

REMINISCENCES
OF
Gibraltar, Egypt,
AND THE
Egyptian War, 1882.

(From the Ranks).

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Reminiscences

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CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL AT GIBRALTAR, AND CELEBRATION OF QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.



ON the 1st of January, 1881, I formed one of a draft of 140 men of the 32nd Regiment, or 1st Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, who mustered on the parade ground at Aldershot in readiness to proceed to Gibraltar to join the 2nd Battalion then stationed there. We had spent our last Christmas at home (for a long time to come) in a merry manner, with the Black Watch Royal Highlanders as our guests. Unfortunately for me that day, I was on guard duty, and so debarred from enjoying to the full the company of my countrymen. Though I had found my way into an English regiment, I was by birth an Aberdonian Scotchman. I will pass over the festivities between the two corps; in a word, suffice it to say that the carouse was long and deep, extending far into the night; in fact, the skirl of the bagpipes could be heard in the huts about 3 a.m. the following morning as some of

the benighted pipers woke up from their potions, and, finding themselves still in the 32nd camp, treated their English comrades to a few bars of Scotch music before they trooped off to their own quarters.

This morning, New-Year's Day, when Scotchmen make merry, our gallant friends of the Black Watch were to pay back the compliment. Such scenes of fraternity among regiments spread a wonderful bond of friendship, for, after a few years, it was my fortune to meet the same corps in Egypt, and what was begun in Aldershot was resumed there. On account of our departure, which would prevent us being present at the arranged feast, the Highlanders had set their minds on giving us something to keep out the cold. Long before the "reveille" sounded, several of them were stealthily stealing through our lines, whisky bottle in hand, and, on the sly, we had "our morning," the last glass on British soil for many a day. Though the morning was cold, and snow on the ground, a number of troops had turned out to see us off, the 32nd being a popular regiment in camp. Amid the cheers of our friends and the lively music of the band, we marched on our way to the railway station, and, before night, were safely on board Her Majesty's troop ship, "Himalaya," at Portsmouth, bound for the Rock of Gibraltar.

I will not dwell on the voyage, which, after the first pangs of sea-sickness were allayed, proved to be of a pleasant character, and the fifth day saw us safe and sound in the Bay of Gibraltar. Our vessel steamed alongside the New Mole Wharf, where we disembarked, and marched through an archway on to an open square, surrounded by massive pieces of ordnance, such as we had never seen before. The commanding officer of our new

regiment met us there, and conducted us through the street to our future quarters, known as the Wellington Front Barracks. After being portioned off to different companies, and had partaken of a few drinks at the canteen, we were quite at home with our henceforth comrades, and a jolly lot they were.

I was much struck with this mighty fortress, and, for the benefit of those who have never seen it, I will briefly describe the rougher outlines as it appeared to me at first sight. Beginning at the south end everlooking the entrance to the Mediterranean, the rock rises almost perpendicular from the blue waters to a great height; while on the top, and here and there on the way up, frowning down on the tumultuous sea, are several batteries of enormous cannon. Skimming the eye along the jagged top for about a mile, it reaches the signal station, from where all passing vessels are hailed, and also where the time-gun is fired, calling on the gate-keeper to open or shut the gates, which is done with as much care as a jeweller would shut his shop door. The back part of the rock, or rather the side next the Mediterranean, also rises nearly perpendicular, and is fortified by nature without the aid of the machines of man. On the west side, looking down on the spacious bay, where the fleets of all nations often repose, stands the thickly-populated town of Gibraltar—a mass of narrow winding streets, which, owing to the incline they are built on, are perforce connected by big flights of stone stairs. Between the town and the south end lie the gardens and promenades, the loveliness and beauty of which are undreamt of here. Geraniums grow in wild profusion, their bright blooms mixing with beautiful tropical plants giving a delightful and almost paradisal look to the scene. The north end, which

overlooks the plain connecting the rock with Spain, stands straight and smooth from the land till it reaches the height of 1350 feet. Away up in the face of the perpendicular mass of solid rock are hewn the famous galleries, whose dark mouths can be seen in regular rows; while hidden in those recesses, ready for action, are the iron monsters of war, by whose power Britain holds her sway over this coveted fortress. Away up on the topmost point is a battery of six or eight guns, known as the Sky Battery. There are three entrances to the rock, two by water and one by land, all formed by long and narrow archways, with a draw-bridge behind, and at sunrise and sundown every day, with exact regularity, a sergeant may be seen carrying a large bunch of keys, and guarded by a soldier on either side with fixed bayonets, passing from entrance to entrance, blocking, with the aid of machines, those passages, by raising the bridge outside against the mouth of the arch, leaving a broad ditch behind, thus cutting off all ingress or egress till morning light, when they again return to open them for the next day's business.

