

FAUGHNAN THOMAS

STIRRING INCIDENTS IN
THE LIFE OF A BRITISH
SOLDIER

Thomas Faughnan

**Stirring Incidents In The
Life of a British Soldier**

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Thomas Faughnan

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PREFACE

In laying the history of my life and travels before the public, I deem it right to state that I am past the middle age; this I feel compelled to mention, because it is my opinion that no man should write a history of himself until he has set foot upon the border land where the past and the future begin to blend. When the past has receded so far that he can behold it as in a picture, and his share in it as the history of a soldier who has fought for his Queen and country, and had many narrow escapes of death. But, thank God, I have been spared thus far to confess my faults, and my good deeds look miserably poor in my own eyes; indeed, I would no more claim a reward for them than expect a captain's commission.

The countries and incidents described in this work will be found I trust, interesting to all classes of persons. The history of a soldier's life and travels is always an entertaining and instructive one. Many books on the lives of officers have been written by learned men containing much information, and highly useful to the scholar, but they do not interest the mass of common readers. Others, again, pass so rapidly from place to place, and are so general in their description, the reader gets but very imperfect ideas from reading them. These extremes the writer has endeavoured to avoid. It has been my object to select the most important events of my life, and to describe them in a plain and familiar style. I have not indulged in learned dissertations, my common, old-fashioned Irish school education being too limited to give that classical finish to the work which a learned writer would have done. Indeed, it has not been my intention to write a book for the learned or critical, but to give to the public a volume written in a homely style, by a non-commissioned officer, to instruct and interest the family and the common reader, as well as my comrades. If, while dilating on the exploits of my comrades in arms, I have omitted to pay proper respect to gallant foes, it is because I know that history will supply the deficiency. Time will gild with glory a Trojan defence, fitly closed by a successful retreat across a burning bridge, under a heavy fire. But come along, dear reader, and try whether in my first chapter I cannot be a boy again, in such a way that my reader will gladly linger a little in the meadows of childhood, ere we pass to riper years and stirring battle-fields.

TESTIMONIALS TO THE WRITER

Edinburgh Castle, April 26th, 1868.

I have great pleasure in stating that I have known Sergeant Thomas Faughnan for about nine years, and during most of that period he was Pay and Colour-Sergt. of my Company. He was also Sergt. – Major of a Detachment of which I had command, and I cannot say too much in his favour, either as a soldier or as a trustworthy person.

He always gave me the greatest satisfaction, in the position he was placed; both by his high sense of discipline, as well as his entire knowledge of drill, and he leaves the Regiment with the respect of every one.

*(Signed) JOHN E. TEWART,
Captain, 2nd Batt., 6th Royal Regiment.*

[True Copy.]

Sergeant Faughnan was discharged from the 2nd Battalion, 6th Foot, in Edinburgh, May, 1868, after twenty-one years' service, with an excellent character, I have pleasure in stating that I consider him a most honest, trustworthy, respectable man; for many years he held positions of much responsibility.

*(Signed) JOHN ELKINGTON,
Colonel Commd'g 2nd Batt., 6th Royal Regiment.*

Aldershot Camp, July 10th, 1868.

[True Copy.]

Aldershot Camp, July 12th, 1868.

I have known Sergeant Faughnan for the last five years, in the 2nd Batt. 6th Regiment, and can say that he has behaved himself very well in every way as a soldier. He was an honest, willing and sober man; he was also Mess Sergeant for several years, and gave every satisfaction, and deserves to get on in the world, and I much wish he may do so.

*(Signed) SPENCER FIELD,
Captain, 2nd Batt., 6th Royal Regiment.*

[True Copy.]

I have known Sergeant Thomas Faughnan, late Sergeant in the 2nd Battalion, 6th Regiment, for about ten years, during which time he served as Pay and Colour-Sergeant to a Company with great satisfaction to the Captains; also as Sergeant-Major to a Detachment, in which position, by his steady conduct and fair knowledge of drill, he commanded the respect of his superiors. He has since served as Mess and Wine Sergeant to the Battalion, and has been sober and attentive to those duties. I can recommend him as a general useful Non Commissioned officer.

*(Signed) HENRY KITCHENER,
Lieut. and Adj. 2nd Battalion, 6th Foot.*

Edinburgh Castle, 25, 4, '68.

[True Copy.]

I have known Sergeant Faughnan – now taking his discharge from the 6th Regiment, with a pension, after twenty one years' service – since the year 1860, and have served with him in Gibraltar, the Ionian Islands, and the West Indies. Up to 1865 he was a Colour-Sergeant of the Regiment, and as such was very much respected. About the middle of the year he became Sergeant of the Officers' Mess, in which position he remained up to the departure of the Regiment from Edinburgh, on the

22nd May, 1868. He was for about two years caterer of the said Mess, and in addition had charge of all wines, ale, &c. Thousands of pounds must have passed through his hands, for every portion of which he has had to account, and his remaining up to the last moment in the Mess is a proof of his having done so most satisfactorily. I, myself, have a very high opinion of Sergeant Faughnan for his straightforwardness, honesty, sobriety, ability, and steady good conduct. I am sure his loss will be much felt in the 6th Regiment.

*(Signed) L. B. HOLE,
Captain, 2nd Batt., 6th Royal Regiment.*

[True Copy.]

I have known Sergeant T. Faughnan for the last seven years, and have always found him honest, sober, quiet and obliging. He is a good accountant, and was employed in charge of the Mess, 2nd Batt., 6th Regiment for some time, and gave every satisfaction. He was also a Colour-Sergeant and had charge and payment of a Company for some time, and resigned his colours to go to the Mess.

*(Signed) W. G. ANNESLEY,
Captain, 2nd Batt. 6th Royal Regiment.*

Aldershot Camp, *June 8th*, 1868.

[True Copy.]

CHAPTER I

EDUCATION – MY SCHOOLMASTER – SCHOOL HOUSE – MY FATHER, MOTHER, SISTERS – OUR HOUSE.

I have for some time been trying to think how far back my memory could go; but, as far as I can judge, the earliest definite recollection I have is the discovery of how I played the truant, in stopping on the way-side playing pitch and toss, instead of going to school; and how I cut all the buttons of my jacket and trowsers for the purpose of gambling with other boys. After losing all my buttons, I had to pin my jacket to my trowsers. In Ireland in those days, boys had to be content with gambling for buttons instead of coppers as now-a-days. I was late for school, and was rather remarkable, going in with my trowsers and jacket fastened together with pins. I remember well the master called me over to him. Oh! I will never forget his spiteful countenance, and how he showed his ivories. My heart beat fast. I thought I was very wicked, and fright made my heart jump to my mouth. I had to stand my trial. Master: "Well, boy, what kept you late for school?" Before I had time to answer, "How came the buttons off your clothes; tell me straightforward at once, who cut them off, and what became of them? Hold up your head and speak out." "I – I – I – cut them off, sir, to play with the boys, and they won my buttons." "O, ho! you have been gambling, have you? I will teach you to cut the buttons off your clothes to gamble. Go, stand in that corner until I am through with the class."

"Pat Cannon, take this knife, go out and cut a strong birch, this one I have is nearly worn out. I want a strong one for this youth."

While I was standing in the corner, one of the boys, or, as we used to call them, "gossoons," stole over to me and gave me a big shawl-pin, saying: "Stick this in the boy's neck who takes you on his back." I took the pin as I was told, and nerved myself up for the occasion.

"Dan McLaughlin, take Thomas Faughnan on your back."

I was brought up in due form. "Take off your jacket; get on Dan McLaughlin's back."

No sooner had I got on his back, and before the master had time to administer the first stroke of the birch, than I sunk the big pin into the boy's neck. He shouted at the top of his voice, yelling as if he had been stabbed with a knife, and fell over the other boys, causing great commotion. In the uproar and confusion I made my escape out of the school, jacket in hand. The master stood in a state of amazement. It took him quite a while to restore order among the boys. I waited outside until the school came out, then went home with my comrades as if nothing had happened, and did not go to school again for three days. The master reported my absence. My father questioned me concerning my absence from school. I then told him the whole affair, and, as I was afraid of getting another flogging, he accompanied me to the school next day.

It will be necessary, here, to describe the master and the school. The master had only one leg and that was his right; he had lost his left when young, by some means which I never heard of; he walked with a long crutch under his left arm, and a short one in his right hand. He trotted very fast, considering that he went on crutches. He was in truth a terror to dogs or animals which dared to cross his path on his way to and from the school, and could most wonderfully use the right hand crutch with great skill and alacrity, in his own defence.

The school was held in the chapel, which was a most peculiar edifice of ancient architectural design. Its shape was that of a triangle, each side of which formed a long hall, one for boys, the other for girls; there was a gallery at the extreme end of the girls' hall which the choir occupied during divine service.

The structure was one story in height, and had a very high, slanting, thatched roof, with narrow gables. The edge of the gables rose, not in a slope, but in a succession of notches, like stairs. Altogether it had an extraordinary look about it, a look of the time when men had to fight in order to have peace,

to kill in order to live – every man's hand against his brother. The altar stood in the acute corner of the angle, facing the men's hall, with a railing around it. Under the altar was a small hole sufficiently large enough for a boy to crawl in. One day I had done something for which the master started to punish my back with the birch. He was laying it on pretty stiffly, and he had me in a tight place, when, in self defence, I pulled the crutch from under him. He fell over and I retreated into the hole under the altar. However, tracing me out, he started to dislodge me with his long crutch. For every thrust he gave me, I gave him one in return, until I found he was too strong for me, when I made one drive at him, jumped out of my hiding place, and left for home in a hurry that day. Next day I expected a flogging, but I got off much easier than I had anticipated. Afterwards – how strange! – he took quite a liking to me. The number of pupils attending was over two hundred. The hall was supplied with fuel by a contribution of two turfs from each scholar every morning, which he brought under his arm.

Enough of my school history – it would spin out my narrative unnecessarily. I shall only relate such occurrences as may be necessary to lead to those main events which properly constitute my eventful history. I remember my father, but not my mother. She died when I was yet a baby, and the woman I had been taught to call mother was only my stepmother. My father had married a second time, and now our family consisted of my father, stepmother, two sisters, and myself. Our house was of olden-time stone, gray and brown. It looked very gray and yet there was a homely, comfortable appearance about it. A visitor's first step was into what would in some parts here be called "house place" – a room which served all the purposes of kitchen and dining-room. It rose to a fair height, with smoked-stained oaken beams above, and was floored with a home-made kind of cement, hard enough, and yet so worn that it required a good deal of local knowledge to avoid certain jars of the spine from sudden changes of level.

My sisters kept the furniture very clean and shining, especially the valued pewter on the dresser. The square table, with its spider-like accumulation of legs, stood under the window until meal times, when, like an animal aroused from its lair, it stretched those legs and assumed expanded, symmetrical shape, in front of the fireplace in winter, and nearer the door in summer. Its memory recalls the occasion of my stepmother, with a hand at each end of it, searching frantically for the level, poking for it with the creature's own legs before lifting the hanging leaves, and then drawing out the hitherto supernumerary legs to support them, after which would come another fresh adjustment, another hustling to and fro, that the new feet likewise might have some chance to rest. The walls of this room were always whitewashed in spring, occasioning ever a sharpened contrast with the dark brown oak ceiling. If that was ever swept I never knew. I do not remember ever seeing it done. At all events its colour remained unimpaired by hand or whitewash. On the walls hung several articles, some of them high above my head, which attracted my attention particularly. There was a fishing-rod, which required the whole length between the windows to support it. There were old bookshelves, hanging between the old pewter, of which we were very proud; my father's temperance medal, which he received from Father Mathew; a picture of Dan O'Connell, the "Irish Liberator;" several other pictures, and many articles of antique and Irish origin. I need not linger over these things. Their proper place is in the picture with which I would save words and help understanding if I could.

MY NATIVE VILLAGE

Dear Fiarana! loveliest village of the green.
Where humble happiness endeared each scene;
The never-failing brook at Drumod Mill,
The parish church on John Nutley's hill.

There in the old thatched chapel, skilled to rule,

The one-legged master taught the parish school;
A learned man was he, but stern to view —
His crutch he often used, and well the gossoons knew.

