

one did not read the dictionar like him;” or “dinna be gi’en us ony o’ your grammar words na.” If a man, when accused by superiors of something of which he was not guilty, ventured to speak in his own defence, he was called a *lawyer*, and desired to give no repiy. If he said that he thought it was hard that he should be condemned without a hearing, the answer was, “D——n you, sir, *you have no right to think*: there are people paid for thinking for you—do what you are ordered, sir, right or wrong.”

If he did not join with his neighbours in their ribald obscenity and nonsense, he was a methodist—if he did not curse and swear, he was a quaker—and if he did not drink the most of his pay, he was called a miser, a d——d mean scrub, and the generality of his comrades would join in execrating him.

In such society it was a hard matter for a man of any superior information or intellect to keep his ground; for he had no one to converse with on those subjects which were most congenial to his mind, and to try to inform his comrades was a

vain, and, by them considered, a presumptuous attempt. Thus, many men of ability and information were, I may say, forced from the intellectual height which they had attained, down to the level of those with whom they were obliged to associate; and every thing conspired to sink them to that point where they became best fitted for *tractable beasts of burthen*.

Blackguardism bore the sway, and gave the tone to the whole. Even the youngest were led into scenes of low debauchery and drunkenness, by men advanced in years. All therefore, with few exceptions, were drawn into this overwhelming vortex of abject slavishness and dissipation. Many of the officers, who at least *ought* to have been men of superior talents and education, seemed to be little better, if we were allowed to judge from the abominable oaths and scurrility which they used to those under their command, and the vexatious and overbearing tyranny of their conduct, which was eagerly imitated by those beneath them, even to the lance corporal with his *single chevron*. All this considered (and

I have not exaggerated)—it must be certainly concluded that, if there is one method better than another, to make a man an abject slave to the will of his superiors, without a conscience or a judgement of his own, one calculated to smother every generous and noble feeling, to destroy his morals and his constitution, there could not have been a better school chosen than the army, in the state it was in at that time.

It redounds much to the honour of those who superintend the discipline of the army at present, that the situation of the soldier has been much ameliorated since that period; but still I am afraid (in spite of all that has been proved to the contrary) that many consider the soldier's ignorance the best guarantee for his subordination.

Let it not be thought, however, that there were not many exceptions to this general character which I have drawn (some of whom I will have occasion to mention in this narrative), who have shed a lustre around the military character that has often served to conceal some of the darker parts of it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MARCH TO ABERDEEN—INFATUATED DRINKERS—  
THEIR ASSOCIATES—THEIR CONDUCT TRACED  
TO ITS CAUSE—OBSERVATIONS—REMEDY—VOY-  
AGE—JERSEY—JUBILEE—DENNIS AND A  
FRENCH PUBLICAN—GUARD HOUSE—OF-  
FICERS.

ABOUT the beginning of May, we got the route for Aberdeen. On the march, I have nothing interesting to take notice of, unless the kindness which we experienced from the people, where we were billeted on the road, particularly after we crossed the Frith of Forth.

We arrived in Aberdeen, after a march of ten days, where we had better barracks and cheaper provisions than in Dunbar; but, the barracks being too small, a number of our men were billeted in the town, and not being in the mess, when pay-day came, it was a common thing for many of them to spend what they had to support

them in drink; and some of them were so infatuated as to sell even their allowance of bread, for the same purpose. They were then obliged (to use their own phraseology) to "Box Harry," or "Live on the smell of their oil rag" until the next pay-day; and some of them carried this system to such a length that it was found necessary to bring them into barracks, to prevent them from starving themselves.

Indeed, to speak from any experience that I have had, the men's morals are no way improved by being lodged out of barracks; for while here, the principal employment of many of them when off duty was drinking, and associating with common women; and I think, if any thing tends to depreciate the character of the soldier in the eyes of his countrymen in civil life more than another, it is this habit of associating publicly with such characters. This total disregard of even the appearance of decency conveys an idea to the mind that he must be the *lowest of the low*. But many of them seem to be proud of such company; and

it is quite a common thing to meet them on the streets arm in arm, or the soldier's arm about the neck of his *dearie*.