The streets are thickly set with wine shops, some of them small, dark hovels; others, more for the use of the numerous garrison, are large, and fitted up with captivating grandeur, and furnished internally with a stage, whereon, in the evening, artistes are engaged to amuse the audience by song and dance. Sometimes the amusement is enlivened by the introduction of some of the rougher style of theatrical p'ays. Those latter places are generally crowded with soldiers and sailors, mixed with a sprinkling of the better class of civilians, for the army and navy are there looked upon with respect.

The lower ten prefer the unsavoury odour of the darker dens.

Although freely patronising the over-abundant wine shops, the natives are by no means a drunken lot, as it is a rare sight to see a rock scorpion (a sobriquet bestowed on natives of the Rock) staggering hilariously through the streets with that idiotic and devil-may-care air peculiar to those who have allowed John Barleycorn to take possession of the upper storey.

With regard to the fair sex, I may say that I hardly ever saw any of them intoxicated during my stay of $1\frac{1}{2}$ years there, except when the British soldier or sailor got on the loose, and persuaded some of those dark-eyed beauties to share too deeply with them the contents of the flowing bowl. Lewd women there were in abundance, but they were relegated to a part of the town by themselves, and those encountering them had themselves to blame for being in that locality, as those ladies of pleasure (as they were styled) dare not leave their own street in pursuit of their calling.

The whole (or mostly so) of the inhabitants were of the Spanish type, speaking a sort of guttural Spanish, but, nevertheless, proficient in the English language. If one of them was engaged in conversation with you, and a civilian neighbour joined, they instantly changed into their own dialect—a rather tantalising process, as you found yourself quite at sea; you might actually be the subject of discourse for all you knew.

Here a soldier's life undergoes a complete change from the continual drill and barrack scrubbing indulged in, sometimes to an excessive extent, at home. There were numerous guards to mount every day; in fact, the outer lines of the rock bristled with sentries, their red coats and shining bayonets being encountered at every turn. A martial air pervades the whole place, cannons

here, there, and everywhere. Even the inhabitants are under the stern rule of martial law. Soldiers, on duty along with the civil police, patrol the streets after night-fall, and every person, both high and low, found moving about after 11 p.m. without a written permission from the town major are indiscriminately "run in" to the main guard, and from there (if civilians) passed on to the police office.

Besides the guard and picket duty, plenty of manual labour is always to be got. Every day large working parties from the different regiments are employed on some part of the ever-changing fortifications, sometimes renewing, sometimes demolishing; it matters not to the soldier as long as he receives his 3d. or 4d. per hour, which is the allotted pay over and above his regimental allowance. A drill now and again, with an occasional field-day at the "North Front" (the designation of the neck of land joining the rock to Spain), completes the ordinary routine of a soldier's work at Gib.

Our amusements consisted of what could be obtained in the recreation rooms, such as billiards, draughts, dominoes, reading, &c., or drinking and song-singing in the canteen; sometimes off to visit companions in other regiments, or meandering about the streets, and spending an hour or two in the drinking and amusement saloons. There was no such thing as proceeding Spain-wards for the private soldier, as only non-commissioned officers were granted that privilege, and them only by a pass from the town major. People unacquainted with the stern military discipline of Gibraltar might say, why not take a trip across the line without leave, for a broad road, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long, stretched right along the centre of the level plain which lay between us and sunny Spain; but this was

a difficult matter. On no other part of this land, except the road, was human being allowed to cross (barring the governor, then Lord Napier of Magdala). A line of British sentries were posted from sea to sea, with strict injunctions, as strictly carried out, to prevent any person from crossing or recrossing, except by the proper track, and it was forbidden to privates.

About 800 yards in front of our sentries was a similar line of Spanish soldiers following out the same instructions; therefore we were confined within the sea-and-gun-girt walls of Gibraltar. Nevertheless, we managed to make the rock a lively habitation, and taking all in all, before I left I had a decided liking for it and its people.

The first event of importance that took place during my sojourn was the celebration of the Queen's birthday.

By the 1st of May it was the talk of the town, the citizens looking forward to it with lively interest, much more so than do the citizens of Queen Victoria's own land. All seemed to be striving to make the town gay with decorations, for, in the principal thoroughfares, the work of beautifying began about a week before the auspicious occasion, which I will now briefly describe.

