

THE EXAMINER:

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EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

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THERE'S A GLEN OF GREEN BEAUTY.

BY EDWARD WHELAN.

AIR—Humours of Glen.

There's a glen of green beauty, where echoes have spoken,
And waters of brightness o'er rude rocks are flung;
In the glen blooms a bower (but haply 'tis broken)
Where Mary the strains of her Poet oft sung.
Till memory dies in the breast of the weeper,
These moments of rapture he'll never forget,
The vanished for aye, like the dream of the sleeper,
I wonder does Mary remember them yet!

O'er shall the bard, in that green blooming bower,
Hear Mary's voice warble his wild song again;
For young hearts that bounded to passion's soft power,
Mistaken for ever hath sundered in twain!
As bright eyes might light him o'er life's troubled ocean—
A kinder cares him—but can he forget
The raptures that hallow the heart's first devotion!
I wonder does Mary remember them yet!

Restore him the bloom of a hope early blighted;
Erase from his heart the deep trace of despair—
Recall one wild vow which to Heaven was plighted—
Did his soul be as pure as when true love was there.
Oh! never shall peace to his dark soul be spoken,
Shall his couch be unstained with the tear of regret
For pleasures long vanished, and tender ties broken—
I wonder does Mary remember them yet!

[Dublin Nation]

THE WAR IN THE CRIMEA.

THE BATTLE-FIELD OF INKERMANN BY MOONLIGHT.

On the evening of the battle I went over the field. All our wounded had been removed, and the wounded of our enemy were being gathered in. The kindness and attention of our fellows to their helpless enemies was beyond all praise. There is nothing so awful as the spectacle of the bodies of those who have been struck down by round shot or shell. One poor fellow of the 96th had been struck by two 24-pounders in the head and body. A shell afterwards burst on him and tore him to pieces, and it was only by the fragments of cloth, with the regimental buttons adhering, that you could tell that the bloody mass which lay in the road had ever been a human being. Some had their heads taken off at the neck, as with an axe; others their legs gone from the hips; others their arms, and others again who were hit in the chest or stomach, were literally as smashed as if they had been crushed in a machine. Passing up to Sebastopol over heaps of Russian dead, you came to the spot where the Guards had been compelled to retire from the defence of the wall above Inkermann valley. Here our dead were nearly as numerous as the enemy's. Across the path, side by side, lay five Guardsmen who were all killed by one round shot as they advanced to charge the enemy. They lay on their faces in the same attitude, with their muskets tightly grasped in both hands, and all had the same grim painful frown upon their features, like men who were struck down in the act of closing with their foes. Beyond us the Russian Guardsmen and line regiments lay as thick as leaves, intermixed with dead and wounded horses. The path lay through thick brushwood, but the path was slippery with blood, and the brushwood was broken down and encumbered with the dead.

The scene from the battery was awful—awful beyond description. I stood upon its parapet at about 9 at night, and felt my heart sink as I gazed upon the scene of carnage around. The moon was at its full, and showed every object as if by the light of day. Facing me was the valley of Inkermann, with the Tchernaya like a band of silver flowing gracefully between the hills, which, for varied and picturesque beauty, might vie with any part of the world. Yet I shall recall the memory of Inkermann Valley with any but feelings of loathing and horror; for round the spot from which I surveyed the scene, lay upwards of 5,000 bodies. Many badly wounded also lay there; and their low, dull moans of mortal agony struck with terrible distinctness upon the ear, or worse still, the hoarse gurgling cry and vehement struggles of those who were convulsed before they passed away. Round the hill small groups of men with hospital stretchers were searching out for those who still survived; and others again, with lanterns, busily turning over the dead, looking for the bodies of officers who were known to be killed, but who had not been found. Here also were English women whose husbands had not returned, hurrying about with loud lamentations, turning the face of our dead to the moonlight, and eagerly seeking for what they feared to find. These latter were more to be pitied than the inanimate forms of those who lay slaughtered around. The ambulances, as fast as they came up, received their load of sufferers, and even blankets were employed to convey the wounded to the rear.

Outside the battery (the two-gun battery above mentioned), the Russians lay two and three deep. Inside, the place was literally full with bodies of Russian Guardsmen, and the British 55th and 20th. Some lay as if arranged for burial, and as though hands of the relatives had arranged their mangled limbs, while others again were in almost startling positions, half standing or kneeling, clenching their weapons or drawing a cartridge. Many lay with both their hands extended towards the sky, as if to avert a blow or utter a prayer, while others had a malignant scowl of mingled fear and hatred, as if indeed they died despairing. The moonlight imparted an aspect of unusual paleness to their forms, and as the cold damp wind swept round the hills, and waved the boughs above their uplifted faces, the shadows gave a horrible appearance of vitality; and it seemed as if the dead were laughing, and about to rise. This was not the case on one spot, but all over the bloody field.

