



## Sandhurst, Berks.

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(Continued from page 78, Vol. 21.)

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### MILITARY MANŒUVRES.

Before going on to the events of the nineteenth century it may be worth recording that in the year 1792 the first regularly organised military manœuvres took place on our borders, when for three weeks a force of about 7,000 of all arms were encamped on the heath south of Cæsar's Camp.

Revolution was in the air, and the Opposition thought it their business to make a great fuss about the proposed operations. Lord Lauderdale, after declaring that the camp was being formed to overawe the people of the Metropolis and destroy their efforts for a reform, proceeded to make such a violent attack on the Duke of Richmond, who was to command the troops, that the latter sent him a challenge. Political pamphleteers also took the matter up, notably Peter Pindar, who, in his "Lyrical Epistle to Lord Macartney," makes fun of the King, the bravery of the Generals, the mock battles, etc.

The camp for the time became all the rage. The manœuvres were watched daily by an interested crowd, special coaches were run from London, and reports furnished by the newspapers. Both at Astley's and Sadler's Wells Theatres dramatic entertainments with scenes from the camp were provided. The latter announced "An entirely new Musical Sketch, called 'Mar's Holiday,' or 'A Trip to the Camp,' in which is presented through the medium of Recitative, Song, Dance, and Spectacle, a variety of scenes, comic and military, taken from the grand Encampment in the neighbourhood of Bag-

shot." These scenes on further examination prove to be "The setting out and progress of the camp caravan," "A characteristic scene on the outskirts of the Heath," and "A striking and whimsical representation of the Suttling Ground at the Rear of the Lines." The entertainment concluded with a grand panoramic view of the camp and "a military divertisement and finale in which is introduced among other appropriate exercises the New Prussian Manual." Meanwhile at the camp a good deal of hard and useful work was being put in by the troops, including attacks on entrenched positions, night surprises and marches. The Prince of Wales came over from Bagshot Lodge to join his regiment, the 10th Light Dragoons, and entertained his brother officers with two hogs-heads of claret and a 250lb. turtle. The King was constantly riding over from Windsor, and on one occasion at least took up his position in Sandhurst village to watch an attack on Edgbarrow, Ambarrow, and Longdown.

At the end of the training there was a most imposing field day. By six o'clock in the morning over 100,000 persons were upon the ground, many of whom had spent the night there. The troops paraded at 8, and soon after the King and Royal Family arrived. After a march past in slow time the sham fight began. A series of redoubts, some of which may still be seen, had been dug in a semi-circle along the crest of a plateau from Wagbullock hill to near Wishmore Star, and these were made the object of the attack. The assailants were, however, repulsed, and fled pursued by two regiments of Light Dragoons. The Duke of Richmond conducted the operations, being attended by two running footmen dressed in white, who conveyed his messages to different parts of the field. The greatest enthusiasm was displayed by the numerous spectators, and the King and Queen constantly expressed their approval.

The "Reading Mercury" says: "To those who approached the royal tents it was a sight truly gratifying. Their Majesties appeared by their gracious manner to relinquish the pomp of State. His Majesty observed in great good humour that the youngest Princesses were so anxious to see the review that they could not sleep all night for fear they should not awaken in time." By noon over 15,000 horsemen, besides a vast number of pedestrians, were present. "Several well-dressed sprightly females," says the "Morning Post," "assumed the shoulder knot place behind the carriages and were thus drawn many miles over the Heath, while many noblemen even condescended to ascend the box behind their own carriages in order the better to view the proceedings."

When the troops moved back to camp for dinner the spectators sought refreshment at the caterers' tents. The food available, however, proved quite inadequate, and soon a free fight ensued. It was a broiling hot day; there was very little water to be got, and this went at 5s. a bucket; beer was soon at the same price for one bottle. Many horses lay in the woods exhausted from thirst and fatigue and unable to move.

After dinner the 11th Light Dragoons gave a display with the light guns which had just been attached to the regiment, proving that they could travel for some distance at a rate of 12 miles an hour. Artillery practice followed, and a wooden redoubt was cannonaded and destroyed by red hot balls. The day's work at length concluded at 6 o'clock with "the grand and tremendous springing of a mine." This gave great satisfaction, the redoubt rising some 40 feet into the air and disappearing in dust and smoke. King George was especially pleased, if we are to believe Peter Pindar, by the colossal figure of a man, made of straw, which was blown out of the hill by the explosion.