At 5 a.m., on the 24th May, 1881, the loud boom of the time-gun broke the stillness of a clear and unclouded morning, and, ere its echoes had died away among the neighbouring hills of Spain and Morocco, the royal standard could be seen fluttering in the gentle breeze from the flagstaff of the Sky Battery, the highest point of the gigantic Rock. Down below in the town all was soon bustle and stir, the citizens vying with each other in the amount of gay and many-coloured flags and bunting they could display. By 10 a.m. the principal streets were one grand mass of decorations. From roof to roof, and

from window to window, stretched lines and arches of gorgeous flowers, surmounted by richly embroidered flags and ribbons. Underneath thronged the inhabitants and visitors in holiday attire. Spanish and Italian beauties, with their graceful mantil'as over their shapely heads, men with broad-brimmed sombreros and swarthy faces, mingled in picturesque confusion with the bright scarlet coats of the line regiments and the blue uniform of the Royal Artillery. The garb of Old Gaul was not wanting, as a Highland regiment formed part of the garrison. Passing through this gay throng, one could hear the Spanish, Italian, and English languages, and occasionally the broad vernacular of the Scot, as the lads of the kilt and plaid mingled with the crowd. Altogether it was a bright and animated sight, and presented a great contrast to 10 a.m. in the Granite City, where, with the exception of a flag here and there, nothing could be seen to show a stranger that the celebration of the birthday of the greatest monarch on earth was in progress. But the saying is, a prophet has no honour in his own country, and truly this would go so far as to affect even Queen Victoria, judging from outward appearance. But the inhabitants of the two places are different, and the quiet joy of the Aberdonians may be equally as true and deep as that of their more effusive and passionate brethren on the rock.

At twelve noon the real rejoicing began, for as soon as the first stroke of twelve tolled from the town clock, a white puff of smoke could be seen far away up on the topmost point of the Rock, followed immediately after by the report of the first gun firing the royal salute. This was the signal for a general fusillade, battery after battery adding its tribute to royalty. The guards were turned out, and stood at the "present arms" until the guns had

ceased firing. In the spacious bay lay quietly at anchor during the forenoon the monsters of the Mediterranean fleet, accompanied by several foreign war and other vessels of different nationalities, all gaily decorated from stem to stern; and now, with yards manned by "gallant tars," those noble vessels were vieing with the batteries on shore in paying tribute to Britain and her Sovereign. Report after report rang from their solid decks, and as the white smoke curled and twined through the tall masts and spars and brilliant decorations on its upward way, it was indeed a noble sight for Britons to behold. Nor were the foreign ships behind: they were also sending forth their share of fire and smoke, and for a quarter of an hour the bay was one roar of artillery. In the barracks all were on the *qui vive*, and cheer after cheer came heartily from lusty throats, which had to be slacked immediately after in the canteen.

At 1.30 the Governor of the neighbouring province of Spain arrived to attend the review of the troops that was to be held later on. He was received at the Waterport Jetty by a guard of honour of the Highlanders, and drove to the Governor of Gibraltar's house, where he was again received by a guard of honour, this time of my own regiment, the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. As he drove up, the band played the general salute, and the guard presented arms. The white-haired general doffed his cap and bowed low until the last strains of the salute died away, and then he passed into the house to be the guest of the Governor of the Rock until the review hour.

About 4.30 p.m. each regiment mustered on its own parade ground, and, leaving only sufficient men to look after the barracks, commenced their march to the "North

Front." The way out of the Rock was by the principal street through a barrack square, then through an arch about 50 yards long, thence by a broad road with water on both sides for about 100 yards, and we arrive at the drill ground, which consists of the level piece of land that joins the rock to Spain. As regiment after regiment filed through the streets underneath the bright arches of flowers to the stirring strains of their bands, crowds of spectators gathered and followed, evidently bent on seeing the grand parade, but more especially the firing of the *feu de joie*. Arrived on the grounds, the troops were drawn up in two lines about fifty yards apart. I was on special duty near the saluting point, and had a splendid view of the whole scene. Directly in front of me were the solid lines of British troops with their faces to the Gibraltar Bay and their backs to the blue waves of the Mediterranean. On the right were the blue-coated artillery with their field guns, next to them came the serried ranks of the Highlanders, and away to the left were the scarlet coats and white facings of my own corps. The second line was entirely composed of English regiments. To the left of the whole line, and about 400 yards off, towering hundreds of feet above, was the rugged and almost perpendicular end of the Rock which guarded this the only entrance by land.

Punctually at the appointed time, the Governor of Gibraltar and his guest, escorted by a troop of Spanish cavalry, came dashing on the ground, and were received with a salute, after which the two generals rode along and inspected the ranks, and then came the signal for the *feu de joie*. The guns from the Sky Battery began, and they were followed by those in the galleries this time sending forth their voice in turn. The cannonade ran slowly

along the whole of the embrasures, some of them hidden by trees and foliage. Nothing could be seen but the smoke slowly curling over their tops.