Well had the daring urchins learned to trace
His scowling countenance and his fierce grimace;
And yet they laughed with much delight and glee
At all his tales, for many a one had he.

In all my travels round this world so fair,
Of trials and marches I have had my share;
I still have hope my latter days to crown,
And 'midst old friends at home to lay me down.

I trust and hope to visit home again,
And sell my book to every village swain;
Around the hearth a wondering crowd to draw,
While spinning yarns of what I heard and saw.

Men who a military life pursue,
Look forward to the home from whence they flew;
I still have hopes, my long eventful past,
Some day return, and stay at home last.

T. Faughnan.

CHAPTER II

RIVER SHANNON – DERRY CARNE – OUR FARM – MY SISTERS
GET MARRIED – CAVE – STILL-HOUSE – STILL AND WORM – PROCESS
– INTERIOR – REVENUE POLICE – IRISH WAKE – FUNERAL.

Our residence was situated on a beautiful bay of the River Shannon in the County of Leitrim.

The month was July, and nothing could be more exhilarating than the breezes which played over the green fields that were now radiant with the light which was flooded down upon them from the cloudless sun. Around them, in every field, were the tokens of that pleasant labour from which the hope of an ample and abundant harvest always springs.

The bay was bounded on the east by a large wood which abounds in game of every description. Gentlemen from the surrounding counties were frequently invited by its owner, Francis Nesbitt, Esq., Derry Carne, during the shooting and fishing season. Many times I have been out with them, coming home foot-sore in the evening, after traversing the woods all day with the sportsmen. Those were happy days.

My father and the hired man, with the help of my two sisters managed to sow and gather in the produce of the small farm. I, being the only son, was kept at school till about sixteen years old, after which I had to make myself useful around the house and farm. I was about twelve years old when my eldest sister was married; about two years afterwards my other sister took unto herself a partner, for better, for worse. After those events our family dwindled down to three, viz., my father, stepmother, and myself.

About this time I roamed about the country a good deal. In the evenings a few other boys and myself assembled in a "Potteen Still-house" to see the men who manufactured the potteen, and hear them tell stories. It was situated about two miles in a north-western direction from our residence. The country was very rugged and wild, but picturesque. Although a portion of the same landscape, nothing could be more strikingly distinct in character than the position of those hills. They formed a splendid pasture lane for sheep. In approaching these hills you struck into a "Borheen," or lane which conducted you to the front of a steep precipice of rocks about fifty feet high. In the northern cover of this ravine there was an entrance to a subterraneous passage twenty feet long, which led to a large chamber or deep cave, having every convenience for a place of private distillation. Under the rocks which met over it was a kind of gothic arch, and a stream of water just sufficient for the requisite purpose fell in through a fissure from above, forming such a little cascade in the cavern as human design itself could scarcely have surpassed in perfect adaptation for the object of an illicit distiller. To this cave, then, we must take the liberty of transporting our readers, in order to give them an opportunity of getting a peep at the inside of a "Potteen Still-house." In that end which constituted the termination of the cave, and fixed upon a large turf fire which burned within a circle of stones that supported it, was a tolerably sized still made of copper. The mouth of this still was enclosed by an air-tight cover, also of copper, called the head, from which a tube of the same metal projected into a large condenser that was kept always filled with cold water by an incessant stream from the cascade I have already described, which always ran into and overflowed it.

The arm of this head was made air-tight, fitting into a spiral tube of copper, called the worm, which rested in the water of the cooler; and as it consisted of several twists like a corkscrew, its effect was to condense the hot vapour which was transmitted to it from the glowing still into that description of alcohol known as potteen whiskey or "mountain dew."

At the bottom of the cooler the worm terminated in a small cock, from which the spirits passed in a slender stream about the thickness of a pipe-stem into a vessel placed for its reception. Such was the position of the still, head, and worm, when in full operation.

Fixed about the cave, on wooden benches, were the usual requisites for the various processes through which it was necessary to put the malt before the wort, which is the first liquid shape, was fermented, cleared and passed into the still to be singled; for our readers must know that distillation is a double process, the first produced being called singlings, and the second or last doublings – which is the perfect liquor. Sacks of malt, empty barrels, piles of turf, heaps of grain, tubs of wash, kegs of whiskey, were lying about in all directions; together with pots, pans, wooden-trenchers, and dishes for culinary use.

On entering, your nose was assaulted by such a fume of warm grains, sour barm, and strong whiskey, as required considerable fortitude to bear, without very unequivocal tokens of disgust. Seated around the fire were a party of shebeen men and three or four publicans who came on professional business.

In order to evade the vigilance of the "Revenue Police," or, as they were called, "Still Hunters," the smoke, which passed through a hole in the roof, came up into a pasture field. On the top of this hole was fitted a wide flag, made to be shifted at will. On the top of this flag was kept a turf fire, in charge, of a boy who herded sheep and goats. When the boy saw the police advancing towards the fire he would shift the flag over the hole. The police came, lit their pipes, walked off, and suspected nothing. The boy then shifted back the flag, in order to let the smoke escape. In this way they escaped detection.

Several illicit stills flourished in this part of the country, which I frequently visited during the winter evenings. When there happened to be a wake I often accompanied parties for whiskey to this still-house; it being the custom to have a supply of liquor to enliven the guests on good occasions. The boys and girls always expected a good time for fun and frolic at a wake, especially if it was an old person who gave up the ghost; therefore it was looked forward to as a kind of pleasurable occurrence to the rising generation. I became a regular frequenter on such occasions, for a radius of three or four miles. The corpse was laid out on a table, with a white curtain similar to those over a bed. On the same table, in front were six lighted candles. At the entrance stood a table furnished with bottles of whiskey, glasses, tobacco and pipes, for those who drank and smoked to help themselves. An old woman sat at the head of the corpse whose duty it was to start the crying on the entrance of a guest. After they got through with the crying, the host passed round whiskey, tobacco and pipes; when the conversation went on as if nothing had happened, except the loud crying, which was only the women's part, the men not joining in it.

When my stepmother's sister died, I put an onion to my eyes, in order to cause them to shed tears, which had the desired effect. Those wakes generally last two or three nights. Whiskey is passed round previous to the funeral procession starting from the house.

On returning the processionists invariably called into a "shebeen" to have a sociable chat and a parting glass to drown their sorrows. I refrain from quoting the conversation of those peasants, as it would take up too much space and defeat my object in laying the history of my life and travels before my readers.

CHAPTER III

ADVANCED SCHOOL – STATE OF THE COUNTRY – EMIGRATION
– CAUSE OF POVERTY – IRISH LANDLORDS – POTATO CROP
– DISHONEST AGENTS – ELECTIONS – POLITICS – MY SISTER
EMIGRATES – I ENLIST.

About the time this chapter opens I had been removed from the country school (which has been already described in the first chapter), and sent to a much more advanced and better school, in the town of Drumod, County Leitrim. I continued at this school about four years, during which time I had waxed strong in mind, strength, and learning. In the meanwhile the state of the country gradually assumed a worse and more depressing character.

Indeed, at this period of my narrative, the position of Ireland was very gloomy. Situated as the country was, emigration went forward on an extensive scale – emigration, too, of that particular description which every day enfeebles and impoverishes the country, by depriving her of all that approaches to anything like a comfortable and independent yeomanry. This, indeed, is a kind of depletion which no country can bear long; and, as it is, at the moment I write this, progressing at a rate beyond all precedent, it will not, I trust, be altogether uninteresting to enquire into some of the causes that have occasioned it. Of course the principal cause of emigration is the poverty and the depressed state of the country, wages often being as low as eight-pence a day, and it follows naturally that whatever occasions our poverty will necessarily occasion emigration. The first cause of our poverty then is "absenteeism," which, by drawing six million pounds out of the country, deprives our people of employment and means of life to that amount. The next is the general inattention of Irish landlords to the state and condition of their property, and an inexcusable want of sympathy with their tenantry, which indeed is only a corollary from the former, for it can hardly be expected that those who wilfully neglect themselves will feel a warm interest in others. Political corruption in the shape of the forty shilling franchise, was another cause, and one of the very worst, which led to the prostration of the country by poverty and moral degradation, and for this proprietors of the land were solely responsible. Nor can the use of the potato as the staple food of the labouring class, in connection with the truck or credit system and the consequent absence of money payments, – in addition to the necessary ignorance of domestic and social comforts, that resulted, – be left out of this wretched catalogue of our grievances. Another cause of emigration is to be found in the high and exorbitant rents at which land is held by all classes of farmers – with some exceptions, such as in the case of old leases – but especially by those who hold under middlemen, or on the principle of sub-letting generally.

By this system a vast deal of distress and petty but most harassing oppression is every day in active operation, which the head landlord can never know, and for which he is in no other way responsible than by want of knowledge of his estates.

There are still causes, however, which too frequently drive the independent farmer out of the country. In too many cases it happens that the rapacity and dishonesty of the agent, countenanced or stimulated by the necessities and reckless extravagance of the landlord, fall like some unwholesome blight upon that enterprise and industry which would ultimately, if properly encouraged, make the country prosperous, and the landed proprietors independent men. I allude to the nefarious and monstrous custom of ejecting tenants who have made improvements, or, when permitted to remain, make them pay for the improvements which they have made.

A vast proportion of this crying and oppressive evil must be laid directly to the charge of those who fill the responsible situation of landlords and agents to property in Ireland, than whom in general there does not exist a more unscrupulous, oppressive, arrogant, and dishonest class of men.

Exceptions of course there are, and many, but speaking of them as a body, I unhappily assert nothing but what the conditions of property, and of those who live upon it, do at this moment and have for many years testified. I have already stated that there was a partial failure in the potato crops that season, a circumstance which ever is the forerunner of famine and sickness.

The failure, however, on that occasion, was not alone caused by a blight in the stalks, but large portions of the seed failing to grow. In addition, however, to all I have already detailed as affecting the neighbourhood, or rather the parish, of Anaduff, I have to inform my readers that the country was soon about to have a contested election. Viscount Clemens and Samuel White, Esq., were the opposing candidates. The former had been a convert to Liberalism, and the latter a sturdy Conservative, a good deal bigoted in politics, but possessing that rare and inestimable quality which constitutes an honest man.

It was a hard contested election. The electors throughout the country were driven to the town on side cars escorted by police. The excitement was fearful. However the people's candidate gained the election. There was a large amount of whiskey drunk during this election and there was plenty of fighting.

At this time my eldest sister, with her husband, emigrated to Canada. On parting with her she said she would send for me, but I did not like the idea of going to America or Canada at that time, although I heard good reports from both countries. I thought instead that I would go for a soldier. I had seen splendid, tall soldiers frequently marching past our house, when I invariably accompanied them for several miles to hear their band play. With this intention I went to the fair of Mohill, on the 8th of May, 1847. There I met a recruiting party. I went up to the sergeant and asked him if he would take me for a soldier; he answered me in the affirmative. He then told me to answer the following question, viz.: "Are you free, willing and able to serve Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, for a period of twenty-one years?" I answered, "I am." "Then take this shilling in the name of the Queen." I "took the shilling," and was one of Queen Victoria's soldiers, and of the 17th regiment of foot. I must say I never regretted it since.

MY OWN, MY NATIVE LAND

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee;
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam;
His first, best country, ever is at home.
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere Ireland's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
The broken soldier kindly bade to stay,

Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won."

CHAPTER IV

SWEARING IN – MARCH TO DUBLIN – BEGGARS' BUSH BARRACKS – RATIONS – THE CITY – EMBARKATION – THE SHIP – THE VOYAGE – LIVERPOOL – TRAIN TO LONDON – BILLETS – CANTERBURY – JOIN THE 17TH REGIMENT.

The sergeant conducted me to the rendezvous, where I passed a medical examination, and was returned fit for "Her Majesty's Service." He then ushered me into a room in which were five more brothers-in arms.

Next morning at ten o'clock I was taken before a magistrate and sworn-in, after which I received a half-crown, called "swearing-in money." My sister and stepmother hearing I had enlisted came after me the following day, and tried to get me off, but the sergeant would not hear of it, and I was unwilling, as I had made up my mind to be a soldier, as I was anxious to get away from my relatives. My anxiety was soon realized, for next morning, after breakfast, we were on the road for Dublin in charge of a staff sergeant, the distance being one hundred and fifty miles, which we accomplished in ten days. During the journey the sergeant amused us with stories of his experience in the regiment to which he belonged, marches in different countries, and several battles he had fought. It being the month of May, the roads were in good condition, the weather salubrious, and the country beautiful in the summer sun.

