight through France.

It was then that my mind took me back to Brown's Hotel and Mr. Ford, its proprietor, at which hotel King Alfonso had often stayed, and Mr. Ford promised me to arrange to put up Don Carlos and his suite. My next business was to call upon tailors,

hosiers, hatters and bootmakers in Bond Street, and to arrange for them to have their representatives at the hotel that evening to receive their orders.

I was at the station at the appointed time, and the travel-stained party, in their picturesque Carlist uniforms, arrived. I can well remember the impression that they made on their arrival. Such of the public as happened to be present looked on in silent wonder at the group of foreign officers. The rumour soon spread that the tall, commanding figure, erect and distinguished, whose handsome face and black beard were surmounted by the Carlist headgear, the "Boyna," was the celebrated Don Carlos himself, of whom some of them had heard as a great leader and who was now seeking refuge in England. We were not long in reaching our carriages – there was no luggage to cause us any delay – and we were glad to arrive at Brown's Hotel and sit down to the good dinner that awaited us.

The tradesmen who attended to the personal wants of our guests worked wonders, and, in a very few days, the visitors were all provided with complete outfits. Many thoughts went through my mind in those few days. Within a year I had been the companion of a young prince, whose mother had practically been expelled from her throne and who had himself been exiled from his country; a young prince who, for some years, had been full of hopes of succeeding to the Crown and whose hopes had seemed always to be difficult of fulfilment and not likely to be realized. Yet he was now King. On the other hand, the man who

had fought for that throne and had almost succeeded in attaining it was taking refuge, not only in the same country and city, but also in the same hotel where his successful antagonist had spent the last hours of his exile. The ways of Providence are certainly wonderful.

As a result of diplomatic communications, Don Carlos and those with him were permitted to reside in England until arrangements could be made for their return to France. At his request permission was granted me to be attached to his Staff during his stay. He was naturally very much run after by lion-hunters, and many were the entertainments that were given in his honour. But the hours he enjoyed best were those which he spent amongst his old supporters, not only those whose homes were in London and in the country, but also those who, after his refusal to accept the amnesty offered by Alfonso, had been compelled to leave Spain and take refuge in England. There were some seventeen thousand families then expelled from Spain. My days were fully occupied in making all the arrangements for visiting in the country, dinners, balls, theatre parties. In fact, it was a constant round of pleasure and amusement.

The visitors – especially Don Carlos himself – were most anxious to ride to hounds. It was a difficult matter to mount so large a number, as the horses had to be hired, and we all know how difficult it is to depend on hired horses in the hunting field. Perhaps the biggest problem was to find a horse suitable to Don Carlos. He stood six-foot three and must have ridden somewhere

over sixteen stone. I was despairing of success when I mentioned my difficulty to Mr. Ford. He at once relieved me of all anxiety. He told me he thought he could mount Don Carlos and two or three of the others out of his own private stables. It was a right jolly good day we had. There was to be a meet of Sir Robert Harvey's Harriers somewhere in the neighbourhood of Staines, I think, and Mr. Ford kindly arranged all the details. The party returned home more than satisfied with the day's sport. So time passed, only too quickly, and the day came for their departure. We said good-bye, and I went back to duty.

Some three months later I was agreeably surprised to receive an official letter stating that Don Carlos had written from Paris expressing the wish, if it could be granted, that, as some recompense for all the trouble and, as he put it, hard work, that had fallen to my lot while looking after him during his stay in London, I might be allowed a month's leave to stay with him in Paris. The official letter notified me that the necessary leave had been granted. Once again I was crossing the Channel, full of contentment, as in the days when I left Woolwich to join him in Spain. But my hopes were very much brighter. I was not going to see battles fought or undergo hardships. No; I was going to enjoy myself thoroughly.

On arrival in Paris I met my cousin, Pepe Ponce de Leon, the aide-de-camp referred to before. He had, shortly after his return to Paris from England, married a very rich widow, whose husband had been one of Don Carlos's principal supporters. They

had a beautiful and magnificent house in the Champs Elysées, which, as a matter of fact, became the headquarters of the Carlist supporters in Paris, and Pepe had arranged that it should be my home during my stay. Life indeed was worth living in those days. Every luxury that one could wish for was at hand, and perhaps the most enjoyable one was the splendid stud of horses, harness and riding, which my cousin had got together.

Our usual routine was as follows: *Déjeuner* was served at noon, at which Don Carlos generally was present and as many of his late officers and supporters as cared to come. These *déjeuners* were full of interest, party affairs being discussed, but often also full of conviviality notwithstanding the evil fortunes which had fallen upon the cause. Later on in the afternoon riding and driving parties were arranged for. In the evening banquets or private dinner parties were the order of the day, after which we all made our own plans to amuse ourselves. Paris was very gay and we generally managed to foregather again at midnight, or thereabouts, for supper at one or other of the many cafés, where music and dancing would be enjoyed. I soon discovered that some of our intimate friends were in the habit, instead of proceeding home to their beds after supper, of visiting the Turkish baths. After enjoying the bath they would sleep until the carriages arrived, and then, after partaking of chocolate or coffee, as they desired, they would be driven off home to sleep again until the time to appear at *déjeuner* should arrive once more. And so the days and nights passed, and enough for the day

was the pleasure thereof.