Standing where we were, one could form an idea of the impregnability of this fortress when the very nature of the Rock lent her shape to engineer's skill. When the firing subsided on the Rock it was taken up by the artillery on the right, and from them the line picked it up, and, as the sharp rattle of the musketry ran along those thin red lines tipped with steel, the scene was so grand that the spectators could not suppress their excitement, and gave vent to a cheer. When the firing ceased, the Governor and his guest rode forward, and the former, taking off his plumed hat, called for three cheers for the Queen. Every soldier in the ranks took off his helmet, and, holding it aloft in his right hand, a deafening cheer was sent up from 5000 British throats. The spectators also joined, and the band played the National Anthem. The Spanish Governor sat on his horse with his head uncovered and bowed low, and there remained until the music ceased, and then he resumed his upright seat. A march past followed, and, as each company passed the saluting point, they were greeted with cheers by the assembled multitude, more notably when the Highlanders went sweeping past to the tune of the "Highland Laddie" on the bagpipes. We then marched back to the barracks, and each man was supplied with a pint of beer to drink Her Majesty's health. This was done, and in many cases several more "pinties" were sent after it, as a proof of extra loyalty. At any rate, the walls of the old canteen of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry resounded with mirth and song until the bugle sounded to "shut up." In the town the inhabitants paraded the streets in jovial crowds.

playing melodeons, their favourite outside instrument. Dances were arranged in close and green, and all made merry as becometh the great occasion. Such is a Queen's birthday in Gibraltar.



CHAPTER II.

AN ESCAPE IN SPAIN.

 SHORTLY after this I was promoted to the rank of corporal, and having had a longing eye on the neighbouring Spanish town for a considerable time, one Sunday morning in the month of July saw me on horseback, accompanied by a chum, careering along the broad road, bound for the cork woods of Spain. The horses we had were hired for the day at a cost of 2 dollars (8/-) each. Some might say we ought to have chosen a more lawful day for our excursion ; but Sunday was the day we could get best clear of work and duties, so it was generally set aside for rambling.

Early in the bracing morning air we passed both English and Spanish sentries (showing our passes to the former) through the town of Lena, thence along the sands of the bay for about a mile, and then bearing off to our right we made straight for the white walls of San Roque, a town of small dimensions, situated on a hill within sight of, and some eight miles from, the nearest part of British territory. Our journey on this our first trip proved a failure, for the horse I was riding got fairly lame, and we had to stable up for the day, and enjoy ourselves as we best could at San Roque. There is a sight to be seen at the entrance to this town (I am glad to say) totally unknown in our own land. For the last few hundred yards we had to pick our way through hundreds of invalid and

deformed beggars, who even crawled in front of our horses beseeching alms. If they got trod upon, we knew a great outcry would arise, bringing the gendarmes on the scene, and 10 to 1 we would be marched off to jail without ceremony. Stabling up our horses at a large and well-furnished hotel, we sauntered forth to look around us.

Owing to the hill on which this town was constructed, the streets had mostly all a sharp incline. They were paved with large round boulders, and with the grass growing up between them. A deserted look hung about it; no vehicles of any description did I see. The whole traffic seemed to be conducted through the medium of pack mules, of which there were abundance. The few inhabitants we saw were apparently familiar with red coats visiting, as they took little notice of us, further than an inquisitive glance in passing.

We wended our way to the barracks, and got into conversation with a soldier (more by signs than by words, for we could not understand each other), who invited us to have a look inside, which invitation we accepted. The soldiers were all seated on the floor round a big pot containing beans or something of that sort, each one taking a spoonful in turn. We were asked to join the circle, but declined by a shake of the head (which seemed to mean "no" over all the earth.) The sight of this meagre dinner, and the barely-furnished and miserable room, gave us cause to be thankful that we were British soldiers instead of Spanish. This scene presented a great contrast compared with our neatly-arranged abodes—the soldiers seated at a long table, all trim and neat, with a pound of roast beef and potatoes before them. Leaving the barracks, we sauntered aimlessly through the streets, and, beginning to

feel the pangs of hunger, we resolved to ask the first persons we met for some place wherein we could get a good repast.

Two lovely black-eyed damsels were coming in our direction, and we made ready to try our best Spanish on them, which consisted of a few common words we had heard on the Rock till they were familiar. The maidens seemed greatly to enjoy our attempts to imitate their language, to judge from their merry laughter, when, by signs and grunts, I made them understand that the inner man required attention. They promptly picked up our wants, and, giving us the signal to accompany them, we soon entered a neat little house, not very far from the inn where our steeds were stabled. It proved to be their parents' abode, who made us heartily welcome, and, could we have understood each other's dialects, a more jolly afternoon might have been spent. As it was, a huge decanter of wine (the favourite Spanish beverage) was produced, a big omelet at once made, and we and our fair companions were in a short time seated, in high spirits, at a good meal. By and by a lady friend arrived who could both speak and understand English, and she took up the role of interpreter. When we left to hurry back to the Rock before gun-fire, we had promised to return that day four weeks to spend another happy afternoon with our new and charming friends.

