

Reminiscences of Camp and Field.

WHEN at Wynberg hospital, some eight miles by rail from Cape-town, there lay in the cot next to mine as true an Irishman as ever breathed. Pat—Pat Donegan—by us called “Patsy Mick,” was tall and burly, red-headed, and endowed with a heavy brogue. He had been smashed by a bullet in the vicinity of the shin-bone, during one of the numerous battles around Ladysmith; had been sent down to Wynberg for treatment, and had been made the happiest man in camp by having his diet board marked “E.”—for England. Pat could neither read nor write, and his pent-up feelings, finding no other vent, stirred him in the wee small hours of the night, till he rose in his pyjamas and blossomed forth into an orator. He stood at the foot of his bed, on the bare boards, gesticulating wildly, and working his ugly mug in such a comical way that we could not lose patience with him. He was worth a dozen tonics. One thing stands out prominently amongst the thousand rambling statements he made.

“Fait, bhoys,” and he perspired as he said it, “the divil himself wud’nt come to this counthry. Nixt toime they git Pat away from home, shure Oi’ll go to jail furrst. Whoi, an’ Oi ain’t no big man at all, Oi don’t pretend to be; but it’s only roight that thim as made these foights shud have to foight ’em. Let Joey Chamberlin git his mout all shtuck up fer want iv a dhrink, an’ his leg smashed, an’ a galloper (the adjutant) come along an’ say, “D——n it, man, lave that wather alone,” an’ thin see if he wants to foight. It ain’t roight, bhoys, so it ain’t!”

And neither it was. Pat was scarcely right himself when he thought that “Ould Hornie” wouldn’t go to Africa; to my eyes the country seemed full of him. The sand, the water, the heat and the very people bore a stamp that resembled somewhat the too prevalent “made in Germany”; but the last word was altered.

Quite in contrast to Pat’s expressions were those of one of the Welsh Fusiliers. Over the Modder River, just where the heavy guns of the naval brigade had been placed while shelling Magersfontein, the wounded from the first battle of Paardeberg had to be carried on stretchers, to be laid down in the baking sun until transport could be provided. As I helped poor “Taffy” to a more comfortable position, and carried him the red water of the Modder in my service cap, we grew quite friendly. He told me of the marching, the fighting and the terrible end; of the row of bullet-holes, stretching from right to