This debasement of feeling and character, I imagine arises from two causes. First, the system of discipline pursued by many commanding officers, which teaches the soldier to believe that he is a mere piece of machinery in the hands of his superiors, to be moved only as they please, without any accordance of his own reason or judgement, and that he has no merit in his own actions, independent of this moving power. Such a belief naturally has the effect of making a man so little in his own eyes that he feels he cannot sink lower, let him keep what company he may: The Second, from that immorality which seems so fashionable in the army, both amongst officers and men.

I hate all canting; but is it not evident to every one who knows any thing of the army, that in this I state only the truth? Does it not even seem contagious; for, in general the moment a recruit is inlisted, and gets a forage cap on his head and a stick in his hand, he considers himself

licenced to drink, curse and swear, and associate with women of the town, whatever may have been his previous character? There is no necessity for this. If the character of the army has fallen, the fault is not in the profession itself; but in the conduct of the individuals composing it.

But let soldiers be taught that they have a character to uphold; give them to understand that they are made of the same materials as those who command them; capable of feeling sentiments of generosity and honour—let officers evince by their conduct that they believe that the men they command have feelings as well as themselves (although it would be a hard task to make some of them think so); let them be encouraged to improve their minds—and there will soon be a change for the better in the army—one honourable to all concerned.

The doctrine which teaches that men are most easily governed when ignorant is, I believe, now nearly exploded; and I can say from my own experience, and also safely appeal to all unprejudiced individ-

uals of the army, whether they have not found those men who have had their minds improved, the best soldiers: and this will hold good even when they are in a state of intoxication; for, while the one is like a wild beast let loose, the other still retains a portion of that decorum which always characterizes a sober man.

I hope I will be pardoned for this digression, as the observations here offered are the fruit of fifteen years experience of the service, and as such, I think, are worthy attention. To return to my narrative.

We had been about three months in Aberdeen, when we received orders to hold ourselves in readiness to sail for Jersey; and, four transports having arrived for us, we prepared to embark.

This was a busy scene. We had been on good terms with the towns-people, and many of them attended us to the pier. As we marched down, the old women stood in rows exclaiming—"Peer things, they are gan awa to the slaughter." While the boys were ranked up, marching before our band, with as much import-



ance as if they considered themselves heroes; and no doubt, the fine music, and the sight of the soldiers marching to it, gave them high ideas of a military life; and perhaps was the incipient cause of their inlisting at a future period. Indeed I must confess that when I heard the crowd cheering, and our music playing before us, I felt at least a foot higher, and strutted with as much dignity as if I had been a general. I almost felt proud at that moment that I was a soldier.

Once we had embarked, however, and fairly out to sea, my ideas were soon low enough. Stowed like any other part of a cargo, with only eighteen inches allowed for each man to lie on, we had scarcely room to move. The most of the men became sea-sick, and it was almost impossible to be below without becoming so. The women particularly suffered much: they were crammed in, indiscriminately amongst the men, and no arrangement made for their comfort.

No incident of any consequence took place on this voyage, with the exception of a severe gale of wind, which forced us

to run into Dungeness. It soon abated however, and we proceeded on our voyage. We made the island of Jersey, and disembarked at St. Oban's harbour: from that we marched through St. Helier's, to the Russian barracks near Groville.

All kinds of liquor, tea, sugar and fruit were here uncommonly cheap; but bread was dear, and what we had served out as rations was quite black and soft, something in consistence like a lump of clay. Brandy was only a shilling a bottle; wine two shillings; cyder three halfpence a quart; and tobacco fifteenpence a pound.

The jovial drinking fellows amongst us thought this another paradise—a heaven on earth—and many of them laid the foundation of complaints here which they never got rid of.