True to our promise, the fourth Sunday found us again on horseback galloping gaily across the border. This time we had two sound and fleet steeds, for we had given the hirer a good blowing up for supplying us with such poor animals on the last occasion. Past San Roque we went, and ran right into the cork woods, about six miles further off. Soon after entering those woods we came to a

number of paths branching off in different directions. Not knowing which one to follow, we threw the reins over our horses' necks, and allowed them to choose for themselves. They took the wrong one, and instead of arriving at the place we wanted, viz., a rest known as "The Long Stables," we found ourselves standing in the yard of a convent. Seeing some of the nuns looking out at the windows, we signed to them that we wanted food for both horse and man, but they hid themselves away. Driving our horses into a house bearing a slight resemblance to a stable, we gave them some grass which was lying there. For about half-an-hour we hung about this convent, in hopes that some one would come and get payment for our stabling, but no; so we mounted and rode back to where the paths diverged, and, following another for about a mile, we reached the Long Stables.

Here we got a good breakfast, our horses fed, and after an hour's ramble in the woods, we again mounted and retraced our steps to San Roque to see our sweethearts, who were, to all appearance, overjoyed to again meet us. The fairest of the two had been taken possession of by my chum, and she seemed to be deeply in love with him, as I heard the same interpreter we had on the last visit tell him point blank that the girl wanted to marry him. He, not thinking on the consequences, no doubt taking the whole affair as a joke, readily complied, and, in a bantering tone, said he would be ready when he came back. There was no formalities gone through, not even a name asked, and on the way home he was laughing about the idea of marrying a girl who could not understand a word he said, nor she him. Both of us had taken it as a joke, but we were soon to get our eyes opened.

Five weeks after was the appointed day of our next meeting, and, after a run to the Long Stables, and a few hours' enjoyment in the green woods, we posted back to pay our promised visit to our lady loves at San Roque. But something was in the air. As we entered, we were both greeted with an even greater show of affection than on the previous occasion, especially my companion. A number of young men and maidens were gathered together, among them a young fellow who could speak and understand English fairly well. He was not long in telling us that a priest was coming to arrange the preliminaries for my companion's marriage. This was a dilemma; how were we to get out of it? Nothing was further from my chum's thoughts than marrying this Spanish beauty, and, with the perspiration standing in beads on his forehead, he whispered to me, "What shall we do?" I whispered back, "Pocket our courage and run for it. You go and saddle the horses and be ready; I will stop to allay suspicion." At this moment the door opened, and a priest entered, and, in the confusion of hand-shaking and greeting, my chum slipped out. He was not more than five minutes gone ere his lovely bride missed him. I had to explain that he was away to see after the feeding of the horses, but as he was staying too long I would go and bring him back. Whether it was by the guilty look on my face as I went out, I know not, but I had not gone far when, on looking round, I saw four of the young men following after me. There was nothing for it now but a bold dash, and away I ran. The horses were standing saddled and bridled, and my companion mounted. I sprang into the saddle, and off without even getting time to fix my feet in the stirrups, for an angry crowd was close at my heels, attracted by the chase.

We rode at a mad gallop for about two miles, and then, seeing we were not pursued, broke into a slower pace.

My friend was thankful for his deliverance ; but, for three weeks or so, he said he was the owner of an uneasy mind, in case his would-be bride found him out in the regiment. However, we heard no more of it, and you may be sure we kept the occurrence solely to ourselves. Had it broken out among our comrades, we would have lived in torment for long. As it was, we never trusted ourselves on Spanish soil again.



CHAPTER III.

SCENES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ROCK.



DO not intend to weary the reader with any of the details of the ordinary every-day life of a soldier in Gibraltar, as they would prove uninteresting and weary. Therefore I will only record briefly a few recollections which may prove acceptable, and then pass on to sterner scenes.

A few months after our escapade in Spain, a new bishop was appointed to minister to the spiritual affairs of the Rock residents.

The British Government seemed to have chosen one against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants, for as soon as the name was published in the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, the daily official paper, a great outcry arose, and for weeks the natives could not conceal their bitter feelings. When they met in the streets and drinking saloons, their sole topic of conversation turned on the appointment of the new bishop; and openly they threatened that they would resist the ordination to the last. It looked as if that day was to be a day of bloodshed, for many of the inhabitants went the length of saying that revolvers were provided, and they would try our mettle before we forced a man on them against their wishes. Whether it was that the governor, Lord Napier, heard of these threats, and thinking it would be a bad precedent for Gibraltar to allow its inhabitants to think

for one moment that they could cope with the garrison, I know not; but the order went forth that, on a certain day, at a certain hour, the ordination was to take place in a chapel situated in the very centre of the town.