On our arrival in the evening we were billeted at a public house, where soon after our arrival we enjoyed a hot meal, the landlord being allowed ten-pence for the same, this being according to "Her Majesty's Regulations." After we had regaled ourselves with the landlord's hospitality, the sergeant enjoyed himself with his pipe and a glass or two of beer; he also gave us some of it to drink. I had never tasted beer previous to this, although I had often tasted "potheen whiskey." After the sergeant had finished his pipe and glass of beer, we retired to bed, slept well, and dreamed of long marches. We were on the march again next morning at eight o'clock, and so every day until we reached Dublin, which we accomplished in ten days. On arriving in that city I was astonished at the appearance of the splendid high buildings, the like of which I had never seen before; they formed a striking contrast with the cabins which I had been used to look upon in Leitrim.

We entered the city from the south, marched past the Royal Barracks, along the Liffy to Carlisle Bridge, where we crossed over; thence past the Bank and Trinity College, to Beggars' Bush Barracks where we were to await orders to join the depôt of our regiment in Canterbury.

On our arrival in barracks we were told off to different companies *pro tem.* until our embarkation for Liverpool. This was my first night in barracks. I was shown a bed or cot, with three pegs over it, to hang my clothes on. We soon got acquainted with other recruits, and old soldiers, who showed us to the canteen, where there was a large company of soldiers and recruits carousing and singing. On the first post sounding, we had to answer our names in barracks at tattoo roll-call, and be in bed at last post. Fifteen minutes afterwards "out lights" was sounded, when all the lights were put out, except the orderly sergeants', who had fifteen minutes longer for theirs. "Reveill  " sounded next morning at five, when we all got up, made our beds, and were on parade at six o'clock, when we were drilled till half-past seven, were practised at setting up drill and the goose step. It being my first drill, I was awkward; we had three such drills daily (Sundays excepted), while we were in these barracks. On being dismissed, we went to breakfast, which consisted of a pound of bread and a basin of coffee each; my appetite being good, I made short work of the pound of bread. Our dinner consisted of soup, beef and potatoes; at supper we got a quarter of a pound of bread and a basin of tea. After paying for our rations, washing, and barrack damages, there were four-pence left, which

I received every day at twelve o'clock, so that I could spend that much for extra food if I wanted it; some of the recruits preferred to spend it in beer.

When the daily afternoon drill was over I generally walked into the city to see what I could of the place. I went past some splendid shops, saw the soldiers on guard at the castle, went into the Royal, Ship-street, and Linen Hall Barracks, visited Nelson's monument, Sackville Streets, Four Courts and Burns' saloon in the evening. After we had been a week in barracks, an order came for us to proceed to Canterbury and join our depôt there; this order was most agreeable, and we hailed it with pleasure, for we were anxious to get into our uniform. Accordingly two days afterwards, fourteen of us, with a staff sergeant in charge, were paraded on the barrack-square. After we had signed our accounts, and were told that our bounty would be paid to us on arrival at our depôt, we were told to number off from the right, and showed how to "form four deep;" the command "quick march" being given, we marched off to the north wall for embarkation on board a steamer which was to sail for Liverpool at four p.m. that day. An officer accompanied us to the steamer to see us all safe on board.

Several soldiers came to see us off. I would like to tell my reader more about Dublin; but, as I hope to visit it again during my soldiering, I will defer them till further experience has increased my stock of knowledge. Four o'clock p.m. was the time set for our departure; we were all well pleased when we got on board; the afternoon was beautiful, so we anticipated a pleasant voyage. An ocean-ship was to me a novel place, and I had many things to learn. "What is that little flag at the main mast?" said I to a man standing near me. "That they call a Blue Peter; it indicates that the ship is to sail immediately." "And what is that flag at the stern?" "Why, that is the Union Jack, the pride and boast of every British subject."

My reflections were broken by the loud, sharp cry of the ships captain, "all on board." The last warning was given; friends hastily exchanged the farewell tokens of affection. I saw many, too, struggling to keep their tears back. I stood alone; no one knew me or cared particularly for me, but I was not an uninterested spectator. I dropped a few tears when I looked at my native land, which I was about to leave, and thought of the friends I had left behind me. All was in readiness, – ten minutes past four o'clock p.m. the ponderous machine was put in motion; the huge paddle-wheels lazily obeyed the mandate. The Blue Peter came down and the Union Jack went up, and we moved slowly out among the shipping of the harbour. It was a clear, beautiful evening, and the water lay like an immense mirror in the sun-light; we passed the light-house which stood at the end of the harbour like a huge sentinel to guide the passage to the ocean. Onward we went; shore and city faded away and disappeared in the distance. I looked out on the wide expanse of waters; the sea and sky were all that could be seen now, except a few sea-gulls, which hovered round the ship in search of an accidental crumb that might be thrown over-board. We were fairly out at sea. The flags were taken in, and things put in readiness for rougher ocean life; for a time we moved on pleasantly. Towards sun-down a head wind sprang up producing that rocking motion of the boat that makes sea life so much of a dread to those unaccustomed to water; at about ten o'clock our head wind changed to a side wind, and we had what the sailors call "a chopping sea," producing a very unpleasant motion of the boat. Previous to this the recruits were in good spirits, but now silence reigned; I could see them getting pale, and one by one go below. I felt myself approaching a crisis of some kind, but was determined to put it off as long as possible. I kept on deck in the open air, and resolutely frowned down all signs of rebellion in my stomach. From what I heard going on around me, I was aware I was not the worst sufferer; with some the agony of the contest was kept up all night long. At three o'clock p.m., we passed Holy Head; at five we were steaming up the Mersey, and were landed on Liverpool Dock at six o'clock. After a run of twelve and a half hours, here I was, standing in amazement, looking at the forests of masts, and the vast amount of shipping in the Docks. Liverpool is noted principally for its shipping accommodation and fine docks; of these it has now over eleven miles in length, all walled in, and protected by massive gates like the locks of a canal; this renders the shipping very secure. It is a place of great mercantile importance and trade; the streets are continually in a perfect jam with heavy

waggon and vehicles of almost every description. If I was astonished at the appearance of Dublin, how much more so at this great Babel of commerce. The sergeant took us to an eating-house, owned by one of his acquaintances, where he ordered breakfast, for which I believe the landlord did not make much profit; for what with sea-sickness, and fasting since three p.m. the day previous, I'll leave it to my reader to determine whether we were able to do justice to the landlord's hospitality or not.

We left the depôt at Liverpool about ten a.m. on the "Great North-western Railway" for London. I am now taking my first view of England and English scenery, also my first ride in a railway carriage. As we passed along, numerous towns and villages dotted the country; multitudes of great black smoke stacks, amid splendid steeples and church towers, side by side, rose in majesty towards the heavens.

Thus religion and industry are generally, nay always, found in close proximity; with the smoke of the furnace goes up the incense of worship; with the hum of machinery is mingled the anthem of praise. The train stopped at several stations, which were beautifully fitted up; during the journey we frequently partook of refreshments at the different stations. The train travelled very fast. After a ride of one hundred and eighty miles, in nine and a half hours, we reached London, the great metropolis of England, and the mart of the world. We were set down at Euston Station. Now my eyes, indeed, were opened wide, gazing on the magnificence of the great modern Babel of the universe. We were billeted on three different taverns, in close proximity to each other. The sergeant had to report himself at the "Horse Guards," and hand over some recruits which he had for regiments stationed at London.

He left me in charge of the billet while he was gone. We remained here five days, during which I visited a great many places. There are many wonderful things that can be seen in a brief walk through this great metropolis, if a man has his eyes open.

I should like to have had time here to take my reader to the top of some of the tall monuments; to walk with him among the wondrous fortifications of "Old London Tower," through the rooms where nobles, princes, kings, and queens have been incarcerated; to stand with him on "Tower Hill," where the scaffold and executioner's block tell their dark tales of treachery and blood and murder. I should like to go with my reader to Westminster Abbey, a wonderful pile, a venerable old church, and the great sepulchral home of England's honoured dead. It is worth a journey across the Atlantic to take a stroll through its cold, damp aisles and chapels; to stand amid its costly monuments and mouldering dust, where death for many long centuries has been gathering her glorious trophies, and yet her dark garlands have been recorded and embodied by human skill and art and genius. I have in a very brief space brought before my readers facts and stories; but I must defer any further description until my next visit, for I hope to see all those wonders again. The sergeant had done his duty to his satisfaction, and this being our last evening in London, he took us to the Haymarket Theatre, where we witnessed the "Colleen Bawn." After the play was over, we took the serjeant into a saloon close by, and treated him to oysters, beer, and cigars, after which we went to our billets quite jolly. Next morning, after paying the landlord and bidding him good-bye, we marched to the Waterloo Railway Station, where we took the train at ten o'clock. After a ride of about eighty miles, in two hours, we were in Canterbury, and put down at St. Dunstan Street Station, marched into barracks, and were handed over to the officer commanding the depôt of the 17th Regiment of Foot, "The Royal Tigers." We were told off to companies, and shown our quarters. More about Canterbury as my story advances. As I am now stationed here; I hope to have an opportunity of getting acquainted with this ancient cathedral city.

CHAPTER V

MEDICAL EXAMINATION – RECEIVE MY KIT – DRILL, MANUAL AND PLATOON EXERCISE – DISMISSED DRILL – VISIT THE CITY – DESCRIPTION – ROUTE – THE MARCH.

The following morning, reveillé Sounded at Five o'clock, when I turned out, made my bed, and was dressed when the drill bugle sounded at half-past.

Parade being formed at six by the sergeant-major, the recruits without uniform were not required to drill that morning; drill being over and the bugle for breakfast sounding, we all sat down to a pound of bread and a basin of coffee each. We were afterwards marched to the Regimental Hospital by the orderly corporal, where we passed another medical examination, which was final, and were returned fit for service; we were next marched to the quarter-master's store, and received our uniform and kit, which consisted of one of each of the following articles, viz., pair boots, cloth trowsers, summer trowsers, shako, tunic, stock and clasp, shell-jacket, forage-cap, pair mitts, tin blacking, pair braces, clothes-brush, canteen and cover, knapsack and straps, great coat and haversack, two shirts, two pair socks, and two towels; for the marking of which we were charged a halfpenny each. We were next taken to the tailor's shop, where we had our clothing altered and fitted; this lasted four or five days, during which time we were exempt from drill; but instead had to do the duties of orderly men by turns, that is, prepare the meals for those at drill, and keep the barrack rooms clean and in proper order. After we got our clothing all right, we then turned out to drill three times a day, viz., before breakfast, club drill; ten o'clock, commanding officer's parade, with setting up drill; afternoon, goose step, extension and balance motions.

At all these parades and drills we were minutely inspected by the orderly sergeant, and afterwards by the sergeant major, and if the least fault was found ordered to parade again, which was called "a dirty parade." I took particular pains to escape the latter.

When drill commenced, we were formed into squads of six or eight men each, in line, at arms-length apart, which is termed a "squad with intervals;" after drilling in single rank for a week, one squad was increased to two ranks, at open order, the rear rank covering the intervals.

The sergeant major frequently came round to each squad, and finding a deserving recruit, sent him up to a more advanced squad; in this way the most intelligent and attentive recruits were advanced. I was lucky in being one of the first sent up, and I afterwards got sent up step by step, until I reached the advanced squad, where I learned company's drill without arms; after which we were served with arms, formed into squads, taught the manual and platoon exercise, company and battalion movements, with arms.

We were then put through a course of ball practice. The distance being fifty, a hundred, hundred and fifty, and two hundred yards; the "old Brown Bess" being in use then. The first shot I fired I got a bull's eye, which was reckoned a first-class shot, and the only one I got during the practice. After we had finished the course, we were again inspected, when we acquitted ourselves to the entire satisfaction of the officers, and were accordingly dismissed from recruits' drill, and returned fit for duty as soldiers. Two days afterwards the head-quarters of the regiment arrived from Bombay, marched into barracks, band playing, colours flying, forming up on the barrack square. The men were tall and soldier-like, but very much tanned from exposure in the east. Their strength on arrival was only five hundred.

