

*Echoes from the Past***SIR JAMES McGRIGOR, BART.****Surgeon-General Sir James McGrigor, Bart., K.C.B., F.R.S.,  
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BY

**S. LYLE CUMMINS***(continued from page 89)***PART II****THE WEST INDIES**

THOSE who know their "Roderick Random" will realize what it was to be sent to the West Indies during the eighteenth century. For the "other ranks" at any rate the experiences must have been very like those of Bob Rattlin and others so vividly told in his great novel by Tobias George Smollett. The conditions cannot have improved much in the early years of the nineteenth century while the ships were still the same "wooden walls" that had made Old England famous and yet hid so much misery for the sick and wounded below decks.

The Connaught Rangers were, however, embarked on board a large and roomy vessel, the "Jamaica," and there awaited the order to sail. Meantime McGrigor sat at his ease writing letters of farewell to his friends and dealing with the many things that had to be committed to writing before a long and eventful voyage. As he was so engaged, the Commander and the Adjutant of a party of men drafted to the regiment came on board and said that the Surgeon of the 88th should accompany them at once to inspect the men. "I merely exchanged the slippers I had on for a pair of boots, put a boat-cloak over my shoulders, and jumped into the boat alongside." A long and heavy pull brought them alongside the transport and, as it was already very late before McGrigor had examined all the men and as, moreover, a heavy wind had now arisen, he accepted the invitation of the Commandant to dinner and a bed on shore for the night and made himself as comfortable as he could under the circumstances. In the morning he heard gun signals which, as subsequently explained, were intended for the Mediterranean vessels only but were misunderstood by those intended for the West Indies also, and, having ascertained that all the men of the draft for the 88th had deserted during the night! secured a boat and went in search of the "Jamaica" but found that she had already started. Nothing daunted, he hailed a ship called the "Betsy," getting aboard with the 48th Regiment, so that he might pick up his own ship as soon as possible. The officers on board were very good to him, lending him clothes and making him as comfortable as possible

though he hoped to regain the "Jamaica" fairly soon. This, however, proved a false hope for, as day succeeded day and as vessel after vessel was hailed, there was no sign of the much-desired ship.

Still he hoped that the explanation lay in the faster sailing qualities of the "Jamaica" and so settled down as comfortably as might be on board the "Betsy," getting the cabin reserved for a certain Colonel Malcolm who had been left on shore in the confusion. He found on board various officers who proved to be very good fellows, Captain Airey, for instance (later to be Sir George Airey, the Quartermaster-General in the Crimea), and others. Thus, with such kit as he could borrow and such arrangements as he was able to make, he settled down for what proved to be a six weeks' voyage to Barbados very comfortably and with no misgivings. The brush of Smollett made the life in one of the old sailing ships comprehensible, but how different was the experience of a military officer travelling with reserved accommodation on board a good ship like the "Betsy" with fairly favourable weather and freedom to do just what he liked. The six weeks of the voyage must have slipped by with the busy idleness of a pleasant dream. But a rude shock awaited McGrigor on arriving at Barbados. *There was no trace of the "Jamaica."* Had she not started? Or was she now in some other port of the West Indies? The main fact was that the ships of the fleet had not yet arrived. The "Betsy" appeared to be the only one as yet. Whatever had delayed the rest must have delayed the "Jamaica" too. A fortnight later the West India ships began to arrive but there was not yet any trace of the awaited vessel. Then the truth was ascertained from the Captain of another. It seemed that the "Jamaica" had been obliged to delay for some trifling matter of repair and had gone into Gibraltar to have the alteration carried out. On leaving Gibraltar to continue her voyage she had been so unlucky as to fall in with a French frigate, the "Tribune," and had been captured and carried to Brest. The officers of the 88th had been very badly treated by the Captain of the "Tribune" and had had most of their kits and valuables taken from them but, as McGrigor learnt afterwards, they had finally been exchanged as Prisoners of War and had been sent back to England. As to the non-appearance of McGrigor himself, it had been ascertained that an officer had fallen between two ships and been crushed to death and it had been taken for granted that this was the fate of McGrigor! He had been reported dead by his own brother and replaced by a surgeon from the Glasgow Regiment, one Hamilton, who does not appear to have been very popular! So much for the explanations that were forthcoming later.