It was about this time that a reconciliation took place between King Alfonso's mother, Queen Isabella, and Don Carlos, of a personal but not official character. The proverb, "Blood is thicker than water," sometimes comes true. The two were near relations. They had no personal quarrels. Her own destiny was settled and Don Carlos's own efforts to wrest the Crown from her son had ended in failure. Why, therefore, any need for further enmity? I am reminded of a quaint conceit of Isabella's, which amused not only her but also her friends. Isabella had grown to be a woman of large proportions – in fact, of unmistakable proportions. One of her favourite ladies-in-waiting was similarly endowed by nature, if not more so. Isabella's hospitality was noted for its old magnificence. Her entertainments were, one might say, superb. She delighted in masked balls, and it was her pleasure to move in the crowd of guests, masked, without being recognized. As her wish in this was made known to her guests, the pleasing illusion was kept up till the hour for unmasking arrived.

CHAPTER VII
MY FIRST ENGAGEMENT

I had been in Paris about three weeks when it came to the mind of Don Carlos that he could arrange an excellent marriage for me. Any of my readers who know how marriages are managed in France and Spain could not be surprised that his liking for me personally prompted this kind thought. Without my knowledge, but with the aid of my cousin's wife and other feminine confederates, he had selected a charming girl, some seventeen years of age, the only daughter of a rich financier, scion of an old French family, whose wife was a Spaniard. During my visit I had met her at times. She was as desirable a partner for life as any, prince or peasant, could have wanted. Educated in one of the best convents in Paris, she spoke English and Spanish equally as well as her own language. She was tall, for a Frenchwoman, and her love for sport was equal to her personal charms. Up to this time I had, I suppose, not had time to fall in love with anyone in particular. This was probably due to the fact that I was imbued somewhat with the spirit which prompted a Spanish songster to write:

"Me gustan todas,

Me gustan todas en general."[1]

Then came the day when I was told that practically my engagement to her had been approved by her family. This came, I need hardly say, as a considerable surprise. The future was as rosy as the rosiest sunrise in any part of the world could be – a most desirable and charming wife, a life of contentment and pleasure. Who could ask for a better future? No more soldiering. On the contrary, a ready-made road to success, in whatever walk of life I chose to pursue. Some such thoughts – and many others – passed through my mind and I plucked up courage. Still, my heart was not in the affair, as you will see; but I argued to myself that, if the marriage did not finally take place, it could mean only the breaking of a family arrangement, which would not result in much grief or sorrow to my *fiancée*, as she certainly could not have become very devoted to me personally.

A fortnight or so passed, during which some further family affairs were discussed, and the day was at hand when the engagement was to be made public. Unfortunately a stroke of ill luck overtook me the night before that very day. It was the custom in Paris for those engaged in the theatrical profession to hold annually an Artists' Ball in aid of the charities supported by them. This year the ball was to be held at the Grand Hotel. It was always a brilliant and picturesque pageant. The companies playing in the theatres entered the magnificent

[1] "I like them all; I like them all equally well."

ballroom dressed in their theatrical costumes, while others appeared in fancy dresses. Remembering the fame for good taste, smartness and chic of Frenchwomen, the beauty of such a gathering is not surprising. The younger members of our party promised ourselves a thoroughly enjoyable night, while the elder ones looked forward to much pleasure too. It was about half-past twelve that the guests assembled in the ballroom to watch the arrival of the artists. Company after company entered, amidst much applause, and took up the position allotted to them. At a given signal the men approached the ladies to beg for the honour of dancing with them; it was a thoroughly Bohemian *fête*, and it was not necessary to obtain personal introductions. One very politely made his request of a lady for a dance. If it was granted, all was well. If it was not granted, then a polite bow – and all was not well.

I had been much attracted by a very sweet and charming actress. She appeared to me as the impersonation of all that was lovely. Her complexion was fair, and her hair golden – a head that Murillo would have loved to paint. She was rather petite, but, oh dear me, what a figure! What ankles! What sweetly moulded neck and arms! What delicately coloured flesh! Are you surprised that she looked all lovable? She had a companion, differing in type, but with equally as many charms of her own. One of my friends seemed to be much taken with her, and we at once decided to try our fortune and beg of them to honour us by accepting us as partners for the opening dance. As soon

as the signal was given we did so, and, to our great joy, we obtained their permission. No two young men were happier than we were, for one dance followed another till supper was ready. Of course, the fact had quite escaped my mind that, in France and Spain, it is not usual for engaged men to dance with other ladies than their *fiancée*– and certainly *outré* for them to make themselves conspicuous by paying too much attention to any ladies, especially at such public functions. Still I continued to enjoy myself. My friend was equally successful with his partner.

Before going to supper Louise (my charming companion's name) told me that she had another ball to attend that night, and that, as it was then about 2 a.m., she and her friend Estelle would take a light supper and leave immediately afterwards. Their will was, of course, law to us. We sent out a message by our footman for our carriage to be ready at the exit gateway in half an hour, and our *partie carrée* continued to enjoy itself. While at supper my cousin came to our table. We introduced him to Louise and Estelle. He joined us in a glass of champagne, and, as he left us, he said to me in Spanish, "Ten cuidado; tomas demasiados riesgos."[2] But, what think you? Did I care? No. I did not even realize that he was alluding to my engagement. I just thought that he had noticed that we four had passed the whole evening together, and that possibly we might be opening a friendship that might result in a liaison which might not be so judicious. We wished him good night and he passed on.

[2] Take care. You are taking too many risks.