We were all delighted to meet the head-quarters, which had been long expected. They had a long, rough voyage of three months, having come in a sailing vessel.

After they had been inspected by the commanding officer, Colonel Pinnikuck, they were told off and shown to their different barrack-rooms.

Next day, regimental orders being issued, I heard my name read out "Private Thomas Faughan posted to the Grenadier or Captain L. C. Bouchier's company." I was well pleased to hear this, it being the best company in the regiment. The whole of the recruits were also posted to the different service companies.

Being dismissed from recruit's drill, I had ample opportunities of walking out in the afternoons, and visiting some of the old places around the city, among which was the cathedral, one of the oldest ecclesiastical edifices in England.

It was consecrated by Saint Augustine, A.D. 597. Here, too, he baptized Ethelbert, King of Kent. Saint Martin's Church under-the-hill, said to be the oldest in England, is another time-worn structure, partly built of Roman brick and tiles. There are fourteen such old churches here, most of them built of rough flint, and very ancient.

Also the ruins of a Norman Castle, one of the largest in England, which stands near a mound known as the "Dan John;" connected with this are beautiful gardens, where the band of our 17th regiment played always on Thursday afternoon, when hundreds of the élite of the city assembled to promenade.

This is one of the pleasantest stations in England for a soldier; there is no garrison duty to perform, the only duties being the regimental guards, and they come very seldom; the men getting sixteen nights in bed between guards.

Regiments arriving from India are generally stationed here for some time, in order to recruit after foreign service and the long voyage.

The citizens are very much attached to soldiers, and treat them with the greatest kindness and respect. Our regiment was not fortunate enough to be left here much longer, for a letter of "readiness" was received by the commanding officer, directing him to hold the regiment ready to proceed to Dover at the shortest notice, which he made known to us in regimental orders that evening. After this order was read we were all on the alert, officers and men preparing for the march, packing officers' and mess baggage, whitewashing and cleansing barracks – to save barrack damages, that great curse – ready to hand over to the barrack master.

Accordingly the route came, which was read as follows, viz.: —

"Regimental Orders,

By Lieut-Colonel Pinnikuck

Canterbury Barracks, Sept. 20th, 1847.

Agreeably to a Route received this day from Horse Guards, the Regiment will parade in heavy marching order, at eight o'clock, A.M., on Tuesday next, the 24th instant, for the purpose of proceeding to Dover, there to be stationed till further orders. The men will breakfast at 7 o'clock on that day.

By Order,

*(Signed), Lieut. Codd,
Acting Adjutant 17th Regiment."*

The following morning inspection of kits, at ten o'clock, by the commanding officer, ordered, and afterwards medical inspection. Next day being Sunday, the regiment paraded at ten o'clock, for divine service, when we all marched to church, with the band playing; Protestants and Roman

Catholics going to their different places of worship, no other denomination being recognised in the regiment.

The barracks were inspected on Monday morning, by the quarter-master and captains of companies; the afternoon was occupied in loading the baggage waggons.

Tuesday, Sept. 24th, the regiment was on parade, ready to fall in, when the officers' and non-commissioned officers' call sounded; the latter, forming in line, were minutely inspected by the adjutant, accompanied by the sergeant-major, at the same time collecting the reports from the orderly-sergeants, after which the companies formed on the coverers, right in front.

The rolls being called, the captains inspected their companies, that being finished, the colonel gave the commands, "eyes front, steady, fix bayonets, shoulder arms, left wheel into line, quick march, halt, dress." Then the adjutant galloped down the front, collecting the reports, saluting the colonel as he reported "all correct, Colonel!" "Form fours, right, quick march;" when the whole stepped off, the band at the same time striking up "Auld Lang Syne;" marched out of barracks, down north gate, and up High Street, accompanied by such a crowd of citizens, that it is easier to imagine than describe. After marching through the principal streets, the music changed to "The Girl I Left Behind Me," of the latter there were quite a few followed us outside the town; when the order was given "unfix bayonets, march at ease." The latter order being quickly obeyed (for we had quite a load on our backs, having the whole of our kit in our knapsacks), we were allowed to sing, chat, and laugh to shorten the journey. After we had got to the half-way house we halted, piled arms, and were allowed to go into the hotel for refreshments. When we were well rested and refreshed (thanks to the landlord, who had everything we needed ready), the march commenced again, and we accomplished the journey of sixteen miles in eight hours, in heavy marching order. On arrival in Dover, at four o'clock p.m., the left wing were stationed at the castle, and right, with head-quarters, at the heights.

CHAPTER VI

ARRIVAL AT DOVER – FIRST GUARD – THE DEAD HOUSE – GHOST
– THE HEIGHTS – SHAFT – FORTIFICATIONS – MARCHING OUT –
CHARTIST RIOTS – TRAIN TO LONDON – DEPARTURE – OSBORNE
HOUSE – MAIN DOCK – ROUTE TO CHATHAM – SIEGE – SHAM FIGHT.

On the arrival in barracks, the companies were shown their respective quarters, when we soon divested ourselves of our knapsacks and accoutrements; orderly men were told off to draw rations and prepare supper, while the remainder went to fill their beds with straw at the barrack stores; cleaning arms and accoutrements occupied the remainder of the evening. We were exempt from drill the following day, in order to get our barracks and appointments thoroughly clean after the march.

It was now getting near my turn for guard, and it being my first, I was determined to turn out in a soldier-like manner, with my appointments clean and shining. Accordingly I was detailed for the western redoubt, which furnishes a sentry over the garrison hospital, that stands on the middle of a common, on the top of the Western Heights above the barracks, and a quarter of a mile from any house or habitation.

After mounting guard I was in the first relief, and my post was at the hospital; on receiving my orders from the corporal he directed my attention to the dead house, where, laid out on a table, was a body I was to keep the rats from gnawing. The corporal having posted me at eleven o'clock that night, all the ghost stories I had heard in the "potheen still house" in Leitrim, came up in my mind as flush as when they were told. While I was thinking, I heard a noise, looked round, and saw a man dressed in white standing at the door of the dead house. I tried to challenge, but my tongue was tied. I felt paralyzed. I scrambled along the walk to the front of the hospital, knocking at the door, when the sergeant came out and said, "what is the matter, sentry?" "Oh!" said I, "there's a man, dressed in white, at the 'Dead House.'"

He went back for an orderly, saying something incoherent, when both went round to the dead house, and there they found everything as they had left it. The sergeant called me a fool, and threatened to report me for leaving my post; this stirred me up, and I walked up and down briskly the remainder of the two hours which appeared the longest I ever passed in my life. I said nothing of the occurrence to the men on guard lest they might laugh at me.

Our guard being relieved, we were marched to barracks, inspected by the orderly officer, and dismissed. The sergeant, however, did not report me as he had threatened; whether he forgot or not I did not try to find out. The garrison consisted of two batteries royal artillery, one on the heights, and the other at the castle, a company of sappers and miners, besides our own regiment.

The troops had many guards to furnish, consequently the men got only five nights in bed between duty; besides, fatigue parties were many and laborious, on account of so much uphill work; the water supplied to the garrison was brought up from a well over three hundred feet deep, by means of a wheel which took four men to work, they being relieved every two hours.

The heights on which the barracks stand are three hundred and eighty feet above the level of the sea. A deep perpendicular shaft, containing about four hundred steps of winding-stairs, leads from town to the barracks on the heights, which tries the men's wind coming up at tattoo, and at other times when on fatigue.

The garrison is well fortified, and comprises "Dover Castle," which occupies a commanding position on the chalk cliffs, about 380 feet above the level of the sea, and in the construction of which, Saxons and Normans displayed no small amount of ingenuity; the Western Heights, Fort Burgoyne, the south Front Bastion, the Drop Redoubt, the Citadel, the western outworks, and the north Centre Bastion, with Queen Anne's Pocket Piece on the Castle heights. The harbour is well

sheltered by the chalk cliffs, which end landwards, in a charming valley leading to what is known as the "Garden of Kent." During the winter our regiment marched into the country in heavy marching order twice a week, when we generally went ten to twelve miles on each occasion, and not unfrequently encountering a snow or rain storm, returning literally covered with mud, the roads being so sloppy. These marches, with piquets, fatigues, and guards, kept us busily employed. About the end of March there was great excitement in London over the "Chartists," who were expected to break out in open revolt. The colonel got private notification that most likely the regiment would be ordered to London. We were therefore expecting an order to proceed thither to quell the riot which was daily expected. Our expectations were realized, for on the sixth of April, 1848, we got the route to proceed to London by rail, on the 9th instant, there to be stationed till further orders. When this order was given, there was great excitement in barracks preparing for the journey; we had only two days to pack and get the baggage to the station; however, many hands made light work, and we had all the baggage down at the station and everything in readiness on the evening previous to our departure. On the 9th, we were on parade at seven o'clock, a.m., in heavy marching order, the companies told off and all reported present, when the colonel gave the command – "quarter distance column on the grenadiers, quick march," each captain halting his respective company as it came into its place. He then addressed the men, urging them when in London to uphold the credit of their old corps, &c., after which he gave the command "to the right face," when each captain gave the command to his company, "quick march," the companies stepping off in succession, each company wheeling to the left down the shaft. On arriving at the bottom the band struck up "The British Grenadiers;" we marched to the station (accompanied by a large concourse of the townspeople), where a special train was in readiness to convey us to London. As we went on the train the band played "Auld Lang Syne," and "The Girl I Left Behind Me." One hour-and-a-half afterwards we were marching four deep with fixed bayonets, from the Dover and Chatham Station to Millbank Prison. The streets were so crowded that we had great difficulty in reaching our destination. On arrival, we were shown into two large rooms, one for each wing, with a straw mattress on trestles for each man.

The following morning, April 10th, 1848, an order had arrived from the Duke of Wellington, Commander-in-Chief, to hold the troops in readiness to march to Kennington Common, where the Chartists had intended assembling in large numbers to march through London to the House of Commons carrying a petition embodying their demands.

This was to be presented by Fergus O'Connor, one of the members for Nottingham.

The Londoners, to the number of a quarter of a million, enrolled themselves as special constables; the Chartists were not allowed to march in procession, and the whole affair passed off quietly, without bloodshed.

The troops which the Duke had posted ready, when called on, out of sight, were not required. Our regiment with several others, and a few troops of cavalry, were under arms the whole day in rear of the prison, ready to advance at the shortest notice.

While here we were not allowed to go through the city on account of the unsettled state of society; we were supplied with beer inside, the orderly sergeants of companies serving it out in our mess tins.

The troops which had been concentrated in London, from different parts of England on this emergency were now ordered to return; some to their former stations, others to fresh ones; our regiment was ordered to proceed to Portsmouth.

The troops had a very smart, soldierly appearance; such a large number of cavalry and infantry emerging from their different quarters through the streets, bands playing, quite astonished the citizens as they marched to their destinations.

Our march was to the London and South-western Railway Station, where we took the train at ten o'clock, a.m., for Portsmouth, arriving there at twelve o'clock, a distance of seventy-five miles in two hours.

We were marched to Colworth and Clarence barracks, there to be stationed till further orders.

General Orders issued soon after our arrival, by Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, commanding the troops in garrison; the 17th Regiment was taken on the strength of the garrison, and detailed to furnish the following duties: main guard, Southsea Castle, Landport Rablin, and the main and lower dock-yard. The guards with the colours of the regiment that furnishes the main are trooped every day at ten o'clock on the Grand Esplanade (Sundays and wet days excepted). I was detailed for the main guard, which consists of one captain, one subaltern, one sergeant, two corporals, and twenty-four privates; my post being on the ramparts, in the rear of the guard-house, where I had a fine view of the harbour, the roadstead of Spithead, and the Isle of Wight, on the coast of which the walls of the Royal residence at Osborne House are seen sparkling among the trees. I had been well broken in to sentry duty by this time, and was not so easily frightened at my post now, as when I was watching the corpse at Dover hospital.

