



YARNS OF THE ARMY.

By D. H. PAIRY, Author of "For Glory and Renown," "The Pets of the Regiments," etc.

About the Gallant Dragoons.

IN the romantic days of Gustavus Adolphus dragoons are said to have found their origin, and, whether they took their name from the dragon's head on their pistols or not, it is quite certain that they began to modify the rôle of cavalry, and have since won for their arm of the service a record that is "second to none" in the annals of war.

They were terrible fellows in those old days, and a little later, when Louis XIV. revoked the Edict of Nantes, the mention of their name was sufficient to send whole communities of unhappy Huguenots flying for their lives to the woods and wilds.

In a quaint book that I have they are described as "Musketeers mounted, who serve sometimes a-foot and sometimes a-horseback, being always ready upon anything that requires expedition"; and although that was written in 1744, many years elapsed before they came to be regarded as the dashing horse-soldiers pure and simple that they are to-day.

"Oh, love is the soul of the Irish dragoon, In battle, or bivouac, or in saloon," sang Charles Lever, and I daresay he was right; but they possess sterner qualities, as you may learn from an almost forgotten story of an Irish soldier of the 17th Lights during the American War.

Corporal O'Lavery was riding as escort to the bearer of an important despatch through a wild country swarming with the enemy's troops, when they were seen and hotly pursued for many miles.

The messenger was killed and the corporal badly wounded, but he took the precious paper and went on alone, across the prairie bluffs and billowy grass-land, the life-blood pouring from a terrible gash in his thigh and filling his long-boot as he clung with a weakening grip to the saddle. Who can tell what agony that death-gallop meant to him? Fainter and fainter he grew, the horizon became blurred and misty, his senses reeled as the good horse breasted the hillocks and tore down into the hollows, his white housings were soon as red as his scarlet jacket, and at last he fell exhausted, and lay concealed for hours in a dip of the plain.

When our fellows found him his life was ebbing away, and, pointing with a last effort to his leg, he sank back and died, his heroism coming to light in a manner that has had few parallels in history.

Literally crammed into the wound and hidden by its lacerated edges was the despatch, which he had

forced deep down to elude the enemy's search, enduring excruciating tortures as its crumpled folds tore the quivering flesh, and sacrificing his life, so the surgeons declared, in the noble effort to do his duty!

Well might Lord Rawdon, his colonel, raise a pillar to the hero's memory in his native country, and shame upon us that the story should have been allowed to die!

With the exception of the 6th Dragoon Guards, Carabineers, who were dressed as light cavalry, in blue, during the Indian Mutiny, all our dragoons wear scarlet uniforms and yellow braid, the Continental nations adopting blue for their troopers, all but Russia, whose colour is a handsome green.

Some time ago our Queen was appointed Colonel of a German dragoon regiment, and the compliment has re-

in many a *mêlée* during the fierce last century wars, and since 1768 their bearskins have rendered their uniform very conspicuous.

A celebrated woman-soldier, Mrs. Christiana Davis, served in the ranks of the Greys in William III.'s reign, and fought under the great Duke of Marlborough, and when her sex was discovered they turned her out with military honours, Brigadier Preston presenting her with a handsome silk dress, and the chaplain insisting on her being re-married to her husband, who was in another regiment.

A certain Colonel Preston was also an interesting character, being the last British soldier who wore the buff coat, rising to his honourable position as commander of the Greys from being kettle-drummer at the coronation of Queen Anne.

There is a good story told of a Russian dragoon who was sent with a message to the celebrated Suwarrow, one of the most extraordinary generals of any age. The dragoon's colonel was one of the handsomest men in the Russian army, and Suwarrow the most hideous, so that the trooper was placed in an awkward predicament when he said to him--

"What is the difference between your colonel and myself?"

"The difference is, that my colonel cannot make me a sergeant," said the dragoon, "whereas your Excellency can do so whenever you like."

The conqueror of Ismaila laughed, and, being fairly caught, immediately promoted him.

Private Thomas Brown of Bland's Dragoons, now the 3rd Hussars, distinguished himself at Dettingen, and rescued a standard from the French, earning the name of the "Valiant Dragoon," and being handed down to posterity in a curious engraving still in the possession of the regiment, which represents him on the lumbering horse of the period, with his huge basket-hilted sword and cocked hat.