LETTERS FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD.

A Novel way of Taking a Russian Prisoner.

The following is an extract from a letter of an officer of the 77th Regiment:—"I have been quite a lion ever since the engagement, owing to my having been made prisoner by two Russians, and having escaped by killing one of my captors, and making the other prisoner in his turn, bringing him into camp. It is rather a long story, but as it may be interesting, I will relate it. On the morning of the 5th Nov., about 3.50, I started, unluckily very unwell, to relieve D—, of the 23rd, on picket, at a place about two miles from camp, called the 'house in the ravine'—one of our most advanced, and a very important post. My party consisted of 40 men.

Our orders were to defend the place until fresh orders or a reinforcement was sent. As the name implies, we were posted in a deep ravine, the hills on one side being occupied by our troops, and on the other by an advanced picket from the Second Division. Just before daybreak D— had called in his men, and was on the point of marching them back to camp, when a volley was fired on the hills over us where the Second Division picket were posted. We immediately placed our men in skirmishing order, under cover of the walls of the ruined house. When the enemy appeared on the hills above us we opened fire on them, which they immediately returned. We held the place about three-quarters of an hour, until the Russians began to advance up the ravine towards us, and thus take us in flank. We then, finding their fire began to tell, commenced a retreat towards camp, but you may imagine our dismay at finding, after we had only gone about 100 yards, that the enemy had entirely driven in our pickets on the hill, and had got at least a mile in our rear. No sooner did they see us retreat than they charged down the hill on us in hundreds, the fellows on the top firing all the time. We were surrounded by Russians on three sides, and on the fourth was a nearly inaccessible cliff. Our only chance was to endeavour to escape by climbing this, and, accordingly, we all ran for it, with the enemy close after us. We also afforded a splendid mark to their sharpshooters on the other side of the ravine, who kept up an awful fire on us. I can now only speak of what happened to me individually. I climbed, as well as I was able, expecting every moment to be my last, to within 12 feet of the brow, and then found a big rock, which I could not ascend. I was so ill and exhausted that I sat down in despair behind a large stone, which sheltered me a good deal from the fire. Two Russian soldiers who had pursued us up the cliff caught sight of me, and made towards me with fixed bayonets. I drew my revolver, and took three deliberate shots at the smallest and 'wickedest' looking of them. Each time the pistol missed fire. This was entirely owing to my fault. It had been loaded more than two months, and entirely neglected. You can imagine my remorse at not having been more careful. Well, the fellow then fired at me, but by the mercy of Heaven he just missed me, and hit a 23d man, who was endeavouring to escape just behind me. As he was on the point of transfixing me with his bayonet I took a fourth and successful shot, and he rolled over the cliff, but before I could again use my pistol the second fellow had his bayonet at my throat, and I saw that further resistance was useless. My worthy captor seemed rather struck with the eligibility of the place I had chosen, as it was tolerably sheltered from fire, and he therefore sat down quietly by my side, keeping his rifle pointed towards my head, and making very expressive signs, which I could hardly misinterpret, that if I moved he would put an end to my miserable existence. He, no doubt, intended to take me prisoner when the fire slackened a little. I, of course, lay perfectly quiet, and was, in fact, so exhausted that I fell into a kind of doze or faint. When I reopened my eyes the hill in front was still swarming with skirmishers, but you cannot imagine my delight when I saw some of them with their 'bearskins' on, proving that they were the Guards, and that they had repulsed the Russians. This sight seemed to restore all my strength, and I thought that now or never I must make my escape. My friend, seeing me apparently helpless, had removed his rifle for a time from its unpleasant proximity to my head, and I, taking advantage of this fortunate circumstance, suddenly sprang to my feet. He did the same, but, in his astonishment, he dropped his gun. I instantly hit him in the face with my fist with all my strength, and this being a mode of attack for which he was totally unprepared, he tumbled down the cliff. I rolled over with him, and we went down together for 20 or 30 yards, until checked by the stump of a tree. Luckily I then was the top. He now began to roar out 'Sonde! Sonde!' most lustily. I do not know what it means, but, as I was afraid of his cries bringing some one to his assistance, I hit him on the mouth every time he shouted. This soon produced the desired effect; he crossed his two forefingers and said, 'Pardon.' I was very glad to hear it, for my strength was just failing me; so I nodded my head, and pulling out my revolver, I watched him in my turn. I did not shoot him, because he had spared my life previously. Presently a 23d man, who had escaped, passed near us, and I sent him to pick up the Russian's rifle and to watch him while I went in search of my sword, which had dropped in the scuffle. Having found it, I returned and marched him into camp, with his own rifle, which I now have, and shall certainly keep as a memento of my escape. Of my unlucky 40 men 27 were killed or wounded, 7 taken, and 6 only escaped unhurt. So you see we really had some sharp fighting. I was struck by a spent ball just above the left knee, but it only raised a contusion which lamed me for a week. I also had my boot grazed, and one of the rings shot off my scabbard—rather narrow escapes."

