

## THE EMBARKATION OF THE BLACK WATCH.

Portsmouth, Dec. 4.

By what gauge shall be estimated the quantity of beer which was drunk in Portsmouth last night, to say nothing of the mountain dew, which is the native liquor of the Scots, whose last night it was on the sod of Britain? Except for the unfortunate defaulters, there was no confinements to barracks. Colonel McLean, knowing and trusting his men, had told them in the forenoon that they might take the evening and welcome, but that the honor of the regiment demanded that there should be no absentees when the time should come for them to embark. Accordingly the Black Watch did take the evening, and there were signs and tokens about watch-cutting time that the evening was not the only thing which they had taken. But it was not quite all pot houses and beer-shop work, although those who know soldiers will understand how much of this there was.

The "turn out" this morning was set for a quarter to ten, but long before that hour the parade ground of the shabby Clarence Barracks was full of life and bustle. Al ready, too, long before the hour one had to struggle and elbow one's way down the narrow lane which leads to them from the High street, because of the crowd that al ready closed it. A strange miscellaneous crowd it was—that it was not wholly a reputable crowd will be easy understood by any who have a knowledge of a garrison town. Yet in the strange medley there was no indecorum; the sentiment was a mixture of regret, pity, and enthusiasm. At the gate sentries kept watch and ward, and only for favored civilians was their any admittance. Already, very soon after nine o'clock, nearly the whole regiment had turned out into the barrack square. The men wearing trows and Glengarry, valises, and the new pattern unipeplayed belts which have just been served out to them, stood chatting cheerfully in groups, waiting for the "fall in." Everywhere was heard the burr and breadth of the Scottish accent for the Black Watch is not in name alone, but in reality, a genuine Scottish regiment.

Two companies of the 42nd had been quartered in the Cambridge Barracks along with the 100th, and they had to join headquarters before the parade should be consummated. About half past ten came Major Green struggling through the crowd in the lane, with the report that he had got two companies under way, and that they would arrive at once. It had been no easy task to rescue them from the engrossing comradeship of the 100th. The "Canadians" had swarmed around them, shaking hands to the very last; had shouted "Good-bye, Scot-tie, ould chap," till they were hoarse; and had finally formed an alley down to the barrack gate, in which formation they had cheered until they had recovered their voices again. The band of the 100th had turned out to do honor to the Scotsmen, and was on its way to the Clarence Barracks at the head of the two companies. Presently there was aural evidence of this fact, and then as one looked out into the lane, it seemed as if the crowd in it had suddenly gone crazy. In front was the 100th band sturdily forcing its way to the music of that defiant Border ditty, "Wha daur meddle wi' me?" The defiance was buncombe, for the whole lane was meddling with the Scots who followed. The ranks were inundated by a succession of human waves. Men seized hands and shook them

fervently; women were hugging and sobbing as the column slowly staggered onward through its difficulties. But they were conquered at last, and the band drew to one side as the two companies, marching in fours, strode through the archway leading into the barrack yard, greeted with a shrill welcome from the bagpipes. Then were brought forth from out the guard-room the colors of the regiment, carried by the two junior subalterns, and guarded by the color-sergeants, the medals on whose breast testified that the sacred charge was confided to no unworthy hands.