After supper we hurried to our carriage and drove to Louise's apartments, which were only a short distance from the Grand Hotel. Arriving there, Louise suggested that my friend should drive Estelle home and return to take her to the other ball to which she was going. This we, of course, agreed to, and Louise invited me to her apartments to have a glass of champagne while she placed herself in the hands of her maid to change her costume and we awaited the arrival of my friend and the carriage. They were delightful apartments – such as one expects Parisiennes of exquisite taste to dwell in. The dining-room was a work of art in white and gold. Sky-blue draperies, deeply embroidered in Japanese fashion, with birds of the air and fishes of the seas in such bewildering colour as only the Japanese know how to depict. Louise's dress at the ball was in the same sky-blue tone, and – as she stood in her dining-room taking a glass of champagne before handing herself over to the tender mercies of her maid – she looked almost heavenly. Anyway, so any man would have thought if he had been in my place, and of my age, during those precious moments.

But is there not a proverb that says: "All that glitters is not gold"? It applies not only to physical but also to mental condition. My mental condition was one of happiness. Louise was beautiful. Louise was kind, and the world was good and so was the champagne. But Nemesis was not far off.

Presently Louise returned to me. She wished for a cigarette and a glass of champagne before her maid robed her for her

second ball. Just clad in the filmiest and most fetching of wraps (I think that is the word), she looked as bewitching as if she had just floated down from the abodes of bliss and beauty. She had just sipped her glass of champagne and lit her cigarette, and leaned on the arm of the arm-chair in which I was sitting, when we heard the hall-door open and someone enter.

"Hush!" she said; "it is Gustave! Leave him to me and say little."

"Louise, ma chèrie, où êtes vous?"

It was Gustave. He drew apart the silken curtains separating the hall from the dining-room. "Voilà, je suis retourné. Mais … mon Dieu!"

As the curtains were drawn Louise rose from the arm of the chair (I at once rose also), and in the sweetest tones, speaking in English, Louise said: "My dear Gustave. What a pleasant surprise. No? Oh, yes, for me! I thought you would not return till the day after to-morrow. So! No? Let me introduce to you my friend, an English officer. He has been so polite to me at our *fête* to-night."

Gustave and I stood facing each other; we had no need for introductions. Gustave was the bachelor brother of my prospective father-in-law. He happened also to be a particular friend of Louise's. I knew him and he knew me. We looked calmly at each other. He was twice my age; it was not for me to speak. The piece was set as if for a dramatic scene – Louise, in her charming deshabillé; my humble self, silent but unabashed;

Gustave, practically in possession of the situation. The moment was a critical one, but though Nemesis had arrived it was not the Nemesis with a flaming sword; it was the Nemesis with a somewhat more dangerous weapon, that of French politeness, which scorns to provoke personal quarrels in the presence of ladies but awaits to obtain reparation in good time in accordance with the code of honour.

Bowing low to Louise and looking at me straight in the face, Gustave politely remarked, "It happens that I am acquainted with monsieur the English lieutenant. I regret that I have intruded and disturbed your *tête-à-tête* at such an hour of the morning. Pray forgive me, Louise. I have no doubt monsieur the lieutenant and I will meet by and by. N'est-ce pas, monsieur le lieutenant? Good night to you both." And, as Louise moved, Gustave added, "Please, oh, please, do not bother. I know my way out quite well. Au revoir." He drew the curtains aside and, turning towards us, made the politest of bows and was gone.

"Louise," I said, as I took her hands in mine, "it is all my fault. Can you forgive me?"

"Mon jeune ami," said Louise as she looked up at me. "First of all, give me one kiss. Yes, I like that; just one more. So! Ah! Good! Now you said, 'Forgive me.' For that I love you, because it is what a man always should say to a woman. I not only forgive you, but I think you are charmant. One more kiss – eh! ah! nice. I never allowed anyone, since I remember, even to suggest to me to ask forgiveness. Certainly not any man. Don't be

concerned; don't be unhappy. Gustave will come by and by and will ask me to forgive him for his conduct to-night. He was rude; he was unpleasant in front of me. He suggested, by his words, things that had not happened. That was more than impolite; it was ungentlemanly, and you will see he will be very sorry and come to me and ask me to forgive him. At this moment I know not that I will forgive him. One more kiss. He is a good friend, but by no means indispensable to me. I have all I wish of my own and can please myself as to whom I choose for my friends. So don't be concerned. Just one more kiss and I go to make ready for the ball. Ah! the hall door bell! Your friend returns. I will be with you bien vite. Silence, n'est-ce pas?" And she went to her room.

Next minute my friend was with me. He was so full of the charms of Estelle that I had not – even if I wished – an opportunity of saying anything. Another cigarette, a couple of glasses of champagne, the presence of Louise looking sweeter than ever, all in pink silks and satins, and we were off in the carriage to leave her at the private house where her friends, she said, would be wondering what had become of her.

We two returned home in the early hours of the morning and retired to bed. Bed was one thing. Sleep was another. The day and evening had been crowded with unexpected events, wonderful happenings and newly inspired emotions. First and foremost, one event was certain. My engagement was doomed. Why, in all creation, had I selected Louise from all those six hundred other women who had attended the ball at the Grand Hotel? Louise,

who was Gustave's friend, and Gustave, my prospective uncle-in-law? There was only one answer – "Nemesis."

Then I remembered my cousin's warning at supper, "Cuidado!" Well, warnings are of no value if they are not heeded. One thing was clear. The engagement would be off. I must admit that the fault was all mine; I would not, nay, could not, offer any excuse. I had not played the game. I had failed to rise to the occasion and prove myself the correct youth that my sponsors had vouched for. So, no doubt the prospective father-in-law would soon call a family council and Gustave's relations would be discussed – and then, an end to the affair.