It was during the time we were here that the jubilee (on his late Majesty's entering the 50th year of his reign) was celebrated. We were marched to the sands between St. Helier's and St. Oban's, where the whole of the military on the island were assembled. We were served out with eighteen rounds of blank cart-

ridge per man, and the *feu-de-joie* was fired from right to left, and again taken up by the right, thus keeping up a constant fire until it was all expended. The artillery, with the various batteries, and shipping in the harbour, joined in the firing; and altogether formed an imposing scene.

As we returned home, Dennis took the opportunity of asking me what I thought of the *fete*, which we had been assisting at. "I don't know," said I, "I think it was very grand." "Faith and conscience, that's what it was; but what use was in it, unless frightening the sea maws? I wish that I had all the money that was spint in gun pouter this blessed day of our Lord." "Why, Dennis," said I, "what would you do with it?"—"Troth, and it's myself that knows: there's many a poor naked chil running about the cabin doors in Ireland. Aye, in troth, and many fathers and mothers too, as well as childer, that have sorrow much to put on, or eat either. Och, it's I that would make a jubilee of it for the cratur—*one that wouldn't blow away in smoke.*"

When we arrived at our barracks, we got a day's pay in advance, and with great injunctions not to get drunk and riotous—we were allowed to go and make ourselves merry until tattoo-beating. Dennis and I resolved to hold the occasion like the others, although he said he did not admire this way of “treating us to our own.” He thought the King that threw away so much money in gun-powder, might at least have given us an extra day's pay.

We went to one of the usual drinking houses; but it was full, up to the door, volumes of tobacco smoke issued from every opening; and the noise of cursing, swearing and singing was completely deafening.

We were obliged to go farther off to get a house to sit down in. At last we found a place of that description, and went in. After a glass or two, we became quite jovial; and Dennis insisted that our host and his wife should sit down along with us—he was a Frenchman, and spoke little English; but Dennis did not mind that, and there soon commenced a most barbarous jargon—Dennis laying off a

long story, of which, I am sure, the poor man did not understand a syllable. Yet he went on, still saying, at the end of every sentence, "You take me now?"—"You persave now, don't you?" While our host, whose patience seemed pretty well taxed, would shrug up his shoulders with a smile, and looking at his wife, who seemed to understand what was said nearly as well as himself, he would give a nod and say, "Oui, monsieur—yees, zare—yees, zare."

Dennis got tired of this, and asked the landlord if he could sing.—This completely puzzled the Frenchman. At last, after every method had been tried in vain to make him comprehend, Dennis said, "You do this," and, opening his mouth, he howled out a line of an Irish drinking song. The Frenchman, seemingly frightened with the noise that Dennis had made, started to his feet and exclaimed, "me no chanter, me no zing." "Och, the devil's in ye, for a liar." "Parly-vu." "But, sorrow matter, I'll give you a song—a true Irish song, my jewel," and he commenced with the "sprig of shillelah and

shamrock so green," He had got as far as "an Irishman all in his glory was there," quivering and spinning out the last line of the verse to a prodigious length, when a rap came to the door, and the voice of the sergeant of the picquet, asking if there were any soldiers in the house, put an unpleasant end to his melody. Previous to this, however, Dennis had taken up a spade handle, to personify the shillelah, and it was with difficulty that I prevented him from bringing it down on the sergeant's head.

We were then escorted to the guard-house, for being out after tattoo, which we found so full that we could scarcely get admittance. Dennis cried, and sung, and cursed, and swore, by turns, until he fell fast asleep. I was so stupified by the drink I had taken, that I scarcely knew how I felt. Next morning, however, we were released along with all the others who had been confined the preceding evening.

About this time two of our officers left us in consequence, I believe, of fighting a duel. The one was a very good officer;

but the other was a most egregious puppy, who had scarcely a good quality to recommend him. When he was not drinking, or laying plans to debauch the men's wives, he used to go cracking a long whip about the barrack square. He had a tolerable person; but his head had evidently been designed for a clown; his face expressed nothing but vulgar black-guardism, *and it told no lies*. He had the true Irish definition of an open countenance. I believe there were few very sorry at his leaving the regiment.