On the morning of the appointed day the whole population were early astir. The male portion seemed disinclined to go to work, and stood in groups at the street corners with sour and down-cast faces, waiting the turn of events. Not till twelve noon did the troops receive any orders, and then they came—short, sharp, and decisive. “Fall in; on your barrack squares; serve out ten rounds of ammunition per man, and wait for further instructions.” While this order was being carried out the gates of the Rock were shut, and all communication from the outer world cut off. The inhabitants were alone with the garrison.

A few companies of different regiments were marched to commanding places in the streets, and a battalion took up a position in front of the chapel, on a large square near the main guard and police office. About one p.m. Lord Napier arrived, accompanied by several officers and gentlemen, among them the obnoxious bishop. Proceeding towards the door of the chapel they found it secured, and the noise issuing from the interior indicated that it had been taken possession of by some of the bolder inhabitants. The Governor conversed a few minutes with his staff, and then a body of military police was called forward, who, with massive wooden beams, soon shattered the door. A low murmur of discontent ran through a large crowd gathered near by, which was instantly suppressed by the stern order to disperse as a body of troops advanced and drove them off. On entering the chapel, the tongue of the large bell was hurled

at the military police, and, as it rang on the door step, without hitting anyone, Lord Napier called out, "halt!" The police stopped in the doorway, and now it could be seen that the Governor's blood was up. He promptly gave the order for two lines of troops to be formed up, facing each other with fixed bayonets, about six paces apart, and extending from the chapel door to the door of the police station, a distance of about 150 yards. When this was completed, the sharp command, "charge bayonets!" was heard, and as the bayonet points came down, a blank space of about three yards was only left between the rows of glistening steel. The next command was to the military police to clear the chapel of its invaders, and in they rushed with a will, and as the besieged were driven out one after another, they staggered back aghast at the sight of the bristling lane of steel, and the dark open door at the opposite end. There was no loop-hole of escape. Down that lane every one of them passed, and found themselves under lock and key. The bishop was then installed without more trouble. The stern measures taken with the ringleaders effectually cooled the ardour of the onlookers. The following day some 30 of the leading citizens were picked out of the 80 or 90 who were locked up, and sent to prison for periods ranging from thirty days to six months. They were escorted through the streets to prison by a company of troops with fixed bayonets, but no attempt at rescue was made. From subsequent events it seemed that Lord Napier simply wanted to demonstrate clearly that the orders of Britain were supreme, for the whole of the offending citizens were released in about a fortnight, and the bishop removed to some other place. With this lesson taken to heart, things soon assumed their old friendly shape.

About the time of the above occurrence, I was selected for one of the numerous posts of Government employment largely filled by soldiers, and known as "staff jobs." My work consisted of looking after the landing of boats, taking note of cargoes, and, generally speaking, keeping everything in proper order on a wharf immediately outside the landward gate of the Rock.

My only connection with the regiment while so employed was that I wore uniform, and slept in the barracks. I left every morning at gun-fire, and did not return till the shutting of the gates at night. I took my rations with me, and, having a wooden hut to stay in, rigged up with a stove inside, I managed to cook my own food.

Now, our then colonel, under whatever circumstances, always liked to see his men trig and clean, and often sauntered round to those on employment, away from the regiment to have a look at their appearance. Well, one morning, about two months after I had commenced my duties on the wharf, I (feeling rather hungrier than usual, and also having a comrade with me whom I had invited to breakfast) walked into a blacksmith's shop near by, where I was well acquainted, on purpose to do my cooking—by this means saving me the trouble of lighting my own fire, as I happened to be in a lazy mood.

The grimy atmosphere of the smithy made it undesirable for me to don my best coat, so I substituted for it a dirty old threadbare tunic. I had invested in two red herrings and four eggs, and, when my cooking was over, I emerged from the shop carrying a black canteen full of coffee in one hand, while in the other I bore a plate whereon lay my herrings and eggs. I would have been almost glad had the earth opened and swallowed me up, for I no sooner breathed the open air than I was face

