

now *sit well down on the heel.*" There was an exclamation from our adjutant, which was not a blessing, as he fell out to take his spurs off, while a loud smile passed down the ranks, and, as O'Regan's back was turned, was reflected on the usually stolid countenance of the sergeant-instructor.

The adjutant was always a true Irishman to the backbone; I shall never forget the roars of laughter which one of the orders he issued to the battalion evoked. It ran as follows:—

Headquarters,
17th May, 18

The battalion will parade for Divine Service tomorrow at 10.30. Waist belts only.

By order,

(Signed) P. O'REGAN,

Captain and Adjutant.

Of course, if the regiment had appeared in this rather scanty costume, O'Regan would have expressed surprise, for all he meant to convey in this, to him, innocent order was that the men were to leave their cross-belts and pouches in the regimental armoury.

Then came the greatest event of our military career—our first review. We were to start early in the morning, and entrain at A—— (there was no such inconvenient thing, then, as route marching). Our destination was the town of M——, where we should be joined by two or three battalions from the same district, take part in the review in the park, and return at night. Great were the preparations among the officers, the cleaning and polishing of accoutrements and appointments, the hunting after brandy flasks, and the manufacture of sandwiches; for we were not to be left to the tender mercies of the War Office or railway refreshments stall. Great was our joy and rapture when, in spite of evil fore-bodings, the eventful day dawned fine, with abundant sunshine. There was just sufficient breeze to break the monotony of summer time, and greater still our pride as, amid an admiring crowd of fellow citizens, we marched down to the station, preceded by the band, and keeping step to the dulcet strains of "Jump Jim Crow." While waiting for the train we stood easy on the platform, and I could not help noticing what a fine body of men we were, not excluding the officers. I thought everything was perfect, and I felt there would be very little for the inspecting officer to carp at. Suddenly I saw our adjutant's features relax into a smile, and as he stepped up to Ensign Brown I noticed, for the first time, that the gallant officer was wearing his cross-belt over the wrong shoulder. However, this was soon rectified and we got into the train, which at that moment, came gliding up to the platform. We had all taken our seats, and expected every moment to hear the whistle of the locomotive which would proclaim our departure, when we heard a loud commotion at the other end of the train. I looked out of the window, and there were the doctor, the drum-major, and several

of the bandsmen and porters collected round the guard's van struggling with the bass drum, which could not be got inside. The little doctor, who by the way, had no business there at all, was frantic, evidently thinking the drum—and it was a big one, for it had been one of the doctor's hobbies to see that we had the largest procurable—would be left behind. At last the major had to leave his carriage, and push his way up to the van, where he found that the doctor, in his excitement, had omitted to open both doors of the compartment, and, of course, could not get his pet drum inside.

With this little fracas we got fairly off, and after an uneventful journey arrived at M——, where we detrained, and, joining our provisional brigade, marched up to the park. There we found that several volunteer battalions had already arrived, and their colonels were putting them through facings to keep their hands in and prepare for the coming strife. One or two battalions of regulars from the neighbouring barracks were standing and leisurely watching the martial efforts of their volunteer brethren. The salute and advance in line passed off successfully, though deep were the looks of envy which our doctor cast on the battalion on our right, which indulged in the happy luxury of colours, a joy we might have shared, but for our gallant commanding officer, who said "Colours for a volunteer rifle battalion were rubbish, and more trouble than an extra company."

I say the salute passed off successfully, and so it did, but we had a narrow escape of incurring the inspecting officer's wrath. You must know that our junior major (Robinson) was a very phlegmatic man, and as the general kept us waiting, were drawn up in review order for some little time. Now if Major Robinson was phlegmatic, still more so was Major Robinson's charger, and just at the moment which every man should have been stiff as his ramrod, and every eye gazing steadfastly to the front, that fiery steed fell asleep, and tried to lie down and roll. Not without severe bodily exertion, and the use of the spur, could the errant gee be brought up to the scratch, but fortunately his master had regained his equilibrium as the first bars of "Rule Britannia" floated on the breeze.

"I say doctor," said Ensign Carew afterwards, "I believe you hocused the major's charger just to keep your hand in with the drugs."

We were then told off with other brigades into a mixed force of cavalry, infantry, and artillery (destined later in the day to be still more mixed) to attack a somewhat similar force in another part of the field. After a heavy artillery fire at long range, we began to see some of the enemy, who had previously only been visible in the shape of smoke, and at last found ourselves at the foot of a hill, opposed to a force of infantry consisting of two or three companies of volunteers, who were blazing at us as fast as they could load and fire. Our gallant major was equal to the emergency.

Amid the smoke and racket we deployed, and, before fixing bayonets, fired a withering volley right in the faces of our opponents. Then a very unpleasant incident occurred, which justly raised my wrath. A rear rank man, just at the moment of firing, allowed his rifle to swerve a little, and, much to his own astonishment, blew his front man's shako almost to dust. I thought our doctor looked disappointed a little when he found that the hat and not the head sufficed; but really it was no laughing matter, for if the rifle had been three inches lower the man would have been dead. Our adjutant impressed on our minds the necessity of using firearms with care, in words which, although peculiar, were sufficiently expressive. "A rifle many go off, loaded or not," he said, meaning, of course, that however certain a man may be that his firearm is not loaded, still due care in its use should be exercised." However, it will never do to halt and moralise with an enemy before us in position on high ground. We carried the hill with a rush and a cheer, though the two companies who held it died, metaphorically, and didn't surrender until an umpire fortunately intervened, and ordered them out of action.

At our new elevation we were somewhat clear of the smoke of conflict, and witnessed the most brilliant exploit of the day. The Duke of L——'s volunteer Light Horse were charging frantically down a long grassy valley, with the evident intention of annihilating a battery of field artillery unlimbered at the further end, and supported by two battalions of regulars. On came the gallant fellows, the officers leading, sabres flashing, and trumpets sounding "their loudest points of war." The noble leader was triumphant; he had re-enacted the charge of Balaclava, and what is more he had done so without the loss of a single man, unless indeed we count a few troopers who had, after vainly trying to hold on with their spurs, been thrown from their chargers, and were now slowly rejoining their regiment. But, alas! how pride hath a fall. A staff officer galloped frantically up, and in no gentle terms delivered the dreadful news—the duke had ridden over part of his own division, in fact, charged his own guns in the confusion and smoke.

The battle appeared to be near its close, and we should have taken no further part in the day's work, but for the energy of the captain commanding my company, which was sent out on the right flank. He suddenly perceived a body of men working round our rear, and opened fire on them at 800 yards. Our ammunition was nearly expended, when up came a general officer and his A.D.C. I am afraid his temper had already been severely tried, for riding up to Captain Burke, he roared out "Now then, sir, can't you see you're firing on your own men? They'll all be killed." "Sure thin, General," replied our captain, "it spakes very well for for our shooting." We looked in dismay at the general, but the poor old gentleman