For the present, McGrigor appears to have fallen on his feet as usual and to have been appointed to be the head of the Medical Staff at Grenada, the self-same island where Smollett, in the person of Roderick Random, described the attacks of the British on the Spanish positions some half a century earlier, and where there appears to have been still considerable opposition. Reports had reached Barbados that the whole of Grenada with

the exception of Georgetown and of Richmond Hill was in possession of the negroes—and such of the French as were in arms there—and it had been determined to supplement the garrison there and proceed against the blacks. McGrigor, as I have said above, was sent to Grenada as P.M.O. and the force, though greatly crowded, landed at St. George's safely and proceeded to Richmond Hill some miles away. After a time he was sent in medical charge of a party under Colonel Dyott of the 25th Regiment and had hospitality from a planter on one of the little islands that are so abundant in the neighbourhood. Then he, with a number of others, started for "Madam Hook's Bay" but the whole party was shipwrecked on the way and, though nobody was lost, still McGrigor and others had a very close shave of it and all his kit, which he had had such difficulty in bringing up to something like correctness, was missing. McGrigor speaks of a number of them crowding on board a boat that had been brought round to help them and he mentions how, with the boat full so that one more would have been one too many, he and others had to harden their hearts and forcibly prevent a woman from getting on board; one more woman one too many! So they got to the land and had a very uncomfortable time of it, McGrigor bemoaning the loss of all his kit and all his money as well. And then some hours later an honest Serjeant appeared with a portmanteau of his with one or two hundred dollars inside it: judge of McGrigor's feelings when the Serjeant's wife, who had actually rescued it, turned out to be the same woman whom they had turned away in her attempts to get on board the boat!

Meanwhile, a detachment of the 88th, under Captain Vandeleur, which had reached Barbados, came on to Grenada where McGrigor joined it, and great were the rejoicings when, once more, he foregathered with his own regiment. But I continue to think of that heroic woman who had rescued his portmanteau for him even when he had restrained her or assisted in doing so from getting into the boat which would have brought her to safety! "Of such," it appears to me, "are the Kingdom of Heaven." In the meantime the Negroes had to be turned out of the positions which they held and the 88th, with other regiments, had to do the turning. In the operations which ensued, the 88th got into difficulties and was, for the moment, cut off and badly handled by the blacks.

Here is McGrigor's account of the fighting: "As the men fell or were wounded the latter were brought to me under a tree. While engaged dressing their wounds, the situation being rather an exposed one, a gun was opened on it and one shot killed two of the wounded close to where I stood. I felt something moist on my face. At the same time I observed the two poor fellows dead and terribly mangled close by me; and a Serjeant came up to me and, taking me by the arm, told me I was wounded and that he would assist in placing me on the grass. I said I believed I was *not* wounded but, as he insisted, I was placed on the ground, where, on rubbing my face, I found it covered with the blood and part of the brains of one of the poor

fellows near me; and getting up I convinced the Serjeant that I was not wounded. In a very short time after this I found the men and officers in rapid retreat and passing me. I lost no time in joining them and, I confess, I never made better use of my legs!" . . . "The bullets tore up the ground close to us on either side and even between our legs; how we escaped was to me a miracle." The Blacks, and as many of their French friends as they had with them, appear to have put up a very good show and there was severe fighting. The position, however, was at last taken, and remained in English hands. The 29th Regiment appears to have especially distinguished itself in this engagement.