I am not sure whether it was in place of him that we got an ensign (by purchase\*); but such an ensign!—He had not brain enough to bait a mouse trap, so clownish, so awkward, and so stupid; and so he remained, and got promoted in his turn; but I must do him the justice to say that he was (what some others equally stupid were not) *harmless*.

\* A method by which many a numskull acquires a rank in the service, and of course a right to tyrannize over men far superior to himself,—when, if he was left to his own merit, he would never rise even to the humble station of corporal of the pioneers.

## CHAPTER IX.

PREPARE TO EMBARK FOR PORTUGAL—THE WOMEN DRAW LOTS—SANDY AND HIS WIFE—MARCH TO ST. OBAN'S AND EMBARK—PARTING OF THE MEN WITH THEIR WIVES—A DISTRESSING SCENE—VOYAGE—MAKE THE TAGUS—PORTUGUESE PILOT—DISEMBARK—LISBON.

WE had been about three months in Jersey, when the order came for our embarkation for Portugal; but only six women to every hundred men were allowed to accompany us. As there were, however, a great many more than that number, 'it was ordered that they should draw lots, to see who should remain. The women of the company to which I belonged were assembled in the pay-sergeant's room for that purpose. The men of the company had gathered round them, to see the result, with various degrees of interest depicted in their countenances. The proportion-



ate number of tickets were made with "to go" or "not to go" written on them. They were then placed in a hat, and the women were called by their seniority to draw their tickets. I looked round me before they began. It was an interesting scene.—The sergeant stood in the middle with the hat in his hand, the women around him, with their hearts palpitating, and anxiety and suspense in every countenance. Here and there you would see the head of a married man pushed forward, from amongst the crowd, in the attitude of intense anxiety and attention.

The first woman called, was the sergeant's wife—she drew "not to go." It seemed to give little concern to any one, but herself and her husband. She was not very well liked in the company. The next was, a corporal's wife—she drew "to go." This was received by all with nearly as much apathy as the first. She was little beloved either.

The next was an old hand, a most outrageous virago, who thought nothing of giving her husband a knock down when he offended her, and who used to make great disturbance about the fire in the

cooking way. Every one uttered their wishes audibly that she would lose; and her husband, if we could judge from his countenance, seemed to wish so to. She boldly plunged her hand into the hat, and drew out a ticket: on opening it, she held it up triumphantly, and displayed "To go." "D—n you," said she, "old Meg will go yet, and live to scald more of you about the fireside," A general murmur of disappointment ran through the whole. "D—n the old b—h," said some of them, "she has the devil's luck and her own."

The next in turn was the wife of a young man, who was much respected in the company for his steadiness and good behaviour. She was remarkable for her affection for her husband, and beloved by the whole company for her modest and obliging disposition. She advanced, with a palpitating heart and trembling hand, to decide on (what was to her, I believe) her future happiness or misery. Every one prayed for her success. Trembling between fear and hope she drew out one of the tickets, and attempted to open it; but her hand shook so that she could not

do it. She handed it to one of the men to open.—When he opened it, his countenance fell, and he hesitated to say what it was. She cried out to him, in a tone of agony, “Tell me, for God’s sake, what it is.” “Not to go,” said he, in a compassionate tone of voice.—“Oh, God, help me! oh, Sandy!” she exclaimed, and sunk lifeless in the arms of her husband, who had sprung forward to her assistance, and in whose face was now depicted every variety of wretchedness. The drawing was interrupted, and she was carried by her husband to his birth, where he hung over her in frantic agony. By the assistance of those around her, she was soon recovered from her swoon; but she awoke only to a sense of her misery. The first thing she did was to look round for her husband, when she perceived him she seized his hand, and held it, as if she was afraid that he was going to leave her. “Oh, Sandy, you’ll no leave me and your poor babie, will you?” The poor fellow looked in her face with a look of agony and despair.