Sufferings of the Soldiers.

The following are extracts of a letter from a private in the 20th Regiment:—"I am as well as can be expected, according to our situation, which is not a pleasant one, I assure you. The weather is wet and cold, and we have but little clothing to keep us warm, and scarcely a shoe to our feet; our rations come in only by chance, and then we fall short. We have no firing to cook with, but when we come across a tree or a house we do with it for fuel. We are poisoned with vermin and dirt; the men are dying with cold and exposure; we are tenting it, and are in the open air 20 days out of the month watching the enemy, and there is every sign of our remaining in this position for the winter." He then alludes to the battle of Bala Clava and Inkermann, and adds—"Our worst misfortunes are a want of necessities for the wounded, but we do not complain. Our officers are noble fellows, and they do all they can to alleviate the sufferings of the men. Our courage is unflinching—ready amid every privation to do our utmost for old England's honour."

A Night March from Bala Clava.

CAMP ABOVE SEBASTOPOL, NOV. 28.—We landed from the Queen of the South last Tuesday, and were first ordered to encamp near Bala Clava, but I had no sooner marched up to the ground indicated, about a mile from the bay, and got all ready for the tents, than an orderly came up with orders that we were to march up to the front that night. We accordingly got our packs on again, unrolled arms, and marched back to the beach, where I found the rest of the detachments all going up to the ground we have just left, and where they passed the night. We got our ammunition served out to us, loaded our pistols, and began our weary march at about twelve o'clock. Bala Clava was, I dare say, before the dawn of war entered it, a very pretty little town; even now its situation is beautiful—the harbour very small, but completely landlocked with high mountains on each side, those

on the right looking up the country occupied by the Highlanders and marines facing the Russians; the outposts are not a mile from each other. We marched up the road through the valley where the cavalry action took place on the 25th; the road was most dreadful, up to the knees in mud, and encumbered with dead bodies of mules, bullocks, and horses. What a sight this place would be for some enthusiastic member of the Humane Society! French and Turkish troops were marching in every direction, arabas laden with provisions to supply the wants of the immense army surrounding the place. Well, we proceeded on as best we could through the mud till dark, and to every inquiry as to how far the third division was, "Five miles" was the invariable answer. As it became perfectly dark we began to suspect that our guide, an orderly of the 13th Dragoons, did not know much about the country. At last we reached a French camp, and asked them where the English were? They guided us to a camp, and, to our great dismay, we found we were among the Light Division, on the extreme right of the whole position, about four miles beyond our camp. As it could not be helped, we turned to the right about, and again went on; out of 120 men not more than thirty remained with us, and, if it had not been for shame, I should have laid down too. We left our baggage on the beach in charge of a sergeant; some men and I carried a pack with a change of things, great-coats, &c., besides canteen, pistols, sword and spade. We found that a coat and shako is not the most convenient walking dress, and after more than three weeks on board ship my first walk in the Crimea completely knocked me up. At last we reached our camp, about eight o'clock, after having by our wanderings converted a march of six miles into nearly twenty. We got some supper, and I passed my first night under canvas in the tent of a brother officer who was in the trenches. Yesterday we got no rations, and the men are suffering very much indeed from the continual exposure to the constant wet and cold that we have had for the last week; their feet are never dry, some of them have no soles to their shoes and no socks, others no shirts; and I would defy any one who saw the regiments leave England to recognise the care-worn half-starved skeletons of which they now consist. We are encamped on a clayey piece of ground, which is now mud up to the knees; the tents are as wet within as on the outside, and there is, what is perhaps worse than anything else, a scarcity of wood. We have been told that we may hit ourselves, but how to do so without wood I know not. Our engineers and artillery are doing nothing. The French are pushing forward their approaches to within 200 yards of the mud fort; but the storm of shot and shell is so great that it is a wonder how they exist at all. They are magnificent soldiers. I made my debut in the trenches last night, and marched down in silence in a storm of wind and rain. The trenches are very wet, and no attempt has been made to drain them. The consequence is that we are all standing in wet up to our knees, with no dry places to put our fire-locks. If the enemy came out, not one half of the muskets would go off. The night of night is most grand, especially when you hear the shot and shell coming close over you, not knowing whether the next may be your own head. We were all relieved in the morning at 8, half dead with cold and wet. One poor fellow, whom we brought out in the draft, actually did die.