Curiously enough, this did not trouble me much. I felt that the worst harm I had done was to hurt the pride of my would-be benefactors. This might be pardonable, but, as regarded my *fiancée*, what should I do? There seemed to me only one way to act that was honourable. I would ask that I might be given the privilege of seeing her for the last time and ask her forgiveness. If this was refused, then I would find my own way to see her. My thoughts ran on. All the pleasures of the evening recalled themselves. A new sensation coursed through my brain. Yes; it must be so. I must be in love. Love at first sight – and in love with Louise. Was she to suffer – and I the cause of her sufferings? No. I would see her, tell her of my love for her, marry her. Louise, one more kiss – eh! Then I must have fallen asleep.

When I returned from the world of nod my valet had brought me my morning chocolate. My brain was anything but clear.

That some happenings of a surely serious nature had taken place the night before was certain. What were they? Gradually my memory recalled them. And then I dressed. As I was just ready for *déjeuner* my cousin sent me word that he would like to see me. I knew what it was about. Our interview was short. He was very kind. He laid all the blame on himself for expecting that the method of making marriages by arrangement would be a success where a youthful Britisher was concerned. He, however, wished I should tell him all that had happened since he had seen me at supper, and especially about my meeting with Gustave.

I just told him – as I have told you, pointing out that the affair had been quite harmless, though appearances were certainly against me. He left the house and returned later on. He had seen Gustave. The engagement, of course, was off. My escapade was looked upon as excusable. I was young and inexperienced in the ways of the world, and permission was graciously given me to see my late *fiancée*. This I did, and, I am happy to say, she not only forgave me but we remained friends.

It suddenly dawned upon me that my leave was up and that I was due back to duty at home. Don Carlos, while somewhat resenting the unfortunate ending of his scheme, made allowances for me when the whole story was related to him. He smiled a kindly smile as I expressed to him all my regrets that I had failed to take advantage of his well-meaning efforts in my behalf.

But then, what about Louise? What about Gustave? What should I do? The solution came from Gustave himself. Next day

I received an invitation from him to a supper party at the Café d'Helder. Naturally I accepted. We were to meet at a quarter to twelve, and my friend, Estelle's admirer, was also asked. It was a merry party; just ten of us. The hour to say "Good morning" arrived only too soon. For me it was not only "good morning" but also "good-bye." I had to leave Paris the evening of that day. My last but one good-bye was to Louise. I kissed the hands she gave me; then she said, looking towards Gustave with smiling eyes, "One last kiss for monsieur the lieutenant. N'est-ce pas, Gustave? Mais, oui. The final. Pourquoi non?" So Louise and I kissed.

Then Gustave shook hands with me, placed his hand on my shoulder, and we left the supper-room together. He came down to see me into my carriage, and as I was stepping into it he once more shook my hand and said, "You are very young. I am old enough to be your father. Always remember your English proverb: 'Look before you leap.' Good night. Bonne fortune toujours."

Thus ended my first romance and, with it, my most enjoyable visit to Paris.

CHAPTER VIII
SOLDIERING IN IRELAND

On obtaining his commission a young officer was ordered to report himself at the Royal Artillery Barracks at Woolwich, to undergo six months' further training in his regimental duties and in practical work at the Arsenal, with occasional visits to the School of Gunnery at Shoeburyness. It was a happy six months if he managed to keep out of trouble, for there were many temptations to overcome. Straight away from the strict discipline of the "Shop," the young officer found himself – or at least considered himself – quite a gentleman at large. In his own opinion he had become a person of very considerable importance, and the orders he gave had to be implicitly obeyed. His uniform was a source of extreme pleasure to him. He was allotted a whole "Tommy" to himself as a soldier servant. He rejoiced in the possession of quite a big room for his quarters. And there was the Mess.

At that time there had been an amalgamation of the English and Indian Artillery, which were combined into one General List, so that the whole of the Artillery formed one Regiment comprising Horse, Field and Garrison Artillery. The headquarters were at Woolwich, and the Royal Artillery Mess was the Headquarters Mess, and is so still, though lately there have been further sub-divisions of the Regiment. Still, these have

not as yet, so far as I know, resulted in any change as regards the Headquarters Mess. It remains to be seen what changes will or will not be made in the future.

One of the institutions attached to the Royal Artillery Mess was the Garrison Theatre. At regular intervals the Royal Artillery officers gave performances at this theatre. Let me tell you that it is seldom that an Engineer or Artillery officer was not a first-rate dancer; for, at the "Shop," two or three nights a week dancing took place in the gymnasium to the delightful music of the Royal Artillery band. On these nights ladies were not allowed to attend, so the cadets had to supply the ladies amongst themselves. But the continual practice naturally made them good dancers. Personally I took great delight in the art of dancing. I was built just for it, tall, light, thin and long-legged. I was able to pirouette and high-kick fairly well.

I was very keen on private theatricals, so that, amongst my other important duties of those days, I was appointed stage manager and producer for a week's performance which was to take place at the Garrison Theatre. The play was the old farce, *Box and Cox*, which was converted into a musical comedy. Some people say to this day that this particular production was the origin of the musical comedies which have since then so amused the public. Mrs. Bouncer was most excellently performed by Lieutenant Bingham, while Lieutenants Jocelyn and Fritz, if I remember rightly, were Box and Cox. Mrs. Bouncer, assisted in the musical part of the piece by a chorus of lusty sergeants

and gunners, who revelled in dances and choruses, was a great success, while a specially selected chorus of ballet-girls highly distinguished themselves. The production was quite good, and the financial results on behalf of the regimental charities were most satisfactory. In after years the theatrical experiences thus gained gave me considerable enjoyment. But of this, later on.