The scene drew tears from every eye



in the room, with the exception of the termagant whom I have already mentioned, who said, "What are ye a' makin' sic a wark about? let the babie get her greet out. I suppose she thinks there's nae-body ever parted with their men but her. Wi' her faintin', and her airs, and her wark." "Oh, you're an oul hard-hearted devil," said Dennis, "an unfeeling oul hag, and the devil 'ill never get his due till he gets you;"—and he took her by the shoulders and pushed her out of the room. She would have turned on Dennis; but she had got a squeeze from him on a former occasion, and I daresay she did not like to run the risk of another.

The drawing was again commenced, and various were the expressions of feelings evinced by those concerned. The Irish women, in particular, were loud in their grief. It always appeared to me that the Irish either feel more acutely than the Scotch or English, or that they have less restraint on themselves in expressing it. The barrack, through the rest of that day, was one continued scene of lamentation.

I was particularly interested in the fate of Sandy and his wife. I wished to administer consolation; but what could I say? There was no comfort that I could give, unless leading her to hope that we would soon return. "Oh, no," said she "when we part here, I am sure, that we'll never meet again in this world!"

We were to march the next morning early. The most of the single men were away drinking. I slept in the birth above Sandy and his wife. They never went to bed, but sat the whole night in their birth, with their only child between them, alternately embracing their child and each other, and lamenting their cruel fortune. I never witnessed in my life such a heart-rending scene. The poor fellow tried to assume some firmness; but in vain: some feeling expression from her would throw him off his guard, and at last his grief became quite uncontrollable.

When the first bugle sounded, he got up, and prepared his things. Here a new source of grief sprung up. In laying aside the articles which he intended to leave, and which they had used together,

the idea seemed fixed in her mind, that they would never use them in that way again; and as she put them aside, she watered them with her tears. Her tea pot, her cups, and every thing that they had used in common—all had their apostrophe of sorrow. He tried to persuade her to remain in the barrack, as we had six miles to travel to the place of embarkation; but she said she would take the last minute in his company that she could.

The regiment fell in, and marched off, amid the wailing of those who, having two or three children, could not accompany us to the place of embarkation. Many of the men had got so much intoxicated that they were scarcely able to walk. The commanding officer was so displeased at their conduct that, in coming through St. Helier's, he would not allow the band to play.

When we arrived at the place where we were to embark, a most distressing scene took place, in the men parting with their wives. Some of them indeed it did not appear to affect much: others had

got themselves nearly tipsy; but the most of them seemed to feel acutely. When Sandy's wife came to take her last farewell, she lost all government of her grief. She clung to him with a despairing hold. "Oh, dinna, dinna leave me!" she cried. The vessel was hauling out. One of the sergeants came to tell her that she would have to go ashore, "Oh, they'll never be so hard-hearted as to part us," said she; and, running aft to the quarter deck, where the commanding officer was standing, she sunk down on her knees, with her child in her arms. "Oh, will you no let me gang wi' my husband? Will ye tear him frae his wife and his wean? He has nae frien's but us—nor we ony but him—and, oh, will you mak' us a' frien'less? See my wee babie pleadin' for us."

The officer felt a painful struggle between his duty and his feelings; the tears came into his eyes. She eagerly caught at this as favourable to her cause. "Oh, aye, I see you have a feeling heart—you'll let me gang wi' him. You have nae wife; but, if you had, I am sure you



wad think it unco hard to be torn frae her this way—and this wee darlin’.” “My good woman,” said the officer, “I feel for you much; but my orders are peremptory, that no more than six women to each hundred men go with their husbands. You have had your chance as well as the other women; and, although it is hard enough on you to be separated from your husband, yet there are many more in the same predicament; and it is totally out of my power to help it.” “Well, well,” said she, rising from her knees, and straining her infant to her breast: “It’s a’ owre wi’ us, my puir babie; this day leaves us friendless on the wide world.” “God will be your friend,” said I, as I took the child from her until she would get into the boat. Sandy had stood, like a person bewildered all this time, without saying a word. “Farewell then, a last farewell then,” said she to him: “Where’s my babie,” she cried. I handed him to her—“Give him a last kiss, Sandy.” He pressed the infant to his bosom in silent agony. “Now, a’s owre; farewell, Sandy! we’ll maybe meet