Numbers of nobility and gentry assemble to witness the trooping, and to see the main guard relieved. The following day, after being relieved, general field day of the troops in garrison was ordered to assemble on Southsea Common, under the command of General Fitzclarence. These reviews were once a week. My next guard was the "main dock," it is also a captain's guard of great responsibility; sentries are very strict on their posts, being furnished with "countersign," "number," and "parole," no person is allowed to pass a post without being able to give them to the sentry. There are a great many mechanics and labourers employed here; it is at present two hundred and ninety-three acres in extent – one of the largest in the country. Of this immense naval establishment, the most noteworthy, if not the most recent, features are, the mast and rope houses, hemp stores, rigging-stores, sail-loft, and the dry docks, spacious enough to admit the largest vessels, and offering every facility for their speedy repair: of the various building-slips, one of them, roofed and covered in, is so large that three or four vessels can be in process of construction at the same time. When Queen Victoria and Prince Albert opened a new basin in those docks in 1848, our grenadier company formed a guard of honour to Her Majesty and the Prince. We also formed a guard of honour on the occasion of Her Majesty and Prince Albert landing at Gosport the same year, when they inspected our company and complimented Captain Bouchier on the clean, soldier-like appearance of his company. I remember Prince Albert perfectly well; he was dressed in a Field Marshal's uniform, with a broad blue silk sash over his left shoulder. He was the finest looking man I ever saw – he must have been six feet four inches in height. The dock-yard also contains the residence of the superintending officers and a school of naval architecture.

This is a very lively town; the public houses are well patronised by soldiers and sailors; we liked the station very much, although the guards came often; we bathed once a week on the beach of Southsea common, which is now a fashionable watering place – a band plays here once a week in the afternoon. After we were here six months we got the route to proceed to Chatham, where we arrived on the 18th October, and were stationed in Chatham barracks. If Portsmouth was a strict garrison, this is much stricter – there are so many recruits here belonging to regiments in India. They are formed into what is called a provisional battalion. We were looked to as an example for the recruits. Here the dock-yard duty is carried on much the same as at Portsmouth, with a little more humbugging.

We were employed here a good deal in preparing for a siege operation at Saint Mary's Barracks, above Brompton, in building a stockade, and throwing up earthworks and trenches; in the summer we had a grand sham-fight, the troops being formed into two armies, one attacking, the other defending. We were practising for this siege for over two months previously, carrying scaling ladders and moving round with them to the ditches of the fortification; it was very fatiguing work. After we were well practised, and everything in readiness, the grand day came off on the Queen's birthday, 1849, when over ten thousand people were present, most of whom came down from London to witness this grand sham-fight. It came off splendidly, when all returned home well pleased.

CHAPTER VII

ROUTE TO CANTERBURY – THE MARCH – ARRIVAL – CHATHAM – DOCKYARD – FURLOUGH TO LONDON – THAT GREAT CITY – JOIN MY COMPANY – SHEERNESS – THE DOCKYARD – GET MARRIED – ROUTE TO WEEDON – ROUTE TO IRELAND.

A few days afterwards we got the route for Canterbury. On June 2nd we marched from Chatham up High Street, with the band playing at the head of the regiment. We were accompanied by a large crowd of the townspeople outside the town, who gave us three cheers on parting; we marched ten miles that day, and were billeted in the pretty little village of Greenstreet where the people treated us with the greatest kindness and regard.

Resuming the march at seven o'clock the following morning, we arrived at Canterbury at twelve, where we were met by several of our old acquaintances, who were pleased to see us back again, and accompanied us to the barracks. During our stay here of three months we had easy times, getting sixteen nights in bed, hardly any fatigues, but plenty of drill. On the 5th September, 1849, we marched back again to Chatham, arriving there at 5 p.m. on the 6th, after two days hard marching with a full kit weighing fifty pounds. The march tired many of our men, the weather being very sultry and the roads dusty.

The fortified lines around Chatham are the frequent scenes of military siege-operations, miniature battles, and grand reviews.

In a military point of view the lines of detached forts connecting constitute a fortification of great strength, and the whole is regarded as a perfect flank defence for London in the event of an invader seeking to attack the capital from the south coast; the place is also defended by some strong forts on the Medway.

Near Chatham is Fort Pitt, a military hospital and strong fort, barracks for infantry, marines, artillery and engineers, a park of artillery and magazines, storehouse and depôt on a large scale. In a naval sense, it is one of the principal royal shipbuilding establishments in Great Britain, and a visit to it never fails to impress the stranger with a sense of the naval power of the country. The dock-yard is nearly two miles in length, containing several building-slips and wet docks sufficiently capacious for the largest ships, and the whole is traversed in every direction by a tramway for locomotives. There are on an average, 3,500 shipwrights, caulkers, joiners, sawyers, mill-wrights, sail-makers, rope-makers, riggers and labourers, with 5,000 soldiers, sailors and marines, making it lively for public-houses and saloons, which are always crowded with soldiers and sailors in the evenings.

About the middle of December, I applied to the captain of my company for a furlough; having no offence against me since joining, he had no trouble in getting it granted. I had saved most of my pay since I joined, and now had sufficient funds, with the amount allowed me from the captain in advance, to bear my expenses during my absence from the regiment; and as all my near relatives in Leitrim were either dead or had emigrated to America, I had no particular place to spend my furlough, and being stationed so near London, I made up my mind to visit that great city, and avail myself of the opportunity of visiting once more at my leisure some of the principal places of note and amusement. My furlough was dated from 16th December, and expired 16th January. I left the Sun Pier at Chatham, by a penny steamboat to Stroud Station, thence by rail to Gravesend, and boat to Blackwall; from there by rail to Fenchurch, where I took an omnibus to Cambden-Hill-Villa, Kensington, where I stayed on invitation with a friend during my sojourn in London. During my ride through the city on the outside of the omnibus, I had a splendid view of the perfect labyrinth of streets and squares, warehouses and stores, churches and palaces, which I strongly recommend all strangers in London to see. Here I am riding through the vast metropolis of England, where nearly four millions

of people of all classes, grades, and conditions, find a home; a city that covers eighty thousand acres of ground; where is consumed fifty-five million gallons of beer and porter, with three million gallons of ardent spirits, annually poured out to satisfy unnatural and voracious appetites. It takes thirty thousand tailors to make their clothes, forty thousand shoemakers to take care of their feet, and fifty thousand milliners and dressmakers to attend to the ladies' dresses; here an army of twenty-five thousand servants are daily employed, and the smoke of the coal-fires darkens the country for more than twenty miles around. The splendour of the magnificent buildings and shops, carriages, cabs, omnibuses, and vehicles of every description, with crowds of pedestrians, impressed me with surprise beyond my powers of description. I got off at Silver Street after paying the conductor six-pence for my fare, and walked to my friend's house, where I was received in a most cordial manner. During my stay in London I visited many of the principal places of interest in the city, among which were the following, viz.: St. James' Palace, an irregular cluster of buildings used for court purposes, but not as the Queen's residence; Buckingham Palace, the Queen's London residence, a large quadrangular building; Marlborough House, now the residence of the Prince of Wales; Kensington Palace and Gardens; Houses of Parliament, a vast structure which has cost £3,000,000, perhaps the finest building in the world applied to national purposes – the river front is 900 feet long; Westminster Hall, a noble old structure, of which the main hall is 290 feet by 68, and 110 feet high; the Horse Guards, the official residence of the Commander-in-Chief, with an arched entrance to St. James' Park, where under the arches on each side are two noble specimens of mounted sentries; the National Gallery devoted to a portion of the nation's pictures, in Trafalgar Square; South Kensington Museum; the Guards Barracks, Chelsea; the General Post Office, which has a hall 80 feet by 60, and 53 high, with a vast number of offices all around it.

Of public columns and statues the chief which interested me and took my attention were the following: – Nelson's Column, Trafalgar Square; and York Column, Waterloo Steps.¹

Of the public parks in the Metropolis, the most important are Hyde Park, St. James' Park, the Green Park, Regent's Park, Victoria Park, Kensington Park – all belong to the nation, and are, of course, out of the builders' hands. They are most valuable as "lungs" and breathing places for great London.

The Zoological Gardens, Horticultural Gardens, and Botanic Gardens are beautiful places, belonging to private societies. Of places of amusements, there are three opera houses, about thirty theatres, twelve music halls and concert rooms of large dimensions (including Albert Hall), a much larger number of smaller size, and very numerous exhibition rooms of various kinds, including Madame Tussaud's exhibition of wax figures, in Baker Street; these greatly interested and amused me.

I must not forget my leave is nearly up; my furlough expires to-morrow night at tattoo. Also, I am sorry I cannot stay longer, time seems so short and flies so fast in this great city, but as a soldier I must never forget my duty.

After bidding my friend good-bye, and thanking him kindly for his generous hospitality, I started back to join my regiment at Chatham, by the same route I had come, arriving in barracks at tattoo, January 16th, and duly reporting myself.

Whilst I had been on leave, my company (the grenadiers) were under orders for detachment at Sheerness. Accordingly we embarked at the Sun Pier, and proceeded down the Medway, by steamer, on the 8th February, arriving at our destination at two p.m., commanded by Captain L. G. Bouchier, and were stationed in the same barracks as the 72nd Highlanders, whose pipers kept playing and droning from reveillé till tattoo. This is also another of England's Royal ship-building establishments; there are nearly two thousand artisans and labourers employed daily in the dockyard. The streets, public houses, and concert rooms are continually, unfortunately, crowded with sailors, soldiers, marines, and dockyard hands, every evening; and not unfrequently a bar-room row takes place between the soldiers and sailors; on one occasion I saw two of our tallest and ablest grenadiers peel off their coats and clean out a whole tap-room of sailors, and that with their English fists.

On our last visit to Canterbury, what did I do but, like an Irishman, fall in love. I made the acquaintance of a Kentish beauty and promised to marry her, with the understanding that I got the commanding officer's sanction in order to carry out this promise, after our company had been here about a month, I applied to the colonel, of course through the captain of my company, for leave to get married, which was granted, through the strong recommendation and influence of my captain; for my readers must know that it is only a very small proportion of soldiers (six to each company), and those only of the best character and highly recommended, can get leave to marry; or if they marry without leave, they have no claim to participate in any of the advantages and privileges attached to the soldier who marries with leave – such as quarters in barracks and on foreign stations, "rations." Having received the commanding officer's permission, I was married, on the 3rd of April, 1850, at Minster, in the Isle of Sheppy, Kent. My wife then was placed on the strength of the regiment from that date. Now my happiness was complete. I was struck out of the barrack-room messing, and my wife and I became truly happy together. Instead of walking down the town with my comrades, I walked out with my wife in the evening on the ramparts in the rear of our quarters, and gazed in wonder at the massive fortifications and guns which encircled our barracks. Here we could hear the soft strains of exquisite music from the various military bands of marines, or the regiments in garrison, or, more frequently, the pipers of the 72nd Highlanders, or the sound of the evening gun re-echo over the surface of the waters from the flag-ship which rode so majestically at anchor in the distant roadsteads, with the sun sinking into an ocean of fire, and the white sails of the fishing smacks glistening in the setting sun. We had been for some time fearing to be relieved from this delightful station; at length the long expected order came. The rumours which had been for some time gathering strength as to our destination were discovered to have had a better foundation than many which in general floated indefinitely about our barracks, on the subject of which no one ever could discover their origin, for, you must know, soldiers are great gossipers.

Our orders are for Weedon, a small town in Northamptonshire, on the River Nene. In three days we were to embark on board a steamer for London, thence by rail. We were all rather sorry for leaving the present station, although soldiers always like fresh scenery, and always play, when they leave, "The Girl I left Behind Me."

We embarked on the 18th of May, accompanied by the band, pipes, and several men, of the 72nd Highlanders to the wharf, the band playing "Auld Lang Syne" as our steamer moved off from the dock, the men cheering and waving their handkerchiefs, which we responded to in a most friendly manner. We were all very happy, though we were rather closely packed together – a circumstance generally considered dangerous to a good fellowship. The vessel was a small one, and being of rather ancient build did not boast all those conveniences that the new steamers possess. The voyage was a short one; the river being very smooth; the trip was pleasant, although it was somewhat inconvenient for the women and children, who were huddled up very close together. We were lucky that the weather was so fine, therefore we had not the unpleasantness of sea sickness.

As we neared London, steamers and vessels of nearly every size became more numerous; and the buzz of industry from the shore, with the whistling of small steamers, the splashing of wheels, the clouds of smoke, impressed us with the wondrous amount of traffic carried on through this mighty highway of commerce.