The end of the six months' training at Woolwich being completed, I was appointed to a Garrison company, with its headquarters at Limerick – good old Limerick – which was then known as the paradise of hard-up subalterns. Limerick is a quaint town. There is Old Limerick and Modern Limerick. The old town is situated round the castle, which is on the banks of the Shannon, and where – across the river – stands the old Treaty Stone. It is difficult to describe Old Limerick. One must really see it and live in it to appreciate its dirty houses, poor tenements, its smells and other unhealthy attributes. Yet it is a characteristic little piece of old Ireland. This part of the old town reached down to the cathedral, past which the main street – George Street – runs through the modern town, practically parallel with the River Shannon. With the exception of the old castle, Limerick does not possess any buildings of very particular interest. The best residential part was across the river, Circular Row. Limerick itself has nothing to recommend it as regards picturesqueness, but there is much beauty in the country surrounding it. From just below the castle the River Shannon has some beautiful reaches, right away up to Castle Connell; while Tervoe on the river, Adare

Abbey, and many other places are well known.

When I reported myself to my commanding officer at the castle I found that our company, which then consisted of about eighty all told, was doing duty from the very North to the South of Ireland. There was a detachment of some twenty-five men at a place called Green Castle, which was an old fort at the entrance of Lough Swilly, not far off the Giant's Causeway. Another detachment of some thirty-five men was on duty at Carlisle Fort, one of the forts guarding the entrance into Cork Harbour at Queenstown. This left us about twenty men at our headquarters at Limerick Castle. Our captain was not with the company. He was A.D.C. to a Colonial Governor, and, of course, was seconded. The two senior subalterns were in command of the detachments at Green Castle and Carlisle Fort, so that the commanding officer, our good major and myself, were left at our headquarters with the twenty men. By the time that we found the guard for the day, the major's two orderlies, my own orderly, the cook and cook's mate, the district gunner (who was busy keeping our three very old guns, mounted in the tower, polished up), the office clerk and the barrack sweeper, the morning parade consisted usually of the sergeant-major.

At nine o'clock every morning, after first joining, I appeared on parade, when the sergeant-major reported "All present, sir," and I said, "Carry on, sergeant-major," and went inside to breakfast. After a time I'm afraid I got into the bad habit of letting the sergeant-major come to make his report at the window

of my quarters, which faced the barrack-square. At ten o'clock the major, whose quarters were above mine, and who was the happy possessor of some eight children, appeared at the company office, and I duly reported to him, "All correct, sir, this morning." For it was only very occasionally that we had a prisoner. The major would answer, "Very good." I would then ask him, "Do you want me any more to-day, sir?" He would then answer, without a smile, for he was a serious-minded major, "No, thanks." And then the joys of my day would begin for me.

The way in which my major came to be quartered in Limerick was this. He was the eldest brother of a very well-known family in Tipperary. He had many brothers, all of whom were also well known and much liked throughout the surrounding districts. They were all first-class horsemen, and, needless to say, good sportsmen all round. One of these brothers was at the time Sub-Sheriff of Limerick. It was indeed a difficult post to fill in those days. The country was exceedingly disturbed. Evictions were all too frequent, with the accompanying result of riots and murders, and it required much pluck and tact to carry out the Sub-Sheriff's duties. My major had been, some time previous to my joining, ordered to Singapore, while another major, a bachelor, was in command of the company at Limerick. In those days officers were allowed to exchange on the payment of fees agreed upon. My major did not relish the idea of proceeding to Singapore with his young family of eight, so he approached the bachelor major at Limerick with a view to an exchange, and offered a very

handsome sum. The bachelor major very promptly accepted, and the exchange took place. Just before leaving Limerick the members of the club gave the bachelor major a farewell dinner, and, in proposing his health, the chairman remarked that he didn't understand why anybody should wish to leave Limerick for such an awful place as Singapore. When answering the toast the bachelor major said he would tell them in confidence the real reason. He went on to say that a short time before he accepted the exchange he had been to dinner with friends, some nine miles away, across the Shannon, in County Clare. He was returning home with the old jarvey on an outside car, and as it was a fairly fine night, moonlight, and he had had a very good dinner, he was enjoying his pipe and now and again having a little doze. They were passing a piece of road which was bounded on one side by a somewhat thick hedge. Suddenly there was a flash and the loud report of a gun, which very promptly woke him and made the old jarvey sit up too, and pull his horse up. Immediately two heads popped up over the hedge, had a good look at the major, and then one of the men said, "Begorra, Pat, we've shot at the wrong man again," and promptly disappeared. "Now, don't you think, my friends, that it's time I went to Singapore?"

But he never told them of the cheque he got to go to Singapore.