So ended the great day, and those of the spectators who were able returned to London, but many were left to spend the night on the Heath till they could be fetched the next day.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

During the first fifty years of the nineteenth century no great development of the parish took place.\* Mr. Heaviside sold Sandhurst Lodge with the rest of his property to Mr. Gibson, and later a good deal of the land at the western end passed into the hands of Mr. John Walter, becoming part of the Bearwood estate. As already mentioned, the common was all enclosed by the Act of 1813, in which year the ploughmen of the village were busily employed marking off by furrows the new allotments.

The Royal Military College was opened at Sandhurst during the winter of 1812-13. It had been inaugurated by Royal Warrant as a place of education for future officers of the army in 1802, but had previous to that time existed as a school for the improvement of

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\* The population in 1801 was 222. Carlisle, Top. Dict.

present officers, first at High Wycombe, and afterwards at Great Marlow. The following extract from the "Morning Herald" of August 19th, 1799, refers to its early days :—

" We sometime since announced the establishment of a military college at High Wycombe under the immediate patronage of Field-Marshal the Duke of York, and conducted by the Prussian General Jarry, assisted by Colonel Le Merchant of the 7th Light Dragoons and other officers, etc., of approved ability. The institution, which, comprising the entire of the improved system of modern tactics, is not beneath even the well informed in the former art of war, at present instructs thirty officers, amongst whom is a Lieutenant-Colonel, some Majors, etc., who to their high honour are desirous of being masters of their profession. The establishment to be commensurate with its important objects, is to comprise two hundred gentlemen in actual possession of commissions, two hundred, who when thoroughly qualified, are to receive them without purchase, and three hundred of the sons of private soldiers who are to be made competent to the duties of non-commissioned officers, upon whom the good conduct of an army ever materially depend. The education is provided at the expense of the State, which allows forage to the horses of the pupils and six shillings a week towards the lodging of each ; each gentleman paying the sutler three and eight pence per day for his board, including a pint of wine at dinner, an allowance not to be upon any day exceeded."

The history of the college has been fully written by Colonel Mockler Ferryman. He shows how the original idea of making it to a great extent an institution supported by the State was gradually abandoned ; till in 1832 all grants in aid were withdrawn and the college became self-supporting. The scheme for the education of private soldiers appears not to have been proceeded with.

The original foundation continued at Great Marlow as the Senior Department till 1821, when its fifteen students were transferred to Camberley, and later it developed into the Staff College. Owing to the failure of the contractor building operations were much delayed and it is estimated that by the time Wyatt's building was completed it had cost the Government £350,000. Several regiments were encamped in the neighbourhood to assist in the laying out of the grounds, and among other work they formed the lower lake by digging out the old Blackwater Mill pond.\*

Until recent years, except for the hamlet of Owlsmoor, the growth of houses connected with the R.M.C. and Staff College took place on the Frimley side along the coach road, resulting in the formation of Camberley and York Town, while the life of the village was unaffected.

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\* Mockler Ferryman, "Annals of Sandhurst."

The Rev. J. B. Somers Carwithen, to whose memory there is a tablet in the south chapel, held the perpetual curacy with that of Frimley from 1810 to 1832. He was an authority on church history, author of a history of the Church of England, and delivered a Bampton Lecture on Brahminism. There is a tradition that during his incumbency the parsonage house was haunted by the ghost of a dead child, which used to wail at night in the most fearful manner; and would not cease until the Bishop of Salisbury was prevailed upon to come and lay it.

There are only two references of interest concerning the church in the Dean's Visitation Book during this period.

“ 1813. Ordered that the small bell lately fallen down be sold and the money appropriated to the repair of the church.

1818. Ordered that the singers be excluded from within the Communion rails. That a place be appointed for them near the font and that the church fence be repaired.”

In 1836 the County of Berks became part of the Oxford diocese, and in 1846 the Dean's peculiar of Sonning ceased to exist.

The heath continued the haunt of the Broom Squire and the gipsy, who, even after the Inclosure, camped undisturbed on the moors to the north of the village. But a change was coming over the face of the country in the fir plantations which began to cover the formerly bare heath.

*(To be continued).*

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GREAT FAWLEY CHURCH.—I wish to add a few particulars to the account of the Church at Great Fawley, Berks, by R. C. Price, in the January, 1915, number of this Journal. Mr. Wroughton's mother, Mrs. Blanch Wroughton, shared with him in building the new Church. The centre arch, the south side of the Church, and the two half pillars built against the west wall, were brought from the old Church. The old pewter communion service is preserved—in a glass case—fastened to the wall near the vestry door. I have been told that the old Norman font was buried beneath the new one in the present Church.—B. C. WROUGHTON.