After all these adventures McGrigor was attacked with severe dysentery and found it necessary to return to St. George's. The General, on hearing of this, took the opportunity of charging him with the Despatches for England which were to be forwarded by the Officer in Command at St. George's, and he started off hoping to reach his destination all right. Dysentery, however, is a serious affliction and so bad did McGrigor's dysentery become on the way that he persuaded the Captain of the schooner in which he had sailed to put him on shore at a point about four miles from Richmond Hill from which he hoped to make his way thither on foot instead of waiting on board for another week or so. But his internal adversary did not spare him and he was obliged to seek refuge in a house near-by. There appeared to be no one about and so he waited, being unable to go forward. Then somebody made his presence felt and McGrigor attempted to rise and make himself known; and then, wonder of wonders, there appeared a very familiar figure, a figure which he had been very familiar with at the Medical School of Aberdeen, that of a Mr. Pemberton, a West Indian whom he had known well as a medical student in the old days and was particularly relieved to encounter in his extremity. Pemberton was very kind to him and, after he had rested a while, put him on a horse with a man on each side of him and rode with him into Richmond Hill, seeing him into a place where he could be looked after until the dysentery was better. Here he found a large force with whom he joined up as he became once more master of himself. The French prisoners, many of whom had been active agents in the murder of a former English authority, Governor Hume, were here on trial. "In one day about twenty of these French prisoners were executed on a large gibbet in the Market Place of St. George's, leaving wives and families behind. It was said that the greater part of them possessed incomes of upwards of E1500 per annum." This wholesale execution was in keeping with the times, no doubt, but would be regarded rightly as plain murder nowadays.

Grenada was finally reoccupied by the English and things became quiet again but, as a result, perhaps, of this sudden peace and the want of occupation and of dispersion of the troops became very sick. "The number that died of yellow fever was four times that of those that fell by the bullet and by the bayonet." "I feel convinced that, in many cases, the disease was communi-

cated by contagion *although not in its origin a contagious disease.*" So said McGrigor, his thoughts full of the causation of a malady that has since been proved to be transmitted by the mosquito. How did he know that the yellow fever was not, in its origin, a contagious disease? So bad did the "Yellow Jack" become that the first question put to an official on entering the coffee room was "Who died yesterday." Almost always the answer was some name or names well known on the island.

#### RETURN TO ENGLAND

The Connaught Rangers now received orders to return to England. To return home again! That is the best news that a soldier can have. No doubt it was the same in McGrigor's time as it is now; but many a brave fellow, cherishing in his breast the thought of seeing his people again, or longing for wife and child, must have embarked full of hope, only to find a grave in the vast ocean, a victim to "Yellow Jack." For that was the fate awaiting a great many of them as we shall see as we continue our story.

As for McGrigor himself, however, the thought of leaving the West Indies, where he was just making himself known and enjoying an increasing number of friends, was not so very welcome. And, to further such ideas, a certain Dr. Reynolds, of one of the local regiments, wished to negotiate an exchange. They decided to meet and discuss the matter and, for this purpose, Reynolds came to dine with McGrigor in the Mess—where everything might have been settled but that the guest became so excited as the result of redundant hospitality that he was quite unfit to discuss *anything!* So, at last, he was hoisted on to his horse and, accompanied by another officer who promised to see him home safely, started for his quarters, the question of the exchange being postponed until he should be fit to discuss it in a more reasonable frame of mind. Next day, McGrigor, to his great sorrow, heard that poor Reynolds was dead. He had been attacked with what was said to be violent diarrhoea and had succumbed before anything effective could be done for him. And so the intended negotiations came to an end and McGrigor left for England with the regiment.