to face with our stern old colonel mounted on horseback, and accompanied by one of his daughters. My hands being full, I could not receive him with the usual military salute, and I knew I was in for it. I expected, at least, to get a severe rebuke for this unsoldier-like appearance in public, when, judge of my surprise, he saluted me with "Corporal, how are matters getting on with you?" I replied, "Very well, sir," and was moving backwards in hopes that he would pass on, which he did; but he called on me to follow him as he wanted to speak to me, and he had no time to stop his horse. Reluctantly I obeyed, and along the road we went—he sitting on his horse with a broad smile on his face, I following up alongside with my plate of herrings and eggs in one hand, and the black canteen in the other. The eggs rolled on the plate, and it was with difficulty that I got them to stay there. The road was crowded with passers-by, whose smothered and sometimes open laughter jarred on my ears. For fully 200 yards through those crowds of natives and soldiers I tramped, and then, taking compassion on me, with a merry twinkle in his eye, the colonel bade me go back, and hoped he had read me a lesson never to appear outside in such an unbecoming manner again. My blood was boiling with inward indignation at the spectacle I must have presented to the onlookers, and, dashing the plate to the earth, I literally pounded the herrings and eggs into pulp on the hard road, and went back to my own hut to partake of a more frugal breakfast—a sadder but a wiser man.

Misfortunes, people say, do not come singly, and so it proved with me.

In little more than a week I was fished out of the deep waters of the bay, and worse still, for about a fort-

night after, I had to nurse two sprained wrists. The accident happened in this manner: My duties rendered it necessary for me sometimes to sail in a small skiff about the jetty to regulate the anchoring of the fishing crafts. One forenoon, after this task was completed, I being in a working humour, pulled away across the bay to view a foreign man-of-war lying a short distance off.

There are numerous old hulks in the bay used as coal stores, there being no room on shore for such storage.

As my tiny craft emerged from behind the black timbers of one of those, I heard a cry of many voices, and on looking in that direction, a pleasure boat with sails set was within 12 yards of me, splashing through the water at a fast rate. We were too near each other for any of us to avoid a collision. I had just time to jump to my feet, and, without thinking on what I was doing, held out both my hands as if to stop the on-coming boat. Against my hands she dashed with tremendous force, pitching me clean overboard, and, as I sank, I heard the noise of her keel swishing through the water above my head. I could swim very little, and on coming, breathless and dazed, to the surface, I had just sufficient presence of mind to try and keep afloat. The boat that did the deed turned, and in a few minutes I was taken safely on board. They offered to convey me on shore, but I preferred to go into my own skiff, which was floating close by, untouched by the collision. With many apologies, mostly in Spanish, they acceded to my request, and picking up my oars and handing them to me, they waved their adieus. It was now that I felt the result of the blow I had received. My arms would not work the oars, and before I landed I was sick with pain. Next day I had both hands tied to my head in a large arm-

sling. The superintendent of the wharf sent his son, a boy of 14, to do my writing work, and between us we managed to keep things going till I was cured; but the recollection of that fearful crash on my arms remains vivid in my memory, and also the madness of the unaccountable thought that prompted me to imagine that the puny strength of a human arm could have stopped the onward course of that heavy boat, driven by its broad sheets of canvas spread to a rattling breeze.

Seeing that I have taken the readers with me on my dip into the waters of the bay, before leaving let me also take them for a dip into the interior of the rock.

High up, near the top, is situated the Cave of Saint Michael, and one day, along with a few companions, I set off to visit it. We climbed up the steep, winding, and rugged path for about an hour ere we arrived at the dark-looking entrance of the cavern. We found a soldier belonging to a Highland regiment stationed there, one of whose duties it was to show visitors the wonders of the place. When so employed, he was in the best of humour, the loneliness of his post making him gladly welcome whoever came to see him. He could speak for hours about the mysteries of this cave and the grand men whom he had guided through it. I remember that he was very much disappointed that he had no torches at the time, so that, with the reflection of their flaming light, we might see it in all its glory and splendour. He also turned out to be a "townee" of mine (a slang name used when parties come from the same town or countryside). "Townees," when they meet in foreign lands, generally fraternise with each other, and get friendly as they talk of youthful romps in their native place, and so did we.

Entering a large dark hole, we found ourselves in a

wide roomy chamber. Masses of congealed stone hung from the roof, resembling huge icicles in shape and confusion of form, but the colour was light brown and grey, with a silvery sparkle intermixed. The walls were also clothed in the same ornamental manner. Even with the feeble blink of lighted candles which we carried the place had a beautiful look, and we could imagine the effect under the bright glare of torches. Passing on, we went through a narrow passage, and emerged into a smaller chamber than the first, but more magnificent. Stalactites hung, not only from the roof in all conceivable shapes, but several of them had, in the length of ages, extended till they reached the floor, forming pillars moulded by nature into the most lovely curves and pinnacles, their very irregularity adding to the beauty of the place, which brought to my mind the enchanted caves of Arabian Nights fame. Down we went until we reached a small hole, into which our soldier guide went, and I followed—the remainder of the party staying behind. Owing to the smallness of this hole, it was with difficulty that I got through. My companion, though a bigger man than me, was a long way ahead, and evidently getting on with little trouble. I suppose he had scrambled through so often that the passage was used to his burly frame, or else his frame was used to the passage. I was thankful when I stood beside him at the other end of this crevice in a roomier space. For about 30 yards we trod carefully on through passages, sometimes narrow, sometimes high and broad—roofs and walls covered with the fantastically natural sculptured stone—until we arrived at the limit of penetration. Close in front of us was a yawning precipice—its depths hidden in unutterable darkness.

