

THE ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS.

THE RECORD OF THE 'FAUGH-A-BALLAGHS.'

THE gallant action performed by the Royal Irish Fusiliers, as reported in last Thursday's daily papers, reminds us that the history of that famous regiment is a very brilliant one. The Eighty-Seventh was raised over a century ago—in 1793—by Lieutenant Colonel Sir John Doyle, afterwards General Sir John Doyle. The first exploit of the regiment was performed when it was on service in Flanders, during the war between Great Britain and Holland. It got its baptism of fire in repelling an outpost attack at Alost, when General Doyle was wounded.

IN SOUTH AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES.

In 1795 the regiment was sent into Bergen-op-Zoom to be drilled but was there taken as prisoners of war by the French. After being returned to England the regiment, in 1796, saw service in the West Indies, under Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby, and remained there eight years, losing, by diseases incident to the climate, many officers and between 700 and 800 men.

In 1804 a second battalion was added to the first. Three years later the first battalion took part in the campaign in South America and took the city of Monte Video by storm—an exploit for which they were allowed to show the words 'Monte Video' on their regimental colours and appointments. They subsequently, July 5, 1807, compelled the surrender of the troops defending Buenos Ayres to the number of 1,500.

The first battalion of the regiment from the years 1808 and 1809 was stationed at the Cape of Good Hope. Its next place of service was India, where it compelled the rajah of Nepal, who had broken his treaty with the East India Company, to sue for peace. Its subsequent service in India, up to the year 1821, obtained for it the gift of silver cups and plate, as well as special recognition for meritorious conduct by the Governor-General of India.

After a brief campaign in Burmah, on June 23, 1827, the Eighty-seventh was landed in England, and has been placed on the British establishment from that day inclusive, with an effective strength of 208 rank and file. In token of its exploits, the regiment now received the name of "The Prince of Wales' Own Irish Regiment of Fusiliers," and blue facings were adopted, instead of green, in order to make it uniform with the other fusilier regiments. On April 1, 1848, the regiment was augmented to fifty-seven sergeants, twenty-one drummers, fifty corporals and 950 privates.

THE BATTLE OF TALAVERA.

The second battalion, raised from the counties of Tipperary Galway, and Clare, was placed on the establishment of the army from December 25, 1804, at 600 rank and file, augmented the following year to 800, and in the year 1807 to 1000.

In March, 1809, the battalion was sent to Lisbon, and there joined the army under the command of General Sir Arthur Wellesley. It was employed in the operations against the French at Oporto, and in April pursued the French army, which had retreated from Portugal towards Madrid.

The regiment next took part in the battle of Talavera. The English regiments, here putting the French skirmishers aside, met the advancing columns with loud shouts, and breaking in on their front, lapping their flanks with fire, pushed them back with terrible carnage. Ten guns were taken, and though the French rallied on their supports their effort was a vain one. The British artillery and musketry played too vehemently on their masses, and a Spanish regiment of cavalry charging on their flank at the same time, the whole army retired in disorder, and the victory was secured.

In the action Major general McKenzie, who commanded the division of which the Eighty-seventh formed part, was killed. The news of the victory of Talavera, gained over the French army commanded by Joseph Bonaparte in person, excited great joy in England, and Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley was raised to the peerage, with the title of Viscount Wellington. The Eighty-seventh subsequently received the royal authority to bear the word 'Talavera' on the regimental colours and appointments, in commemoration of the conduct of the second battalion on the occasion.

'THE EAGLE-TAKERS.'

In the early part of 1810 the battalion proceeded to Cadiz, then besieged by a powerful French army under Marshal Soult, and was occupied the whole of the year in erecting batteries and strengthening the defences of the place. In 1811 the force of which the battalion formed part gained, at Barrosa, under Lieutenant-General Graham, a decisive victory over the French army under Marshal Victor.

In this engagement the eagle of the other French regiment and a howitzer were captured and remained in possession of Major Gough of the Eighty-seventh regiment. Lieutenant-General Graham subsequently congratulated General Sir John Doyle on the steadiness and gallantry displayed by the second battalion in an action which redounded so much to the fame of the British arms.

The Eighty-seventh next successfully defended the breach made by the French in the walls of the town of Tarifa, the drums and fifes of the regiment playing 'Patrick's Day' and 'Garry Owen' as the French, much more numerous, came up to receive their fire.

A LIMERICK FOOTBALLER.