The well-known helmet with the brass crest and horse-tail worn by the French dragoons at the present day is a modification of what was known as the Schomberg helmet, given to them in 1763.

They were tremendous swaggers then as now, and were so proud of their new head-gear that they insisted on wearing it in church, and a special order signed by the Duke of Choiseul, who introduced the epaulette, was necessary to make them discontinue the practice.

Since the French occupied Tonkin large quantities of human hair have been imported for use on the officers' casques; but one would hardly fancy it pleasant to have the long snaky pigtail of a dead Chinaman whisking across one's face in a high wind.

FRANCE.



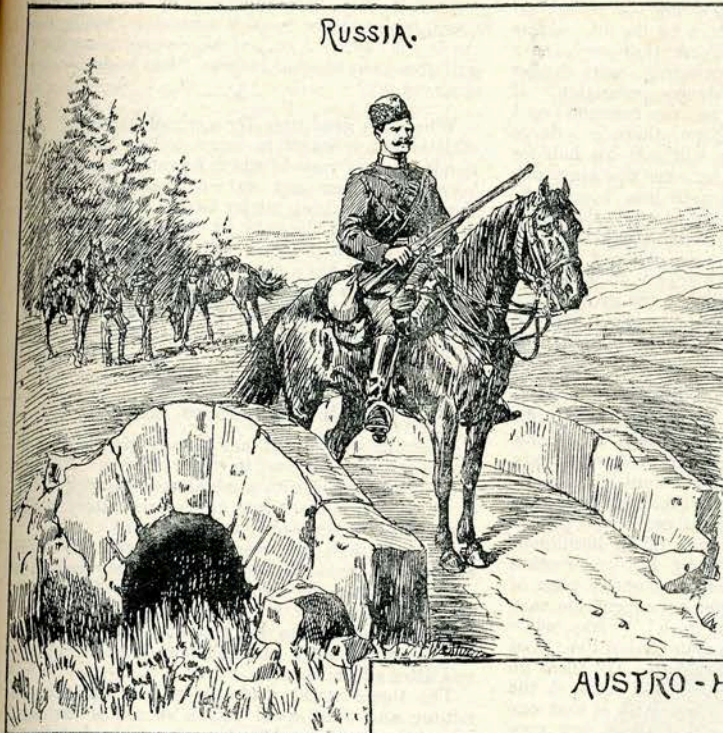
GERMANY



cently been returned by the German Emperor being made honorary colonel of our own 1st Royals, followed again, only the other day, by the young Czar of Russia being gazetted to the same rank in the Scots Greys, a corps whom the Russians have cause to remember in the Crimea. At Waterloo the 1st, 2nd, and 6th charged as the "Union Brigade," and at Balaclava the same gallant regiments again found themselves riding knee to knee.

One could fill a bound volume of "CHUMS" with the records of the Scots Greys, and magnificent reading you would find it, for they are one of our pattern regiments and the oldest cavalry corps of the line, dating from 1683. Their cloth sugar-loaf caps mingled

RUSSIA.



Among my helmets I have one of this pattern which weighs three pounds and a half—oh! the folly of it! And that leads me on to a short description of the uniforms in our illustrations.

The German dragoons are armed with steel lances, and have sky-blue tunics and dark trousers; the Austrians, on the other hand, affect red pantaloons and dark-blue coats, with a hanging jacket of a lighter blue; the Austrian helmet is not unlike the Italian dragoons', who wear dark blue tunics and grey overalls, carrying their sabres attached to the saddle instead of the man.

The French dragoons have lost a good deal of their former smartness, but their blue tunics, buttoned up at the back to show the red lining, and the huge trousers, booted to the knee with pliable leather, take a thousand picturesque folds and creases dear to an artist's eye.

Time was when they wore green coats with gay lancer facings, and brass helmets encircled with a band of cow-hide figured to resemble leopard skin; but at the end of the Second Empire the uniforms of the French army were simplified, and have changed very little since.