But the 88th was now in for a bad time. Owing to the hurry of departure, the ship had sailed with very inadequate provisions and the rations on board were exceedingly short. "There was neither bread nor biscuits on board," says McGrigor. "A little rice only, in lieu of it was sparingly distributed to us; our only food salt and fresh pork alternately; our vessel very crank and the soldiers and crew dispirited." The next disaster was that the Captain died of yellow fever, an ominous happening in itself and made still more so for the crew by the accident that followed: The carpenter made a coffin for him but this was so loosely put together that, when thrown overboard, "as I pronounced the words 'We therefore commit his body to the deep,' the planks came apart and the body uncovered floated upon the sea, to the horror of the sailors." The great thing, now, was to find another man to act

as Captain in the place of the departed and this proved not a very easy task. The first chosen proved absolutely unsuitable. He was "so constantly drunk" that he could not be trusted at all. In this extremity it was decided to place Captain Vandeleur, of the 88th, who had already passed several years as a midshipman, in charge of the ship as Captain, which duty he carried out as best he could though rather badly. At last, however, he managed to bring the ship safely into the Cove of Cork where the officers were delighted to put up at a little inn on the pier where, for the first time for long, they were able to eat good food again. They were given a "security" by the General Officer Commanding, General Massey, afterwards Lord Clarina, while the old ship, although reported as out of order and unseaworthy, was repaired for the journey across to England. This voyage, bringing the regiment safely back to the British Isles from the West Indies, had really been a very severe strain to the "other ranks" several of whom had succumbed to yellow fever shortly after the Captain's death from that disease and who must have suffered still more from the deficiency of rations than the officers themselves. It can be imagined, without much exaggeration, that the conditions described by Smollett in "Roderick Random," were reproduced fairly closely; "But when I followed him into the Side Berth or Hospital and observed the conditions of the patients I was much less surprised that people should die on board than that any sick should recover." Smollett, in the character of Roderick Random, describes the patients on board ship as "deprived of the light of day as well as of the fresh air, breathing nothing but a noisome atmosphere of the morbid steams exhaled from their own excrement and diseased bodies." Let us hope that conditions had improved somewhat half a century later.

Now, however, all was well again. The sick-rate of the men was less and there was no Yellow Jack to be feared. The "Betsy" was repaired and they had a safe passage to Portsmouth where, after a few days of quarantine, the whole ship's company was liberated.

The 88th moved to Halifax, where the clothiers had been very turbulent of late and where the presence of a regiment was felt to be desirable, McGrigor himself taking a few days of "leave" to London. On his way to the Northumberland Coffee House where he usually stayed when in Town, who should he meet but Maconnachie, his old friend who had been so good to him in the Low Countries. But what a change had come over him! "He breathed hard and spoke but few words which were almost inarticulate. I ascribed this to his wonted disease, asthma, with which he was frequently affected but he still grasped my hand without saying anything, looking very pale." The reason of all this emotion was explained after a glass of wine in the Coffee House where Maconnachie explained that, for months, he had believed McGrigor to be dead. He had heard from a Dr. Robertson in Barbados that his friend had been amongst those killed at the engagement in Grenada. "We dined and spent the evening together at the Northumberland Coffee House and we each recounted our travels and adventures since we last parted." It is not difficult

to imagine that the two had a great deal to tell each other and that they kept the waiters busy during long hours at the Northumberland Coffee House.

The three Companies of the 88th joined the Headquarters at Halifax and, after the great reception was over, they settled down as a regiment to enjoy a period of tranquillity. McGrigor found his brother here, now a Lieutenant, and they must have had much to tell each other from the supposed death of our hero, which his brother had mourned, to the evacuation from France, as exchanges, in which his brother had taken part. But regiments did not have much time to remain inactive in those days and the Connaught Rangers were interrupted in their repose by sudden orders to repair to Southampton to embark for Jersey; their old port of departure on a former occasion. On the way they heard of the Naval Mutiny on the *Nore* and hurried forward by forced marches towards what appeared to be a very serious affair. They were, however, stopped at Petersfield for three days and held in leash there while the Mutiny went through its course. It was here that they encountered the Captain of the French ship, the "*Tribune*," which had captured them and held them prisoners some time previously. This man was now, in his turn, a Prisoner of War, and the officers were inclined to get back a bit of their own, now that he was at their mercy! But Colonel Beresford, in spite of considerable feeling, insisted on inviting him to dinner and making him a Member of the Mess, showing him, in fact, every consideration in his power; a good example to some of the youngsters who did not quite appreciate generous conduct and its effects! Then the regiment resumed its march to Portsmouth, which town it reached in due course, to find the mutiny in full swing. It was impossible for an officer or a private soldier to be seen in the streets without being insulted and they had to go out, several officers or men together. "At this time the Corps of Officers of the 88th, about 30 in number, took places and went to the Theatre together. A great body of soldiers, all Irishmen, got tickets for the Gallery where there were many disorderly sailors with their dissolute female companions. We called for 'God save the King.' After a bit of a struggle this was sung and was always sung from that time onwards at the Patent Theatre." About this time or soon after the conciliatory measures of the Government took effect on board the Fleet and they gave up their delegates.