We reached Blackwall at one o'clock, and marched to Euston Station, the women and children being sent in cabs, where we took the train at three p.m., arriving at Weedon at 5 p.m., marched into barracks and joined head-quarters which had been there before us. About this time Colonel Styte got command of the regiment, an old Waterloo officer of great skill in military details. The Town of Weedon, which is situated in the centre of a wide and rich valley in one of the most beautiful counties in England, was declared by all our soldiers, without one dissentient voice, to be an exceedingly dull, stupid place. Not having much duty to perform in this quiet garrison, we were kept continually at drill; in the evenings the men had nothing to occupy their spare time except to assemble in the public

houses or canteen, and on Sunday, after church, to walk out of town to a certain country tavern where they unfortunately used to indulge in drinking and carousing. In the days in which I write, those who entertained the idea of educating soldiers were laughed at as visionary enthusiasts, whose schemes, if put into practice, would entirely ruin and destroy the military spirit of the army; and few there were among the commanding officers of regiments who possessed moral courage enough to combat the general opinion, even if they differed from the principle. Colonel Styte, however, the lieutenant-colonel of the 17th regiment of "Royal Tigers," was happily endowed with moral courage in equal degree with his gallantry in the field, which secured for him his present high position, and an honesty of mind and purpose he possessed that was not usual with officers of his time. He had received a wound at the Battle of Waterloo in his right arm, which entirely disabled it, and it hung down by his side quite powerless. Not being able to draw his sword, we had great sympathy for him, which he appreciated very much. He had established an evening school for the drummer boys of the regiment, and for such of the non-commissioned officers and privates as chose to avail themselves of its advantage. The colonel and a few of his brother officers raised a subscription in order to provide the necessary books, and a school was established and well attended, with most excellent results – valued by many of the best disposed non-commissioned officers and men, and worked exceedingly well. Regarding the drummer boys, their attendance was compulsory. The teacher was a very gentlemanly, able man, and imparted his instructions in a very painstaking manner, which caused many of the young soldiers to attend his school willingly, and try to advance themselves by his instructions.

Nothing in the regiment gave me more pleasure than attending, and the progress I made during our term served to advance my prospects of promotion in after years, which I most gratefully remember.

We were stationed in this quiet town for three months when we got orders to proceed to Castlebar, a town in the west of Ireland, and about one hundred and sixty miles from Dublin.

CHAPTER VIII

LIVERPOOL – EMBARK FOR DUBLIN – THE VOYAGE – ARRIVAL – MARCH – THE TRAIN – THE MARCH TO CASTLEBAR – ARRIVAL – ELECTION – ROUTE TO GALWAY.

May 9th, 1850. – The regiment was formed on the barrack square, right in front, marched to the railway station, the band playing at the head of the regiment, accompanied by a large number of the townspeople, with whom we were popular, and who gave us three hearty cheers as the train moved from the station at 10 o'clock a.m. During the journey the train stopped sufficiently long enough at different stations to enable us to partake of refreshments.

Arriving in Liverpool at 4.30, formed up at the station and marched through the main street down to the docks, with fixed bayonets, the band playing "British Grenadiers," where we embarked at 5.30 p.m. At six o'clock the steamer moved off slowly from the dock, the band playing "Come back to Erin" when we were cheered by the crowd from the quay.

We had a remarkable fine passage, although the boat rolled and pitched a good deal with the long swell from south-west, and we suffered but little discomfort beyond what invariably attends 900 men, 40 women and children who are imprisoned for the time being, with the fear of being drowned. Several of the women and children were sea-sick; but as for the men, their will conquered their stomach, and they were not sick, although many of them looked very pale and squeamish. Hoping to enter port in the morning, I was early on deck; we were already in sight of land; on the right the long low line of the Irish coast was visible scarcely raised above the level of the sea. Not far ahead the outline and prominent feature of the Hill of Howth stood out before us on the right with its lighthouse; my heart beat high with joy as my eye caught the first glimpse of the land of my birth, "my own native land."

The city, that at first looked like a white line on the coast, began apparently to lift itself upwards and assume definite form and shape, the houses and spires standing out more distinctly. On the left we saw Kingston, with the grand Wicklow mountains in the background completing the picture, – indeed the Bay of Kingston is said to be one of the most beautiful in the world. Now we pass the lighthouse on the left, which stands at the end of a long pier at the entrance of the bay, close to the Pigeon House, where there are strong fortifications. We are moving up slowly among the shipping, arriving at the north-wall at six o'clock a.m. The order was given to disembark immediately, when huge swarms of red coats assembled on deck, buzzed and bustled about, actively preparing to disembark in good order, and fall in by companies on the quay. On the bugle sounding the whole fell in, and were inspected by the Colonel. All being correct, we marched off by fours with fixed bayonets and band playing, along the Liffy to the Western Railway station, "Broadstone," accompanied by an immense crowd of spectators. We took the train at eight o'clock for Mullingar, arriving there at ten – sixty miles in two hours – and were billeted on the taverns and public houses. Previous to being dismissed we were formed up at quarter distance column, in front of the principal hotel, Mr. Murray's, where the Colonel stayed, when he charged the men to conduct themselves in their billets in a soldierlike manner, and never bring discredit on the corps through their misconduct among the inhabitants; non-commissioned officers were ordered especially to look after the men's interests, and call the roll at tattoo: he at the same time ordered parade with arms and accoutrements at five o'clock p.m., after which the men were marched to their different billets by their respective non-commissioned officers, where we were received with "ceade-mille-failtha" by the landlords, who had dinner ready for us in right Irish fashion, according to instructions received from the "Billet-master." After dinner we were employed in getting our appointments clean and ready for parade. At the appointed time the regiment paraded at the former place, rolls called, and companies inspected by their respective captains. During

the parade, the bands "discoursed sweet music" in front of the hotel. After the reports were collected, and all reported present by the Adjutant, the Colonel gave the command, "fix bayonets, shoulder arms, left wheel into line, quick march, halt, dress," the Major giving the word "steady," when the line was dressed; after which the Colonel opened the ranks and inspected the whole line (the band playing during the inspection), breaking into open column right in front, and then dismissed.

A large crowd of town and country people were looking on in amazement; one would have thought they never saw a regiment on parade before, their admiration was so great.

After going to our billets, the men dressed for the evening in their shell-jackets, forage-caps, and waist-belts, cane in hand, and were soon scattered in all directions among the civilians, who soon made their acquaintance, and pledged their fellowship with creature comforts in the public houses.

"Reveill " sounded at five o'clock, when we were on the alert, got breakfast at six, and were on parade at seven. After the companies were inspected, the Colonel again addressed them, telling the men the consequence and penalty of getting drunk on the line of march; after which he sent off the advanced guard, and told off the rear and baggage guards. The women, with their children, that could not afford a side-car, had to ride on the baggage waggon. After these preliminary arrangements were made, we marched off, the band playing "Patrick's Day;" the people gave three cheers on parting. After we got well out of town, we were allowed to march at ease, talk, smoke, and sing. We were quite fresh on starting, but after we had accomplished about five or six miles we began to feel the weight of a full kit, arms, accoutrements, haversack and sixty rounds of ammunition in our pouches, with a thick, stiff leather stock, and coatee buttoned up tight around our neck, with a heavy shako. The weather being warm and roads dusty, we began to get somewhat tired and thirsty. We were halted close to a small village, where we procured some buttermilk from the peasants, who gave it willingly. I went into a house and asked for a drink of water, when the old woman brought me a large noggin of buttermilk, saying, "Dhrink this acushla, it's bether nar cauld wather for ye on the road." I offered her some coppers, but she refused, saying, "No, I thank you, sur; do you think I would take pay from a poor sojer for a drop o' buttermilk? the sorrow bit thin; I wish it was bether, it's myself that would give it ye."

After getting refreshed we started on again; we had nine miles more to march before we got to Ballymore, where we were to be billeted for the night; we had frequent halts for a few moments at a time, during the remaining nine miles, when the people brought us noggins of buttermilk. As we resumed the march, the band struck up "Patrick's Day," which well repaid the people for the buttermilk, and several of them accompanied us for miles along the road.

Arrived at Ballymore at two o'clock, when we were told off to our respective billets. This is a very wretched small town, with only three public houses; most of the men were billeted in private houses, the poor people were hard pressed to find room for us, but we were tired and not very particular, as long as we got some place to stretch ourselves. After arriving at our billets, dinner, such as they had, was ready for us; tea and coffee there was none, but instead there was an abundance of bacon, cabbage, and potatoes, which we washed down with plenty of new milk. After satisfying the cravings of the inner man with these substantials, we felt we should like to try a drop of good Irish whiskey, made up a subscription and sent our host out for the "crater." After partaking of this luxury, so long unknown, in which the landlord joined in a sociable manner, we turned out for parade, when we were inspected by captains of companies and dismissed.

We had supper at six, oat-cakes, potato-cakes, and new milk, and soon after we were in the land of dreams, well tired from our march. Reveill  was sounded at five next morning, arousing the hitherto quiet village, when we were all on the alert; got breakfast of bacon, eggs, potatoes and milk, falling in for parade at seven, marching off with the band playing "Patrick's Day," which caused the people to shout and cheer. After a long march of sixteen miles we reached Athlone at two o'clock, dismissed to our billets, where dinner was ready according to instructions received in advance.

My wife fared much better to-day than yesterday. I had procured for her a seat on a side-car with the hospital serjeant's wife, by paying half the expense of the car. This is a good sized town, large barracks and strongly-fortified, on the Shannon, dividing Leinster from Connaught. We fared well here and got good billets. To-morrow will be Sunday; we will halt. We were allowed to indulge in a good sleep on Sunday morning, nothing to do before ten o'clock, only to get breakfast of ham and eggs; church parade in front of O'Rourke's hotel, where we were inspected and marched off to our different places of worship, the band playing, causing great crowds of people to assemble and accompany us to church. After dinner the men walked out in full dress; there were crowds of people and plenty of whiskey drunk during the day and night; great excitement to see so many soldiers in the town. At tattoo that night one corporal and six privates were confined, the corporal for being drunk, and the privates for minor offences. In the morning the six privates were reprimanded, and the corporal sent back for a court-martial on arrival at Castlebar.

We were on the march at seven o'clock, the band playing Patrick's Day and Garry Owen, as we marched out of town, cheered by the crowd. We were in good spirits, for every fellow had a parting glass with the landlord before parting, besides we were getting accustomed to the march. After a march of fifteen miles we arrived in Castleblakeney at two o'clock. This is a small town like Ballymore. During the march to Castlebar, we always started at seven every morning, and paraded at five every evening for inspection.

Next day at two o'clock, we reached Tuam, a fine town, where Archbishop McHale and Bishop Plunket reside, where we were billeted that night, marching as usual in the morning: next night at Holymount, arriving at Castlebar on Thursday, the 18th May, 1850, where we were to be stationed till further orders, accomplishing a journey of about one hundred miles in seven days. On arriving we were shown our quarters; bed filling at the barrack stores, and cleaning our appointments after the long march, occupied the remainder of the day.

The following day commanding officer's parade in heavy marching order at ten a.m., when we were minutely inspected and dismissed. We had good barrack accommodation and easy duty, the men getting ten nights in bed between guards. After we had been here a few days, we became aware of the fact that a contested election for a member of parliament was to take place in about three weeks, and we found great excitement among the people; the committee of each candidate were holding meetings and canvassing for their party; many rows took place between them, the public houses were continually crowded, police were brought here from distant stations, and, as the day of polling drew near, the excitement increased. On the day of voting two troops of cavalry arrived, and we were under orders to turn out at a moment's notice. On the morning of the election, the grenadiers and light company were drawn up in line on each side of the square fronting the court-house, with the two troops of cavalry. The voting commenced at ten o'clock; the police were all formed ready to pass the voters in and keep the crowd back, the voters were brought in from the country on sidecars, guarded from the mob by a policeman on each side of the car.