During the Austerlitz campaign a trooper of the 4th Dragoons, named Marente, was presented to Napoleon, having saved the life of his captain who had degraded him only a few days before from his rank of *sous-lieutenant*. When Napoleon handed him the Cross of the Legion of Honour, he said—

"I only did my duty; my captain cashiered me for some faults of discipline, but he knows I have always been a good soldier."

There were several regiments of dismounted dragoons in the *Grande Armée*, dressed exactly like the mounted corps, except that they wore long gaiters instead of boots, and carried knapsacks and muskets; but the dragoon of that period was a bold rider, and gradually lost his character as a species of mounted infantryman, under such leaders as Murat, Kellermann, and Nansouty.

Our own troopers have undergone many changes previous to their adoption of the smart scarlet tunic and plumed helmet of the present day.

During the reign of George IV. they were tightened in to such an extent that they could hardly go through the sword exercise, and their head-pieces were of such a ridiculous shape that they often fell off when the regiments went at the trot.

At the time of the Irish troubles of 1798 we had a 5th regiment of dragoons which wore bear-skins like the Scots Greys, having won them (or, rather, their cloth prototypes), as a special distinction at Ramillies, where it captured two battalions of the famous

French regiment of Picardy.

Unfortunately—though, some of you may say, very naturally, being an Irish corps—it showed sympathy with the rebel forces, and was disbanded, the number remaining vacant until 1858, when the popular 5th Lancers took it up, and have borne it with honour ever since.

Many famous soldiers have served in the dragoons. Lord Heathfield, the conqueror of Gibraltar, raised Elliot's Horse, the first light regiment in our service, and it is said that a number of tailors were enrolled in its ranks; certain is it that Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the poet, enlisted in it under a false name.

The Duke of Welling-

One little story of Marshal Saxe must close this set of yarns. A general had excused some disorders in his corps on the ground that he did not wish to be severe with his officers.

"*Monsieur le Général!*" said the great soldier, with a twinkle in his blue eyes, "when I was a colonel of cavalry, I was ordered by old General Seckendorf to follow for three days on foot in rear of my own regiment in consequence of some disorders which had unfortunately been committed by the men; and yet I was the son of a king, and a favourite son, too!"

Something Like a Word.

PROBABLY the maximum in long German words is reached in the one given below. It is vouched for as a properly-formed German word, in which the material has not been strained at all in the making. It is:—

"*Exklusivitätsherrenschneidermeistermusterlieferungsanstaltsberaufsichtskasse.*"

This word, which contains seventy-six letters, means in English: "The treasury of the directorium of the establishment for furnishing patterns to master-tailors making clothes for exclusively-living gentlemen only."

There is one advantage about the use of words like this: One could never have frequent occasion to regret having hastily spoken them.

Settling a Vexed Question.

PEOPLE who find it tiresome to read a book more than once will scarcely credit the story which is told of one of the Scilly Isles. The entire library of this little island consisted, a century or more ago, of a single copy of the "History of Doctor Faustus."

As most of the inhabitants were able to read—provided words were not too difficult—the story had been handed from house to house, until, from perpetual thumbing, very little of his enchantments or his catastrophe was left legible.

When this alarming state of things became evident, a meeting of the principal inhabitants was called to discuss what could be done to remedy it, for the people must have something to read.

A proposal was made and carried that as soon as the season permitted any intercourse with Cornwall, a supply of books should be ordered. The question arose what these books should be, but at last it was settled amicably that an order should be transmitted to Penzance for another copy of the "History of Doctor Faustus."

And then the meeting joyously broke up.

AUSTRO-HUNGARY.



ton held a commission in the 12th and 18th, and our gallant Sir Evelyn Wood was once a lieutenant in the 13th Lights; Lord Raglan entered the army as cornet in the 4th Queen's Own; De Lacy Evans rode with the 3rd in many a Peninsular charge, and the campaigns against the French will furnish a score of celebrated names.

Prince Bismarck was a dragoon officer, and of the well-known warriors of France who have carried the dragoon's sword, Marshals Boufflers, Belle Isle, and Saxe, and, in later days, Berthier, Grouchy, Moncey, and Sebastiani, are a few chosen haphazard from a hundred others. La Fayette, Milhaud, and Lepic, with the Duke of Chartres (afterwards Louis Philippe) also prove that service in the dragoons is not a bad school in which to win fame and notoriety.

ITALY.