Look sharp after your Heads.

The following is an extract from a letter written to his friends in Worcester by G. Tilsley, troop sergeant major in the Scots Greys:—"I was expecting that a little rest did time to write I would be able to give you a little news about Sebastopol, but it is in the hands of the Russians yet, and likely to be for a long time to come, for all that I can see. The enemy sallies out in parties of about 2,000 or 3,000 strong and goes back to the town about as many hundreds, but still they can manage to keep the place. I think, however, they will find themselves minus of it some of these mornings. As soon as we can get the army in the rear of us away, we will give them a benefit. It is really astonishing the number of men that have been killed over this affair. The Russian cavalry are well mounted and equipped, and they wear a sort of freeze coat, which is very warm and almost sword-proof. In combat, however, there is no place like the head, and then a good point to assist them out of the saddle! If ever you saw a poor miserable lot of devils you would see them here. In fact, if this weather continues long, I don't expect to have horse or man left in my troop at all, and what is to become of myself, I don't know. Thank God I have had good luck and good health too, for I never got a scratch. My horse was shot, but I have got the crown, that's another step of promotion. As soon as Sebastopol is taken, I will give you a good long letter, please God to spare me that time. A man's life worth these times, when you see the cannon balls and shells flying about your head, and a poor fellow gets his cap knocked off, and turns round to see if his head is in it, it makes him look sharp if he was dull all his life before. Ten o'clock at night, and still thundering away at the ill-fated city. The post closes early in the morning. Adieu."

One of the Heroes of Bala Clava.

Sir.—The accompanying letter was received to-day from my son, a youth twenty-one years of age, who this last spring, in a youthful and romantic fit, enlisted in the 11th Hussars, and in the incredibly short time of six weeks had passed through all the rough-riding and other drills into his troop as a competent soldier, though the extent of his horsemanship before was a pony-ride on Blackheath. I mention this to show how quickly intelligent young men can be fitted for active service on the field of battle. The same practice with which he cut his way through the enemy on the retreat of the Light Cavalry at Bala Clava, proves that the recruit can be trusted equally with the veteran. The "terrible Cosacks" need no longer be feared, for the superiority of the sabre in attack and defence is most graphically shown in the dreadful melee through which his own bravery, through the providence of God, so wonderfully delivered him. While I regret that my son, trained his lack on the profession for which he was educated, I cannot but rejoice that he has proved that the youth of England can be so rapidly trained to lofty deeds of arms.—A. P.

My beloved Mother.—It was a most though, gallant charge made by our light cavalry at Bala Clava. The reports will tell you see our position at the time. The world was to "charge guns to the front." We were posted at a gallery to "charge guns, and a fearful fire from the front of guns, shell, and cannon; with ditto on the right and left flanks, and infantry also pouring in a tremendous fire. The effect was that horses and men fell thick and fast, but even this did not check our onward rush. All the Russian artillerymen were sabred, and for an instant we were masters of the guns, but

having no support, could not keep them. In this condition we were charged in flank and rear by numerous regiments of Russians and cavalry, and, but for the desperation with which our fellows cut their way, there would not have been a single man return from that fatal charge. As for myself, I never reached the guns in front, as a grape-shot went through my bushy, about two inches above my head, knocking it on one side, another through the calf of my leg, and the next through my horse's head (a fine black mare). Well, here I was at the mercy of their Lancers, whom I saw lancing our dismounted men. The demons give no quarter when you are down. At this moment the 8th Hussars came by, with a horse without its rider. This I mounted, and formed in the rear of the 8th, as if it were my own regiment, and dashed on. But worse again—we were obliged to wheel "right about," and to pass through a strong body of the enemy's cavalry, which had gathered in our rear, cutting off our retreat. Of course with our handful, it was life or death, so we rushed at them to break through them, but as soon as we got through one body there was another to engage. At any rate, with five or six of our fellows at my rear, I galloped on, parrying with the determination not to lose my life, breaking the lances of the cowards who attacked us in the proportion of three or four to one, occasionally catching one a slap with the sword across his teeth, and giving another the point in his arm or breast. At any rate they kept close on me till I got sight of our heavies, when thanks be to God, they stopped pursuing me, and I got clear without a scratch from their lances. (Oh! the sabre before the lance!) I found that I could not dismount, from the wound in my right leg, and so was lifted off—and how I caressed the noble horse that brought me safely out. I will not disgrace you as a soldier, take my word. The attendance at the hospital is now pretty good, but of course not like home. Pray that I may be preserved from the dangers of war, and maintain the character for honour, magnanimity to the foe, and courage in the field, for which the British soldier is so justly famed. With best love to my father and yourself, and all that are dear to me,—Believe me to be your affectionate son.