The people were very roughly used at first by the police, which raised their wrath, when they rushed with immense force on the police and thoroughly defeated them, forcing them to retreat to the lines of the military for protection. Having effected this object the crowd retained their position, but did not attempt to assault the soldiers, though their shouts of defiance to the police rose loud and long. The police were ordered to advance again and seize the ringleaders; they obeyed very reluctantly, but being assaulted with sticks and stones their individual courage was excited, and they rushed to chastise the mob, who again drove them back in greater disorder than before, and a nearer approach to the soldiers was made by the crowd in the scuffle which ensued. The police were again ordered to charge the mob, when a more serious scrimmage arose, sticks and stones were used with more effect, and the parties being nearer to each other, the missiles intended only for the police overshot their mark and struck some of the soldiers, who bore their painful position with admirable fortitude, although their patience was sorely tried to stand a target for the mob, but a soldier's duty is to obey

orders in whatever shape they come from his officers, and therefore they had to put up with rough usage. The mob were now furious and the magistrate had to read the Riot Act before the soldiers could attempt to quell the disturbance; at last the military were ordered to fire, the captain giving the command, "with ball cartridge, load, ready, present, fire," the men were previously cautioned in an under tone of voice to fire over the people's heads.

This had the desired effect; the crowd dissolved as the muskets were brought to the present, after which they gave three cheers for the soldiers and down with the "peelers."

This act brought the soldiers into high esteem with the populace. The business of the interior was now suspended for a time by the sounds of fierce tumults, which arose after the soldiers had discharged the volley; some rushed from the court-house to the platform, and beheld the mob in a state of great excitement. A popular candidate now stood forward on the platform and was greeted with fresh cheers. He waited till the uproarious cheering died away, and then addressed them in a few words touching their nationality and the honour of their country.

After which the crowd gave him three hearty cheers, and quiet was restored, when the troops were marched into barracks, but kept in readiness should another row commence; but happily all were peaceable afterwards, although much excitement with plenty of whiskey continued for several days after, in which several of the soldiers joined.

After the election, our men were highly respected by the inhabitants; the old women brought the men bottles of "potheen whiskey" in their milk cans. The sergeant on the gate not suspecting any smuggling, saw nothing but milk in the can – but if he had searched the can he would have found a black bottle of the real "mountain dew" at the bottom.

After being stationed here three months we got the route for Galway, a town situated at the mouth of Lough Corrib; it is the west terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway, and 117 miles west of Dublin.

CHAPTER IX

THE MARCH – GALWAY – CAPTAIN BOURCHIER – DETACHMENT
– REGATTA – ROW WITH THE POLICE – ROUTE TO GALWAY –
MAJOR BOURCHIER EXCHANGES – CAPTAIN CROKER – CLADDAGH
– ATTEND A CAMP MEETING – THE CITY OF GALWAY – THEATRE –
ROUTE TO DUBLIN.

August 26th, 1850, at 7 a.m., we marched out of Castlebar; the townspeople accompanied us for some distance and gave us three hearty cheers on parting. We marched sixteen miles that day, and were billeted at Holymount. Previous to this, Captain Bouchier had applied for leave of absence for three months, which reached him here, when he started for England after bidding the company good-bye, and handing it over to Lieutenant Coulthurst. We all suspected that he was going to be married during his absence, which proved to be a fact, for on his return to the regiment in November he brought his wife with him.

Next morning we were on the march again, and after fifteen miles, arrived at Tuam, where we were billeted for the night, arriving in Galway at two o'clock p.m. the following day, after a tiresome march of eighteen miles. The grenadiers and light company, with four others, were stationed at the Shamble Barracks, and four companies at the Castle. Most of the officers stayed at Mackilroy's Hotel, in the Market Square or "Green," as it was called, where they remained until their quarters were ready for their reception. After our arrival, we all turned out to fill our beds with straw at the barrack store as usual. Duty here was easy, having only three guards to furnish, which consisted of two sergeants, three corporals, and twenty-four privates daily, but we were kept continually at drill, either commanding officer's, adjutant's, or sergeant-major's. The only time we had to call our own was from supper till tattoo.

During Captain Bouchier's absence from the regiment he had been promoted to Brevet Major, and on his return about the thirtieth of November, he brought a beautiful bride back with him to share his military honours. He rented a comfortable house in one of the aristocratic terraces of Salt Hill Road, in the suburbs of the town. At Christmas he treated the company to a good dinner and a barrel of ale to wash it down, when we drank towards his and his lady's health and happiness, and wished them many returns of the season.

On the 30th January, 1851, I had an increase in my family, for a boy was born to me. We had him christened Thomas Henry, Thomas after my father, and Henry after my wife's father.

Our company was under orders for detachment at Banagher, a small fortified garrison town on the River Shannon, and thirty miles south of Galway.

May 1st, 1851, our company was formed on the barrack square, inspected by the Colonel, and after a few words of fatherly advice from him, we marched up High Street, accompanied outside the town by the band, playing Irish airs. We had thirty miles to march, which we accomplished in two days. We marched through Oranmore, Athenry, and were billeted in Ballinasloe one night, passing through Eyrecourt, arriving in Banagher next day at three p.m. These barracks are sufficient to accommodate about one hundred and fifty men, situated within a fortification which commands a bridge that spans the Shannon, and connects King's County with the County Galway. This part of the country is celebrated for fishing, shooting, and boating, and Portumna Lake, about fourteen miles from here, is famous for regattas, which our three officers, viz., Major Bouchier, Lieutenant Coulthurst and Ensign Williams, availed themselves of during our time of duty at this station. They purchased a yacht, a four-oar gig, and a duck boat, from their predecessors. They also hired one Jack, the boatsman, to take care of the yacht and boats, and accompany them when required. They

frequently took a man or two of the company with them when on sailing excursions to work the yacht, which we enjoyed very much.

The Major, Ensign Williams, "Jack," and myself, went to a regatta at Portumna, a distance of fourteen miles, in the four-oared gig; we rowed down the river very fast, arriving there at twelve o'clock, in time for the first race. The officers were invited on board one of the gentlemen's yachts, which was to sail in the match, "Jack and I" were left in charge of the gig. After the race the officers returned at nine o'clock, p.m., when we started to row back to barracks; after we got eight miles, we came to a lock which was open as we passed through going down in the morning, but now it was shut, and we had no alternative but carry our boat to the other side of the lock. This being done, we took a drink of "potteen" which we had in the boat to cheer us up. After refreshing ourselves we started again with renewed vigour. In going down in the morning we thought nothing of rowing fourteen miles with the stream, but now going back against it was quite a different affair, the stream ran so very swift, and we had hard work to make headway against it. However, with good pluck and a drop out of the bottle of "potteen," now and then, we braved the stream and reached barracks at two o'clock in the morning. Scarcely a day passed without a boating, fishing, or shooting excursion of some kind. This makes it a very pleasant station, and besides, the town has a clean, neat and tidy appearance, compared with some towns we have seen in Ireland, and can boast of one decent hotel, "Mann's Hotel," besides several public houses with skittle alleys attached, which places of amusement several of our men patronized. Two of the company had an altercation with two or three of the police at one of these places, when the latter tried to take the two soldiers to the police station; this the soldiers objected to, whereupon a row ensued, then several more police joined and were forcing the soldiers off, when their comrades in barracks, having been warned of the row by some person, rushed out of barracks with naked bayonets in hand, rescued the two soldiers and beat the police, driving the whole force out of the town and chasing them through the country, where they skedaddled and hid in the potato fields. Several of the police got hurt, but not very seriously. Our company and the police never could agree after that row, but they never again attempted to take any of our men to the station-house. About a month after the row with the police, we got relieved by No. 6 company from head-quarters.

On the 27th October we marched out of barracks at two o'clock, p.m., as the relieving company marched in. After a march of sixteen miles we arrived in Ballinasloe at seven o'clock in the evening, where we were billeted for the night. The railway, which was in course of construction as we passed here *en route* to Banagher, being now finished and the train running on it, we took the train at eleven o'clock, a.m., arriving at Galway Station at twelve, where we were met by the band, which marched at the head of the company down Main Street, playing the "British Grenadiers" as we marched into the Shamble Barracks. One month after this, Major Bouchier had exchanged to the 54th Regiment, which was in the East Indies. The night previous to his departure his brother officers of the regiment entertained him as their guest at the mess, where they all expressed deep sorrow at his leaving, and his loss to the regiment. After bidding the men good-bye, he left for India, taking with him the best wishes and prayers for his future welfare, especially of his own company, the grenadiers, to whom he had ever been a father during his command. Many of the men accompanied him to the railway station to see him off; need I say we lost a friend.

Captain John Croker, a Limerick man, not only the tallest officer in the regiment (height 6 feet 4 ins.) but now the senior captain, who formerly belonged to No. 8 company, now got command of the grenadiers, vice Captain Bouchier promoted. Galway has a population of about 25,000; the old town is poorly built and irregular, and some of its old houses have the Spanish architecture, easily accounted for by the great intercourse which at one time subsisted between Galway and Spain. The new town consists of well planned and spacious streets, built on a rising ground which slopes gradually towards the harbour; its suburbs are very wretched – collections of wretched cabins – inhabited by a poor class of people; one of these suburbs called the Claddagh is inhabited by fishermen who exclude all strangers and live perfectly amongst themselves, electing their king, etc., and ever marrying within

their own circle. These fishermen still speak the grand old Celtic language, and the old Irish costume is still worn by the women – open gowns and red petticoats.

They annually elect a mayor, whose functions are to administer the laws of their fishery, and to superintend all internal regulations. One of these fishermen's sons took a great liking to the soldiers, and frequently came into the barracks to see us at drill. He was about 6 feet 4 ins. in height, and a powerfully built young man of eighteen years old. He applied to the sergeant-major to enlist. He took him before the Colonel who approved of him when he was enlisted in the 17th Regiment; his name was Paddy Belton. His father came and tried to get him off, but it was no use, he had his mind made up, and wished to be a soldier. After getting his uniform on, he invited a comrade and myself, to a "camp" in his village, which is a contest of skill, or competition for priority – a display of female powers at the spinning of yarn. It is indeed a cheerful meeting of the bright fair girls; and although strong and desperate rivalry is the order of the day, it is conducted in a spirit so light-hearted and friendly that I scarcely know a more interesting or delightful amusement in a country life. When a "camp" is about to be held the affair soon becomes known in the neighbourhood; sometimes young women are asked, but in most instances so eager are they to attend that invitations are unnecessary; in winter time and in mountain districts, it is often as picturesque as pleasant.

The young women usually begin to assemble at four o'clock in the morning; and as they always go in groups, accompanied besides by their sweethearts, or some male relative, each of the latter bearing a large torch of well dried bog-deal, their voices, songs and laughter break upon the stillness of the morning with a holiday feeling, made five times more delightful by the darkness of the hour. The spinning wheels are carried by the young men, amidst an agreeable volley of repartee. From the moment they arrive the mirth is fast and furious, nothing is heard but laughter, conversation, songs, and anecdotes, all in a loud key; among the loud humming of spinning wheels, and the noise of reels, as they incessantly crack the cuts in the hands of the reelers who are perpetually turning them from morning till night, in order to ascertain the quantity which every competitor has spun; and whoever has spun the most wins the "camp," and is queen for the night. At the conclusion of the "camp," we all repaired to a supper of new milk and flummery, which was most delicious. This agreeable meal being over, we repaired to the dancing-room, where Mickey Gaffey, the piper, was installed in his own peculiar arm-chair of old Irish oak; a shebeen man, named Barney O'Shea, had brought a large jar of potteen to cheer the boys' hearts for the occasion, of which they freely partook, when the dancing commenced. It is not my intention to enter into a detailed account of the dancing, nor of the good humour which pervaded amongst them; it is enough to say that the old people performed cotillons, and the young folks jigs, reels, and country dances; hornpipes were performed upon doors (the floor being of earth) with the greatest skill. My comrade and myself enjoyed the dance, which was kept up all night, taking a drop of potteen between the dances, to keep our spirits up by pouring spirits down. Our leave was up at six o'clock in the morning, and we had to report ourselves not later than that hour to the sergeant of the quarter guard, so we left the dance at four o'clock, got to barracks before six, gave in our passes to the sergeant, and were just in time for morning drill, when we drilled till a quarter to eight o'clock, I can assure you with aching heads after the potteen.

The principal buildings in Galway are, the Queen's College, which was just opened a year before our arrival there; among the other edifices are three monasteries and five nunneries, Smith's College, the court-house and barracks, with the grand old Church of St. Nicholas. It has numerous flour, and other mills, also breweries, and distilleries. Extensive salmon and sea fishing are carried on here.