At that time the garrison of Limerick was fairly strong. There was a Field Artillery battery at the William Street Barracks, and there were a regiment of infantry and a squadron of cavalry at the New Barracks, so that our turn for any garrison duty didn't

come very often, and we had plenty of time to enjoy ourselves. Anyone who wished and who had sufficient horses could put in four or five days' hunting a week during the season. The Master of the Limerick Hounds at the time lived at Croome. He was a typical Irish gentleman, noted for his genial character and the forcefulness of his language in the hunting field. Limerick is a fine hunting country, and gives excellent sport. There were many good riders in those days. Our friend the Sub-Sheriff was one, but perhaps the best man there was the owner of Ballynegarde, at whose hospitable house we spent many happy days. He must have ridden quite over sixteen stone, and I well remember seeing him, on a chestnut horse, clear the wall which surrounded the park, the chestnut changing his feet on the top, just like a cat. Good horses were just as expensive in those days as they were before the war, but we subalterns did not buy expensive horses; we picked up good jumpers that had gone cronk, and trusted to the vet., occasional firing, plenty of bandages, and not too hard work to keep them going.

Riding out one morning towards Mount Shannon, the then lovely home of the Fitzgibbons, on the banks of the river, and just on leaving the old town of Limerick, I arrived at a rather long and steep hill, at the foot of which a jarvey was trying to induce his horse, a long, rakish, Irish-built bay, to go up. The horse absolutely refused to do so, and each time the old jarvey flogged him he exhibited very considerable agility in every direction except up the hill. I rode up to the jarvey and asked him what

was the matter. “Shure, sir,” he said, “I bought this horse to go up this hill, for I am the mail contractor on this road. I’ve got him here these last three mornings, and I’ve never got farther than this. Now I’ll have to go back again and get another horse, and all the people will get their mails late and they’ll report me, and they’ll fine me, and the divil do I know what my ould missus’ll have to say about it. And, shure, yer honour, ’tis all the fault of this donkey-headed old quadruped.”

I asked him whether the old quadruped could jump.

“Shure, yer honour,” he said, “he’d jump out of his harness, traces an’ all, if I hadn’t got him by the bit.”

“Will you sell him?” says I.

“Will I sell him?” says he. “Will I find the fool that’ll buy him, yer honour?”

“Bring him up to the old castle in the morning,” says I, “and I may find the fool that’ll buy him.”

“Begorra, sir,” says he, “yer a gintleman. I’ll be there with him at nine o’clock, with a halter round his old ewe neck.”

Next morning, at nine o’clock, just as the sergeant-major was reporting as usual, “All correct,” I saw my old friend leading his quadruped into the barrack square. He was a quaint looking horse. He was particularly full of corners, for he wasn’t furnished up above at all. But he had good-boned legs. His coat was by way of being a miracle to look at. He had no particular colour to speak of. In some places he was a bit of a roan – Taffy-like; round some other corners he was a dirty bay. In some places,

especially where for the last three days he had attempted to get out of his harness at the bottom of the hill, there was no hair at all. But he had a good-looking eye; he had good sound feet; good bone, though his tail was hardly up to Cocker. Most of it, no doubt, was now part and parcel of the car.

I can well remember the look of the correct and austere sergeant-major – who himself was a bit of a sport, but who still considered himself "on parade" – as he cast his eye over that noble quadruped, and wondered what his lieutenant was about. I could see that he was asking himself, "Is he going to run a circus, and is this going to be the freak horse?"

"Mick," says I, "if I get a saddle on the horse, will you ride him; come out with me and put him over a couple of jumps?"

"Shure, yer honour," says he, "an' so I will."

"Sergeant-major," says I, "tell my groom to put a saddle and bridle on this Rosinante" (at the mention of which name the sergeant-major looked perplexed) "and get one of the other horses ready for me."

In a few minutes Mick and I were riding down the old street, making for a bit of open country. We soon came to a high road, bounded on each side by fairly stiff, stone walls. Having come to a gate on one side I pulled up.

"Now," says I, "Mick, are you game to go into that field and take the double across the road?"

"Shure, I am," says he; "but 'tis a long day, yer honour, since I had a jump. Would you lend me your whip? The old horse'll

want it, it may be."

I gave him the whip, jumped off my nag, opened the gate, and away went Mick into the field. It was a sight to do one good. There was Mick, what he called his hat stuck on the back of his head, and what was left of his coat-tails flying in the air behind him, heading for the first stone wall, and, before you could say "knife," he was over it like a bird, across the road, over the wall the other side, with a "whoop-la" that you could have heard in the cathedral in Limerick.

Just as well to mention that Rosinante's age was what is known amongst horse-copers as "uncertain," that is, anywhere between nine years old and twenty-four.

After that (it was not long before we were again at the Castle) I asked Mick Molloy how much he wanted for the horse. He said, "Shure, I'll just take what I gave for it. He's no good to me."

I asked him how much that was, and he said, "Five pounds."

I was so surprised, that he became quite apologetic, thinking he was asking too much, and quickly began to sing the praises of his mount. I at once disabused him of the idea by telling him that I couldn't give him less than £7 10s., which might help him a little towards his getting an animal that would pull his car up the hill. The horse became mine, and the late owner left the barracks wishing me all the blessings that our good God and Ould Oireland could bestow on my humble head. The end of Mick Molloy came later on.

CHAPTER IX
UNRULY TIMES IN IRELAND

Affairs in Ireland have always been a source of wonderment to me. Ever since the days I spent there, right through to the present time, the doings – at one time or another – of some of the inhabitants of Ireland have puzzled most people. All the talent of all the Prime Ministers and Members of Parliament, within these forty years, has been unable to ensure for Ireland such political and economic conditions as would have made it the happy country which it ought to be.