The "fall in," has sounded, and the confused groups which had filled the barrack square with so picturesque a mass of color, resolves themselves into companies. To the front of everything are the pipers, luckier than the kilted band behind them, in that they are bound for Ashantee with their comrades. The band for once is out of conceit with itself. That seven-foot lance corporal who performs on the big drum has no swagger left in him, and would forego a cubit of his stature to be in trows and among the service men. Behind the band are the companies in quarter distance column. In this formation the exceptional size and muscular developments of the men show to the best advantage. Frederick the Great, the connoisseur in big men, would have found a company after his own heart; but although it contains the picked men of the regiment in the matter of stature, the other companies, if they do not look quite so imposing, look to the full equally as serviceable. The out-marching strength is 471 men, 29 sergeants and 17 drummers, besides the officers, thirty in number, all told. The numbering off proceeds all right, but it is observable that some how for this parade there is considerably more wandering of the eyes than is consistent with discipline, construed in the strictest sense. There never was a truer remark than that "there is a good deal of human nature about most people." Discipline is an excellent thing and "eyes front" on parade a most proper ocular attitude; but if "eyes right" or "eyes left" will enable a poor fellow bound on foreign service to snatch one last look at his wife and bairns, who shall wonder that nature gets the better of discipline? It is true that he commits a military offence, but the recording angle, in the shape of the company sergeant, is not prone to day to rebuke. In very truth, the honest sergeant himself, stern and centred on duty as he appears, seems not wholly indifferent to a little picture, commonplace enough, perhaps, yet with a certain tenderness and pathos in it, framed in yonder window in the dull brick wall. It is only a little woman with very wistful eyes and a tremulous twitching about the mouth, who stands there dropping undemonstrative tears on the face of the baby at her bosom. But it so happened, friends, that the little woman and the baby are, except the regiment the only things that the honest sergeant has got to love in this world; and you may haply thus come to understand how it is that curious gulp and working of the muscles of the throat precede his command, "Right number of!" As the officers take post, it is to be noticed that several of them look desperately fierce. A truculent and bloodthirsty scowl settles upon their features, and their orders are emitted with remarkable harshness. Whence this ferocity of demeanor? Are the Ashantees reported to be out side the barrack yard, and is Koffee Calcalli regaling himself on rum and gunpowder on the Common Hard, prior to disputing the passage of the regiment over

the drawbridge at the Gun Wharf? Or is it assumed to mask emotions of a very different character? There was no ferocity, but inexpressible love and tenderness, in the face of that gallant fellow, now scowling so, as a minute ago he stood, her hand clasped in his, looking into the eyes of that lady by the messroom door who let her veil down so suddenly as with a last "God bless you!" and a last pressure he turned away, doing something to his eyes with the back of his hand. Wondrous few tears do we see in these quiet partings. Millais read aright this page of the book of human nature when, in that most pathetic of all pictures I know, "Ordered on Foreign Service," he limned the two gazing into each other's eyes with a wistful, yearning, concentrated earnestness, that comes so straight from the heart that it cannot pause or turn aside by the way to unloose the fountain of tears. What a strange medley the scene is of the pathetic and ludicrous! Look at this gallant defender of Britain. He has been ordered to fall out from his company, on the ground that he is most decidedly drunk. It happens to be one of those things about which there can be no mistake. It is the most that he can do to keep on his legs, yet he has got his belts and kit on somehow, and has staggered on to parade to take his place in the ranks. He pleads hard to be saved from shame—"I ken I'm fou," says he, with a beery candor; "deevlitch fou, in fac'; but I'm no' that bad but I can march middlin' straight. Will ye gie me a chance, Captain, gin I douk my heid in cauld watter?" It is clear that this recipe would not suffice to make him an efficient, so he is committed to the charge of the rear guard, but allowed to remain under arms.

Just as the parade is complete, Major Cooke, of the 100th, arrives, accompanied by the officers of the regiment, who have breakfasted their comrades of the 42nd this morning, and are come now to convey them on board ship. The pipers strike up "The Campbells are coming," which has been the regimental "advance" since before Waterloo and the band, forming fours, marches out under the archway in rear of the pipers, and with the regiment behind it. Just in the archway there is a momentary block. The unfortunate Irish wife of a Scottish soldier has, it would appear, parted with him on not the most friendly terms, and is here now, "like Niobe, all tears," and with a child in her arms to make it up. This she proceeds to do by going into wild hysterics in the very centre of the band, and her screeches and wild ejaculation, "Arrah, bedad, would yez keep me from me own Pether?" from scarcely a happy accompaniment to the music. Whether she ultimately finds "me own Pether," or whether she is got out from the band somehow, and handed over to her less excited sisters in affliction, cannot be enquired into, for we must move on in the rear of Col. Mac'eod, on one side of whom walks General Kollo, an old 42nd man, who has come to see his old regiment off, and on the other Major Cooks, of the 100th. The band of the regiment takes up the tune from the musicians of the Black Watch, and, amidst a burst of cheering, the head of the column steps out briskly to the tune of "The Blue Bells of Scotland." In the High street the throng stands so thick that it is with difficulty a passage can be opened. Men and women crowd in upon the column to shake hands for the last time. Flags and handkerchiefs flutter from the windows, and between the gusts of cheering you may hear many a "God bless them poor fellows!"