The bay is a large expanse of water about eighteen miles broad at its seaward extremity, diminishing to about eight miles inland, and being about twenty miles long. It is protected from the swell of the Atlantic by the Arran Isles. South-west from Galway to the sea is the district called Connemara, which contains vast bogs, moors, loughs and marshes, which present a bleak and dreary aspect. Galway abounds in ancient remains of Celtic as well as of the Norman period; cromlech and monastic ruins are found in several parts of the county.

A very fine specimen of this class is that of Knockmoy, near Tuam, besides several round towers. The officers amused themselves both fishing and shooting when off duty; they frequently could be seen with rod and line landing a large sized salmon, on the banks of the river, and another officer coming into the barracks in the evening with his dog and gun, with his bag well filled with game after his day's sport.

Besides these enjoyments they organized an amateur dramatic company, with Lieutenant Lindsay, Lieutenant Coulthurst and Ensign Williams at its head, with the band and a few smart non-commissioned officers and privates; which was well patronised by the officers and their ladies, besides several of the nobility and gentry of the town and any of the soldiers who wished to attend. This brought round the best of feeling between the regiment and inhabitants, and produced excellent results.

We had been for some time looking out for an order for Dublin. Our expectations were fulfilled on the fifteenth of March, by the Colonel receiving a large official envelope containing the route for the 17th regiment to proceed by rail on the 28th March, 1852, to Dublin, there to be stationed and do garrison duty till further orders, to be quartered in the Richmond Barracks. The order having been read to the regiment, the news soon spread to the creditors in the town, when could be seen tailors, shoemakers, hatters, bakers, grocers, and liquor merchants, all rushing into the barracks looking for their debtors.

Notwithstanding the credit of the regiment having been cried down on our arrival, many tradespeople had given credit to several parties, which they now were trying to collect; but all those who cannot collect it now, the first tap of the big drum will pay them, when we march out of town.

""How happy is the soldier who lives on his pay,
And spends half a crown out of sixpence a day.""

We had fifteen days to get ready, which were occupied in cleaning barracks, filling nail holes, and white-washing, to obviate as much as possible that curse, barrack damages, which always follows a regiment from one barrack to another.

CHAPTER X

THE MARCH – RAIL TO DUBLIN – ARRIVAL – GARRISON DUTY
– CASTLE GUARD – THE OLD MAN'S HOSPITAL – DIVINE SERVICE –
TENT-PITCHING – DEATH OF THE "IRON DUKE" – THE FUNERAL –
THE QUEEN VISITS DUBLIN – BUILDINGS AND INSTITUTIONS – THE
ROUTE.

March 28th, 1852, the regiment was formed on the Barrack Square, at six o'clock a.m., in heavy marching order, full kits in our packs: the companies minutely inspected and told off by their respective captains; reports collected by the adjutant, when all reported present to the Colonel, who then gave the command "fours rights, quick march," when they stepped off, the companies wheeling to the right out of the gate, the band striking up "Patrick's Day," playing up the main street. During the inspection the barrack-gate had been besieged by a large crowd of town's people, who accompanied the regiment to the railway station, where we were joined by the two companies from the Castle. While getting the regimental baggage, women, and children on the train, the band discoursed some sweet music, causing frequent cheers from the crowd. At length all was ready, when a wild scream from the engine was heard, and the train moved out slowly from beneath the vaulted roof of the station, amid cheer after cheer from the populace, who were assembled in large numbers to see us off; the band playing during the slow departure of the train from the station, and the men waving their handkerchiefs, in response, from the carriage windows. At last the train quickened the speed, and soon station and crowd faded from our view. We were scarcely an hour in our seats – and viewing the country as the train sped along, and admiring the beautiful green fields, hills and valleys interspersed with running streams, the peasantry gazing in wonder, and the country girls waving their handkerchiefs as the long train of soldiers passed them by – when a shrill whistle from the engine was heard, and then, with much noise, and many a heavy sob, the vast machine swept smoothly into the station at Ballinasloe.

There were, formed in line on the platform, the companies from detachment at Banagher and Portumna, waiting our arrival to join head-quarters. The train stopped at this station twenty minutes, when the two companies came on board. All being ready, the train moved off again, soon reaching Athlone, where we stopped fifteen minutes. Here we got refreshments – a glass of beer and a biscuit, which we enjoyed, having breakfasted at five that morning. About an hour after we were in Mullingar, stopping fifteen minutes, when we started again. We are rapidly leaving Mullingar behind. The fields gradually assume a green and spring-like aspect. This part of the country is highly cultivated. Occasionally a small village in the valley, by some running stream, or upon the hill side, gives life and charm to the landscape. The Royal Canal runs alongside of the railway all the way from Dublin to Mullingar, and unites the Liffy with the Shannon in the west.

As I was viewing the beauty of the landscape, the engine gave a loud and long whistle, which reminded me we were close to the city. Now we can see Wellington's monument, in Phoenix Park; arriving at the station at one o'clock, after a ride of one hundred and thirty miles, when we were met by the band of the 39th Regiment, who played at the head of the Regiment to Richmond Barracks. On arrival we were told off to our different barracks.

These are splendid, large, airy barracks, sufficient for two regiments, with good officers' and staff quarters, but bad for married soldiers, who have to rent apartments outside.

The military force in Dublin then consisted of the 11th Hussars, Island Bridge Barracks; 17th Lancers, Royal Horse Artillery and Foot Artillery, Portobello; 2nd Dragoon Guards, 27th Regiment, Royal Barracks; 32nd Light Infantry, Ship Street and Linen Hall Barracks; 39th and 17th Regiments,

Richmond Barracks; besides depôts at Beggars' Bush; the whole under the command of Major-General Sir Edward Blakeley, whose quarters were in the Old Man's Hospital, near Phoenix Park.

The regiments furnish the duties in their turn. In garrison orders of the 30th, the 17th Regiment were detailed to furnish the whole of the duties on the following day, viz: – The Castle Guard, one captain, one subaltern, two sergeants, and twenty-four privates; Lower Castle, one sergeant, one corporal and six privates; Vice-Regal Lodge, one sergeant, two corporals and eighteen privates; Old Man's Hospital, one sergeant, two corporals, and twelve privates; Kilmainham, one corporal, and three privates; Arbour Hill Hospital, one sergeant, one corporal and twelve privates; Magazine, one sergeant, one corporal and six privates; Mountjoy, one corporal and six privates; Island Bridge, one sergeant, one corporal and twelve privates; Picture Gallery, one corporal and three privates; Bank of Ireland, one subaltern, one sergeant, one corporal and twelve privates; Richmond, one sergeant two corporals and twelve privates.

These guards, with the regimental guards, assemble daily (Sundays and wet days excepted), on the Esplanade, at ten p.m., when they are trooped, the junior officer of the Castle Guard carrying the colours during the trooping. The regiment who furnishes the duties for the day, also furnishes the band, which plays during the trooping of the colours, when crowds of spectators assemble to witness this military review. After they march past in slow and quick time, the guards are formed on their commanders, when they are marched off to their respective guards by the field officer of the day. Relieving the Castle Guard is a very imposing sight, and hundreds of people assemble to witness this military performance, as well as to hear the sweet martial music while the guards are relieving. Before the old guard marches off the new guard plants its colours in the centre of the Castle yard, with a sentry over them. Two sentries are posted at the gate of the Castle yard, and two on the door of the Castle, under the portico. All the sentries of the old guard having been relieved, the guard is marched off by its captain, the subaltern carrying the colours, when the new guard salutes by presenting arms, after which the new guard takes the place of the old; the relief being told off, they are dismissed to the guard-room. The guards take their rations with them, which consists of three-quarters of a pound of beef or mutton, one pound and a half of bread, one pound and a half of potatoes and onions, one-eighth ounce of tea, quarter of an ounce of coffee, two ounces of sugar, with pepper and salt to each man. There being but one pot and pan in each guard-room they are kept, as you may well imagine, in active work until six o'clock in the evening, every relief boiling potatoes and making tea and coffee.

I was detailed for the Old Man's Hospital, which is a large establishment, and consists of the Major General's Quarters, the English Church, where the troops from Richmond attend divine service, as well as the "Old Pensioners," or "Old Fogies," as they are called. There are quarters here for about eight hundred men; any pensioner can be admitted who applies (married men excepted). They are required to pay in their pension for their board and clothes; the latter consists of cloth trowsers, red tunic, which comes down below the knee, and a Napoleon hat. They have no duty to perform, only keep themselves and quarters clean and tidy. They are all well satisfied and seem happy; chatting, and fighting their battles over again. The grounds, walks, avenues, shrubbery, kitchen-garden, and flower-beds around this institution show the taste, cleanliness, and discipline of those old veterans whose home it now is, provided by a grateful country.

Being relieved from guard next day, we had kit inspection by the commanding officer, accompanied by Major Cole, who had just joined. Sunday, church parade at ten a.m.; being inspected, we were marched off, the band playing through Kilmainham, to the Old Man's Hospital, where the Protestants and Roman Catholics parted for the time. I, belonging to the latter, marched to St. Mary's Church, on Arran Quay. As we marched along the Liffy the sweet strains of music, which echoed along the river from the different bands as they marched to church, caused a most pleasant sensation, which raised our thoughts heavenward. It is deeply to be regretted bands do not now play on Sundays, owing to the Puritan objections. Strict military discipline, numerous general field-days and reviews, drilling at tent-pitching in the nineteen acres, regimental drills and parades, with five nights

in bed, kept our men pretty well employed. But the beautiful walks in Phoenix Park, and driving to the strawberry beds on side-cars, with our sweethearts on Sunday afternoons, together with theatres, concerts, museums, picture galleries, and the scenery of the city, compensated us well for all our strict discipline, and we were well pleased with Dublin as a military station.

Now came a sad and mournful event to the army. The Duke of Wellington – the Iron Duke, that noble and illustrious warrior and statesman, whose glorious and eventful life, history relates and old veterans remember – terminated this earthly career at the ripe age of 84 years. This event, which took place suddenly and unexpected, occurred on Tuesday, the 14th of September, 1852, after a few hours' illness, at Walmer Castle his official residence. The intelligence of this mournful event was received at the time with the deepest regret by the officers and men of our regiment, and universal gloom pervaded throughout the whole garrison. The hero of Salamanca, St. Sebastian, Quatre-Bras, Ligny, and Waterloo, had paid the last debt. November the 1st, a general order was issued directing one officer, one sergeant, and twelve rank and file from each regiment in garrison to proceed, on the 8th inst., to London, to take part in the funeral procession of the late Field Marshal, His Grace the Duke of Wellington. Lieutenant W. H. Earle, Sergeant Plant, and twelve rank and file (I being one of the latter), to parade on the Esplanade, with the detachment from the other regiments in garrison, when they were inspected by the General, and marched off, with a field officer in charge, going on board a steamer at the North Wall, at six o'clock p.m. We had on board about one hundred and fifty picked men from these corps, I being the smallest man of the party, and I was five feet eleven. The men vied with each other in a smart, soldier-like appearance. All being ready, the Captain cried out, "all on board," when the steamer moved out slowly from the quay, passed clear of the shipping and Pigeon House Fort on the right, where detachments of our men assembled, and gave us three cheers, waving their handkerchiefs, the steamer rushed onwards, city and shore fading away, and nothing but heavy clouds and water could be seen. The evening had an angry appearance; darkness closed around; the sailors thought it looked like a storm, but they were mistaken, although the vessel rolled and pitched more than we thought agreeable. After a good deal of rolling and pitching, with a frequent wave breaking over our bow, we steamed into Liverpool docks at six o'clock in the morning, landed, got breakfast, and marching to the railway station, took the train at 9 a.m. for London. The engine gave the warning whistle, and we moved out of the station, and were whirling onward towards London. The morning was bright, invigorating and beautiful, the swift-winged train going thundering along at the rate of forty miles an hour. After a ride of one hundred and eighty miles in nine hours, we were set down at Euston Station. While in London, we were quartered in Regent Park. On the morning of the 13th of November, nothing could be more imposing than the whole line of this melancholy procession; the day was fine, and the appearance of the troops splendid.

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