W. H. PENNINGTON, Private, 1631, 11th Hussars.

The Army in the Mud.

Every day we sink deeper and deeper into the mud and despondency of winter quarters. We sleep in rain and mud, get up in rain and mud, walk about in rain and mud, and in the evening retire to our cozy beds with feelings of grim dissatisfaction, that we were not born tortoises or alligators, so that we might look forward with something like satisfaction to the prospect of passing the next six months in a puddle. If there is any truth in the virtue of a cold water cure, assuredly you ought to be the best-dressed army in Europe. Of course your readers, thinking of the dirty crossings in Bond-street and Pall-mall, will colloquise over a comfortable breakfast, and say, "Yes, the camp must be very muddy," but let me entreat them to believe they know nothing about it. During the course of my wanderings I have seen some dirty places, but I never saw "mud" sheer, deep, tenacious mud, till I came to the Crimea. In fact, if you can imagine an Irish bog that has had the horse, carriage, and passenger traffic of a large city over it for three weeks, you will be able to form some idea, though but a faint one, of the state of the roads between the camp and Bala Clava. From the appearance of this path, it seems perfectly astonishing how any communication can be maintained between the camp and the sources of our supplies. Even since the repulse we received at Bala Clava, when we lost our rations, and the main road to Sebastopol (and note of which, no matter what miserable, evasive our official Gazetteer may make about the matter, we have retained up to this day), the path to the English camp has lain over the steep hills to the French lines, and so on along them to the English. This route is about three miles longer than that which we formerly possessed; but the distance would be nothing if the road was good. As it is, it is a mere path over a stiff clay soil, winding down ravines and up steep hills perpetually. Yet by this road, such as it is, the whole communication between Bala Clava and the camp has to be carried on. All the commissariat carts, all the forage, provisions, shot, shell, and ammunition of all kinds, ambulances, artillery, and cavalry, have to pass over it daily, and the effects of three weeks' rain on such a route may be imagined for easier than described.

Surprise and Laying out of English Pickets.

The Russians have been emboldened by our inability to prowl about at night, and thus up the advanced posts. It is no wonder that men who may have carried a considerable load from Bala Clava to the camp, and who may be sent out after a secret meal to pass 12 hours in the field, sometimes are less vigilant than they ought to be for the safety of the army. In some such way we lost the pickets of the 50th were surprised the other night by a front of their right flank, and indeed report says some of them were bayoneted by the Russians as they lay in their blankets. The officer on duty will barely escape censure, for compliance on the part of sentries in front of the camp is not compatible with the security of a camp. It was just at the time that the relief came down that they were attacked, and the Rifles, who were moving at the time and repulsed the enemy, have spread a pleasant tale that the Russians relieved the 50th, and we relieved the Russians."

The Damages really done in Sebastopol.

Out here we are perpetually being told by the London journals that Sebastopol is in ruins, its streets choked with dead. There is not one particle of truth to justify these extreme statements. Sebastopol is not in ruins, and what is more important, still its defences are four times stronger and more vigorous than its first day's created fire. To satisfy myself on this point beyond all possibility of doubt, I determined to visit the "ovens," our most advanced picket post, within 100 yards of the Russian batteries, and close overlooking the town and harbour. It is perfectly easy to approach this place now, for a covered way has been constructed to it, and both sides have, comparatively speaking, ceased firing for some time. I, therefore, got to the ovens easily, and lying under shelter of a broken wall was enabled with my glass to survey the whole town minutely. I confess I never saw the town under such favourable circumstances. Except now and then from an occasional Russian gun there was no smoke, and the bayonet, sword, and every object could be distinguished with unusual clearness. The real damage actually inflicted on the town of Sebastopol amounts to this—all the batts used by the decker's batteries and the Turkish ships of the town outside the wall, are nearly destroyed—that is, laid almost level with the earth. This quarter appears to be the only dirty and wretched part of Sebastopol—something of the same kind as our Bachelors-highway. The walls are here