#### INDIA AND THE EAST

"On Christmas Day, 1798, we embarked at Portsmouth for India and arrived at Bombay about the middle of the following May." About six months spent in getting to India from England; a fairly good passage for those days; when I myself went to India by the Suez Canal in 1898 we took altogether about three weeks; now they do the trip in a couple of days by air!

In those days they must have gone round the Cape but they were in touch with many places for the getting of provisions until they had to cross the Indian Ocean where, no doubt, they suffered from deficiency disease for want

of fresh vegetables, for McGrigor, on noting the arrival of the ship at a position just north of Ceylon, mentions that they made good this want and that "our stock" of vegetables and fruit "had the effect of arresting scurvey." On their way to Bombay they stopped for a time at the Island of Johanna which is in the Comarin group. "Soon after we dropped anchor the King of Johanna came on board attended by some of his dusky Ministers," says McGrigor, and he also mentions that the dark lady who washed his clothes for him, adopting an English name as did many of her companions and contemporaries, was known as the Duchess of Devonshire! No doubt she washed his clothes none the worse for her magnificent designation. At Johanna they were able to provide themselves with "a good stock of cocoa nuts and such vegetables and fruits . . . as the island afforded." It must have been a wonderful change for the men, especially, and also for the officers who, poor fellows, had not tasted anything fresh, in the way of meat, milk or vegetables for a considerable time.

From Johanna they made their way up the coast and finally reached Bombay where, for some time, they stayed as part of the garrison. The Connaught Rangers were stationed at the island of Colabah, connected with the mainland at low tide, where they appear to have been very comfortable. McGrigor mentions particularly the kindness and hospitality shown both personally to him but also to the regiment by the General Officer Commanding at Bombay, Sir James Stuart, and he became very intimate with many of the Medical Officers in the Company's Service and contracted lasting friendships with them as well as with the local Practitioners. With one of them, Doctor Helenus Scott, he contracted an intimacy which lasted for twenty years, both in India and, afterwards in England, until the death of Dr. Scott brought it to an end.

The 88th must have spent some fifteen months at Bombay. They had reached India in May 1799 and had been long enough in Bombay to allow McGrigor to contract many friendships there and to become accustomed to the place. But a British regiment was liable to be warned for anything that was going forward and, sure enough, the Connaughts were suddenly ordered to embark again and to proceed to Ceylon "for a particular service." McGrigor mentions that they were opposite Goa on St. Patrick's Day—which must have been in the year 1800, though it is extraordinary how few dates are given in his autobiography to guide us as to the years. On this festal day, so much counted on in an Irish regiment, they celebrated gloriously, as appears from the following: "Sir William Clarke sent us off a basket of vegetables, fruits, and especially the fine Goa mango." "Colonel Beresford contributed from his private stock some champagne to drink the health of the Patron Saint of the day, and I contributed six bottles of fine old hock from my stock. We passed the day in the most good-humoured conviviality and there was a dance in the evening for the soldiers and their wives." The Sir William Clarke mentioned was probably the G.O.C. and Governor. There was a British regiment at Goa,