The battalion next performed several marches under circumstances of considerable hardship and difficulty. On one occasion, when the Eighty-seventh had taken up its ground on a hill not far from the enemy, a shell from a masked howitzer fell in the centre of one of the companies. The men naturally tried to get out of the way, when James Geraghty, a private grenadier, called to the men that he would show them 'how they played football in Limerick.' He immediately kicked the live shell, with its burning fuse, over

the edge of the hill. The moment it touched the ground it exploded, without injuring anybody. For this gallant act the commanding officer made the man a handsome present.

'THE OLD FOGS.'

The struggle at Vittoria was the next battlefield in which the Irish Fusiliers distinguished themselves. In this conflict the Eighty-seventh, under Gough, had the honour of taking the baton of Marshal Jourdan, in acknowledgement of which the Prince Regent made the Marquis of Wellington a field marshal. The Eighty-seventh subsequently won honours in an engagement at Nivelles, where great gallantry was displayed in an attack upon a fortified hill.

The Eighty-seventh also fought in the Netherlands in the war of 1814-1815; at Ava in 1826, and took part in suppressing the Indian mutiny of 1857-1858.

The Irish Fusiliers were nicknamed 'The Old Fogs,' also 'The Faugh-a-Ballagh Boys,' from 'Fag an Bealac' (clear the way), its cry at Barossa; also 'The Eagle Takers.' The regiment bear the plume of the Prince of Wales, also an eagle with a wreath of laurel, from the capture of the French eagle, as described above; also a harp and crown.

From 1793 to 1811 the regiment was known as 'The Prince of Wales' Irish'; and from 1811 to 1827, as 'The Prince of Wales' Own Irish,' and from 1827 as 'The Royal Irish Fusiliers.'

Correspondence.

[We are not responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

MIXED MARRIAGES.

TO THE EDITOR.

REV. SIR,—The evils that arise in so many cases from mixed marriages is a question that has long caused, and is still causing, deep anxiety to the Catholic clergy and laity of Australasia. The first Plenary Council that met in Sydney made special mention of the subject in the Pastoral Letter addressed to the clergy and laity of these colonies. With your kind permission I would like to express my opinion as to the cause of a large number of the mixed marriages that take place in our midst, and also to offer a few suggestions that I think would, if adopted, at least reduce the number of these undesirable unions. I may at once state that I do not wish to pose as an authority on so great a subject; I merely speak from my experience as a colonial who has lived all his life in the country and it is to scattered country districts that I most particularly refer.

First, as to some of the causes of mixed marriages. As surely as fire and tow will ignite, so surely will young people become attached to each other when brought constantly together. The Catholics of this Colony are, I believe, only about one-seventh of the population, and it can be easily seen that in scattered districts such as I refer to the Catholic young man or young woman may have many neighbours and friends of other denominations, but be intimate with very few Catholics. Evening parties and dances are very common forms of amusement in the country during the winter months, and I can say from experience that I have been frequently at parties where there have been from 12 to 20 young ladies, but not one Catholic among the number. I believe it is generally admitted that a very considerable number of engagements always take place on the voyage from Home to the Colonies and vice versa, chiefly because of the reason alluded to by me—the fact that the contracting parties see so much of each other during the trip, and therefore become attached to each other.

Having endeavoured to show some of the causes of mixed marriages in country districts I will now venture to offer a few suggestions that would in my opinion reduce their number. Let the Catholic parents, with the assistance of their clergy, form the acquaintance and seek the friendship of their fellow-Catholics at some distance from home; as very often in the country there may be no eligible Catholics within many miles. The people of New Zealand travel a good deal, and I have often been in a strange town and not known a Catholic in it. I feel convinced that if there were a better spirit of combination and unity among the heads of Catholic families it could not fail to produce good results for their children and for the future of the Church in the Colony. I maintain that it is the duty of parents, as far as they are able, to assist their children in making the acquaintance of those whose company would be beneficial to them, and who would be likely to make them suitable life partners. Such a course of action would, with God's blessing, lead to far more truly Christian marriages than take place at the present time. But this is, I fear, a duty that is greatly neglected. How often do we see young and inexperienced people left almost entirely to their own judgment as to the persons whom they choose for companions; and is it to be wondered at that they frequently make undesirable acquaintances?

In the towns Catholics have many ways of meeting each other, such as sociale, bazars, picnics, etc., but these are almost unknown in many parts of the country. Consequently Catholics in many districts have few opportunities of becoming acquainted with each other. Trusting that this letter will be acceptable to your columns and that someone with more knowledge of the subject than I possess will contribute further to it.—I am, etc.,

T. Q.

MR. P. LUNDON, Phoenix Chambers, Wanganui, is still busy putting people on the soil. He has also hotels in town and country For Sale and To Lease. Write to him.—* *