When I was there in 1877-1878 the times were full of trouble, and I recall several episodes which show the temper of the people at that day. Some four miles from Limerick is a place called "Woodcock Hill," where the rifle ranges, for the instruction in musketry of the troops quartered there, were situated. Close to the range was a small Catholic chapel, standing practically by itself. An infantry regiment was quartered in Limerick at the time. It was an English regiment; its depôt, from which the recruits fed it, was somewhere in the North of England, and the number of Catholic soldiers in its ranks was very small in proportion. One Sunday morning the priest attending the little chapel at "Woodcock Hill" found that somebody had broken into the church and stolen some of the altar fittings and – worse from the Catholic point of view – had taken the chalice used at Mass.

This, of course, was nothing less than sacrilege in the eyes of the devout Catholic Irishmen.

Rumours soon began to circulate that, on the previous Saturday evening, after some rifle-shooting had taken place, two red-coats had been seen in the vicinity of the chapel. These rumours were not long in being spread throughout the city, and as the regiment was looked upon as being anti-Catholic, reports went about to the effect that the sacrilege had been carried out not so much for the sake of the value of the stolen articles, but purely out of hatred for the Catholics and for the purpose of desecrating the holy place. The consequences of these rumours soon became apparent. Soldiers, returning home late at night, were set upon and hammered in the by-streets. As a result, instead of going about in ones and twos, they would congregate in bigger groups and took every opportunity of retaliating on the civilians.

On a quiet Sunday morning, a glorious day, at about eleven o'clock, red-coats in small groups rapidly began to arrive at the old Castle. I had been out riding and was returning to my quarters about twelve o'clock, and I found that there were not less than somewhere between 150 and 200 soldiers within the barrack gates. It had been the custom for members of other corps to come into the canteen at the "Castle" for a glass of beer or two, after their dismissal from church parade. But for such a number to get together was more than unusual.

In the absence of the major, my commanding officer, the responsibility of dealing with the case fell on me. I determined

to send my groom with a message to the officer commanding the regiment at their barracks, which were at the other end of the main street in the town, to inform him of what was going on, and then to order the men off in small groups from the "Castle." But there was no time, for hardly had I finished writing my message than the whole lot of red-coats left the barracks together and proceeded towards George Street. They had their waistbelts on but fortunately did not carry any side-arms. Still, the good old infantry belts, with their heavy brass buckles, were quite a formidable weapon to use about in a crowd which was unarmed. I jumped on my horse and, riding by side streets, reached the police station, which was in the middle of the town, close to the main street, to inform the police of what was taking place. However, when I got there, it had become evident to the police that trouble was coming, for large numbers of civilians were congregating and showing considerable excitement in the main street and moving down towards the cathedral from which direction the red-coats were coming.

Before any steps could be taken by the police the crowd of civilians and the red-coats met. For some little time the red-coats made their way through the crowd, slashing with their belts. Some stones began to fly, heavy sticks were being used, and gradually the red-coats were separated and were getting quite the worst of the bargain.

The news of the disturbance had reached the barracks shortly after the two factions had met, and such of the soldiers as were at

that time within the barrack walls were ordered to parade under arms, with a view of marching down the street to restore order. However, by the time they were ready to march out there were but few red-coats left in the streets. They had been dispersed by the crowd and had sought safety wherever they could. They were collected later on and marched up to their barracks by police and military escorts, quiet was once again restored that Sunday afternoon, and the remains of the fight collected in the shape of lost belts, broken shillelaghs, road metal and smashed glass, while a good many broken heads and bruised limbs received attention.

The sequel was this. The regiment was confined to barracks until further orders. Two nights afterwards, in the early hours of the morning, it marched quietly along to the railway station. A troop train awaited its arrival, while at another platform more troop trains landed another regiment which, in equal silence, marched off to its new quarters. So ended this episode, for as soon as, on the next day, the townspeople became aware that the offenders, as they considered them, had gone, they lost all resentment and were quite ready to make friends and to welcome their successors, who soon were enjoying quite a time of popularity. We soldiers always looked forward to election time with considerable anxiety. We were generally ordered to be ready, in case our assistance was wanted in aid of the police, and we knew that long before we should be called on to use our rifles or even our swords brick-bats and other missiles would be flying about, quite indifferent as to whom they would hit. The

opposing political sides had one great end in view, and that was to break each other's heads, and they deeply resented anybody else attempting to interfere with that playful form of amusement, so that oftentimes both sides would turn their attention on the police and soldiers, causing us quite considerable inconvenience. However, I must say this, that on no occasion when I was on duty at such so-called political meetings and elections did the situation become so aggravated as to necessitate the use of their arms by the soldiers.

Still, we did go home sometimes with a sore head, and I received my first wound from a piece of road metal hurled at me from quite a short distance by a great, strapping, fine Irishwoman. This occurred at Belfast some time after the affair at Limerick. As far as I remember there was to be a Catholic procession from somewhere near the Customs House through the principal streets to the Catholic cathedral. The city authorities and the police were notified and fully expected quite high old times as regarded street fighting. They had been advised by those who were carrying out the procession that the Catholics fully intended to reach the cathedral, even if it took them a week and they had to walk over the bodies of whoever tried to stop them, They knew whom they meant all right. The Orangemen had also informed the authorities that they had very rooted objections to this procession and that they were determined that that procession was not to get to the cathedral without some efforts of resistance on their part. Consequently the authorities

requested military assistance, and further stated that they thought it would be necessary to have on hand, or close to, a sufficient number of soldiers to preserve the peace. So the scene was set for a pretty disputation. Many police were in attendance, and the soldiers were principally utilized out of view, as far as possible, in the side streets debouching on the route of the procession. It was hoped by these means to prevent sudden rushes by these side streets taking the procession at a disadvantage on the flank.