By this time I should think we were at least 80 yards

into the very heart of the rock, and further we dare not go. My companion told me that once on a time long ago an attempt had been made to fathom the depth of the black gulf that now barred our further progress, but those who went down never came back. As to the truth of this I cannot say.

There is another legend connected with this place, but, speaking for myself, I do not believe it. However, I will give it the reader, as I heard it on several occasions at Gib. It runs so : A number of monkeys have their abode away up in the face of the rock, near the cave. They are well cared for and fed by the so'dier who guided us. Rumour has it that on several occasions these well-fed animals have disappeared, and the same ones have been captured across the Straits in Africa. Now, the mystery is, how did they get there, by a subterranean passage, the beginning of which is St. Michael's Cave. So say some of the wou'd-be wise men of the Rock ; but, if such is the case, it has baffled man as yet to find it, and will do so, I am afraid, to the end of time.

To retrace our steps was the next thought, as the want of air made breathing difficult. For the same cause our candles almost refused to burn. On reaching the large chamber near the mouth of the cave, our guide drew our attention to the ends of the stone icicles, where we saw numerous (what seemed to be) soft, woolly balls stuck thereon. It proved to be bats, hanging in hundreds. I reached up and plucked off about 20, putting them into my helmet, and out we went. Very soon they began to be lively in their prison, screeching and wall'oping about on my head, so that I had to give up the idea of taking them to barracks as I intended. It would never do to go through the streets with such a disturbance

going on about my cranium. I therefore lifted my helmet, and away they whirled, some going tilt against the hard rock in their hurry, others skimming away through the air, were soon lost to sight. We wended our way back to the barracks, highly pleased with our afternoon's exploration.



CHAPTER IV.

OFF TO THE WAR : ARRIVAL AT ALEXANDRIA.

TIME rolled quietly and smoothly on till the month of June, 1882, when the daily papers conveyed to us rumours of an expected outbreak of war in Egypt. All was excitement, for we knew that we would be about the first to proceed there, being fully up to war strength and seasoned to heat—the regiment having been previously stationed at Bermuda.

Day after day the papers were eagerly scanned, and on the 12th July came the news of the bombardment of Alexandria, which took place on the preceding day. Almost simultaneously came the order for us to embark on Her Majesty's troopship "Malabar" for Egypt. Little time was lost, and, two days after the order was received, we were standing in the barrack square ready to march. Crowds of people gathered to see us off, and there was weeping and wailing among the married women, some of whom had almost to be torn from their husband's embrace. As if to further outrage their feelings, the command, "quick march!" was quickly followed by the band playing the "Girl I Left Behind." Very soon we were comfortably berthed on board the good old trooper, and, amid ringing cheers from the multitude gathered on the quay, we steamed away from Gibraltar.

Passing through the gut, we were met by H.M. ship "Baccahante," on board of which the young Princes then

were, and the sailors, instinctively knowing, by the state of affairs in Egypt, that we were bound for the war, manned the yards and cheered as we passed. We returned the cheer with equal heartiness, for we were all on the *qui vive* with excitement.

There was only the one regiment on board, and we had plenty of room to reel about. The captain relaxed the usual rigorous discipline observed on a troop-ship, I suppose on account of us being bound for active service; in fact, he said to some fellows who were rather boisterous that he would not be bothered with them again; their days were numbered—anything but a cheering assurance. Favoured with splendid weather, full steam ahead, and sails bellowed out by a light breeze, our gallant ship bore us as rapidly on, and on the fifth day we arrived at Malta. Something must be wrong, for here we were ordered to disembark, and disembark we did that very night, and took up our quarters in barracks. We lay down for the night on the floor of the empty rooms, thoroughly out of spirits.

Early in the morning the work of furnishing began: bed-ticks, barrack furniture, and all the necessary utensils were drawn from the quartermaster's stores. We were all busily employed getting things into ship-shape order when, about 10 A.M., the bugles sounded for colour-sergeants. Instantly work was stopped. Somehow or other we instinctively knew that it was needless to proceed, and all eyes were directed at the returning colour-sergeants, and a hearty hurrah rang out as they gave the order, carry back the barracks' furniture, "boys," and fall-in in two hours for Egypt. The quartermaster had to take in his stores faster than he gave them out, and by the appointed time we were again on board the "Malabar."