I was detailed to take charge of a dozen cavalrymen and was allotted my own little side street. We waited for some three or four hours before the procession as such, or what was left of it, seemed to be approaching our way. It is difficult to describe the noises that filled the air up to that time. We could not see down the main street, but we could hear the smashing of glass windows and the rattling of stones could be easily made out. And then came our surprise. Suddenly our little side street became full of men and women, rushing towards the main street, no doubt to obtain further points of advantage. I can see the women now, holding their petticoats up with both hands, in which the munitions of war in the shape of road metal were being carried, and from which the men helped themselves as they wanted. They came straight at us. What could twelve men do on horseback against such a rush? They were on us, round us, through us, before we could get our breath. I suddenly felt one of my feet had been taken out of the stirrup-iron, and the next thing was that I was pulled out of my saddle and fell, to my surprise, on

something comparatively soft. It happened to be a lady who was paying me this delicate attention, and, as I fell on her, she sat down on the ground, dropped her petticoat out of her hand, and out fell her stock of munitions. It was some little time before she found breath sufficient for her to let me know just what she thought of me for coming there to "interfere with their business." I must have hurt her and annoyed her, for as I got up and was just mounting my horse, which one of the troopers was holding, the lady, a big strapping, fine Irishwoman, picked herself up off the ground, seized the handiest piece of road metal, and threw it, from about three yards away, at the back of my head.

I saw nothing more of the procession that day. I heard no more sounds of revelry. I woke up, late in the afternoon, not in my little side-street but in a very comfortable bed with my head duly bandaged and a nurse sitting alongside of me. I didn't ask why or wherefore I was there. I felt it. All I said to her was, "One whisky and soda, please, quick!" which she brought and which I drank, and then she told me that it had been reported that the tail end of the procession had reached the cathedral at last. So all was well. I bear that honourable scar to this day.

CHAPTER X
SPORT IN IRELAND

Roller-skating had become the fashion in England, and three or four of us became anxious to introduce it into Ireland. We formed a small company and appointed our directors, whose business knowledge was about equal to their knowledge of the art of roller-skating at that moment. However, all went well. The rink was opened at Dublin. A club of the nicest of the nice was formed. The members practised very hard, day after day, and evening after evening, with closed doors, until we became quite artists. Then came the time to inform the public at large that the rink would be open to them every afternoon and evening, reserving Tuesday and Thursday nights for the members of the club.

From the very jump the rink was a success. The members of both sexes gave exhibitions. We played tennis on roller-skates; we danced on roller-skates; we held athletic sports on roller-skates, including steeple-chases and obstacle races. In a very short time the public at large became quite as good skaters as those who taught them, if not better. Then came the usual development that has attended similar enterprises ever since. Fancy dress balls, gymkhanas, carnivals and such like, and – what was more satisfactory to the company – money rolling in all the time. The expenses were not heavy but the dividends

were, and, to our surprise, we members of our company, very few in number, found ourselves absolutely drawing a regular monthly dividend. As we were mostly poor soldiers this was highly gratifying. I remember investing my first dividend in buying a mate to "Mick Molloy." He was much more expensive, you can guess, and I named him, following upon the naming of Mick Molloy, Larry O'Keefe.

The success of our venture in Dublin led us to thirst for further triumphs, and, at an especial meeting of the company in Dublin, it was decided to repeat the success at Limerick. So it came about that the rink at Limerick was started. We followed the same methods that had been carried out in Dublin, only we had not to undergo the probationary stage of learning to roller skate. A large party arrived from Dublin, and after one week of real joy and fun soon made the rink a success. This made us bold, so we exploited Cork and Waterford and our pecuniary successes increased daily, and some of us began to think that it would be worth while to throw up our military careers and become professional roller-skating rink promoters. That was really my first business venture. Others followed later on, as you will hear by and by, but not with the same result.

Let me tell you now what happened to Mick Molloy. He was certainly a good horse and a splendid jumper, but he had one bad fault and that was that, every now and again, apparently for no reason whatever, except the same cussedness that held him when he wouldn't go up the hill, he would hit a bank or a wall full hard

and turn head over heels into the next field. As the weather, as a rule, was moist, and there was plenty of mud about when Mick Molloy performed his athletic feat and I picked myself up from the soft ground, I generally succeeded in attaching to my person a fairly considerable amount of Irish soil. At this particular time one of the great demands by Irishmen was for what they then called "fixity of tenure." Can you wonder that, after my repeated attempts to annex as much of Irish soil as Mick Molloy could help me to, the members of the hunt christened me "Fixity of Tenure"?

I had a visit from one of the best riders in Ireland at that time who was quartered at the Curragh, whose riding at Punchestown Races was always good to watch and who had come down for a few days' stay with us. There was a meet of the hounds; he wanted a ride. I offered him Mick Molloy, who was in good form just then, and he accepted the offer. I warned him of his one peculiarity. The morning of the hunt we rode out together. It was in the direction of Ballynegarde. There was often a trap to be met in the way of a sunken ditch over-grown with gorse, and unless one knew the lay of it a horse was apt to rush through instead of jumping and find himself and the rider at the bottom of the sunken ditch. I had forgotten to warn the rider of Mick Molloy of this fact. We had a fine seven-mile run in the morning and killed one fox. My friend was delighted with Mick, for he had carried him to the kill without a fall. He was full of praises of old Mick.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.