the 84th, and presumably several Native Corps, so that there was probably at that time sufficient troops to warrant a general at that station. At Ceylon they found the 10th and 51st Foot at Point de Galles, the 80th at Trincomalee, while soon after their landing, European and Native Corps daily joined them from Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. On an expedition to a lake fairly near at hand McGrigor had to intervene to stop the shooting of monkeys. "One of the latter gave such human-like cries when wounded," but the officers shot a lot of wild turkeys, so he says, and various other birds of the island. But, although allowing himself occasional days on shore, McGrigor did most of his duty looking after the sick of the regiment on board ship while he designated Bruce, his assistant, to carry out this work on shore. "Of the cases which came under my care in the hospital on board ship a large proportion was what is called Guinea Worm."

The expedition from Ceylon had been intended for Batavia but, as the regiments concentrated there, a despatch came out from England ordering it to proceed to Egypt and, before going there, to return to Bombay. The Expedition's new destination was determined by recent events and the necessity "of expelling the French from the dominions of the Grand Signor" where, once fixed, there was always the possibility of their invading the Company's territories in India. The expedition was at that time intended to be under the command of Colonel Wellesley who was then in Bombay and McGrigor was introduced to him there by Dr. Helenus Scott. Here, too, McGrigor was paid the great compliment of being appointed head of the Medical Staff of the expedition by his friends of the Medical Board of Bombay "with a Company's Commission or appointment of that character," the first King's officer, so he says, ever to be employed in that capacity. A sudden illness, however, was destined to overtake Wellesley and to lay him up so badly that he had to give in to it and Brigadier General Baird was finally appointed to take the command in his place. This is the first mention of Sir David Baird in the Autobiography but by no means the last. As we read through McGrigor's records, we shall encounter many recollections of this gallant officer and many tributes to his efficiency and kindness.

So the expedition left Bombay in a great hurry; it seemed that their duty was very urgent and the ship carrying the Connaught Rangers contained, also, a great many cases of guinea worm, the creatures showing in their victims as a raising of the skin corresponding to the length or part of the length of the worm and an obtruding of the "head"—it was probably not the head at all but a portion of the uterus—and the tendency to form painful abscesses if the worm burst into the tissues of the host. The only form of treatment was to catch the end of the worm in a little bit of split stick and to wind and continue to wind daily; woe to the unfortunate medical man who should wind too fast and tear the worm so that the contents poured out into the tissues! The result was, nearly always, a severe and septic abscess where the embryos had fallen on the exposed surfaces. Dr. Bruce, the Assistant Surgeon, was one of the

victims and had a very painful infection of each of his legs. Meanwhile a steady wind brought them past the opening of the Persian Gulf and to the Straits of Bab el Mandeb. The vessel touched at Jedda and at Mocha, at the latter place taking on board "a stock of the far-famed honey which was both rich and delicious." They had a bad time, owing to unfavourable weather, from Jedda onwards to Kosseir. At that place they disembarked under the orders of Colonel Murray, Admiral Blankett having made arrangement so for them in advance. "The arrival of transport after transport, numbering not less than 100, with troops, provisions and cattle, etc., occasioned no little bustle in the miserable little mud village of Kosseir." Here McGrigor, assuming, for the first time, his authority as Superintendent of the Medical concerns of the Army, made several appointments, such as an Apothecary to the Forces and a Purveyor, the latter position being filled by a Mr. Small of the 8th Light Dragoons, a man previously known to McGrigor and in whom he knew that he could have confidence. We can imagine, though it does not appear in McGrigor's account of things, what anxieties now fell upon Sir David Baird, the General Officer Commanding, who was responsible for the whole movement of the troops to Cairo or as near it as might be possible, and who had to face all sorts of difficulties at the start. He found that a great many bags in which grain had been packed had been worn through and were empty and that many of the mussocks for water were deficient or useless; at the same time he found, also, that the troops were to face an almost waterless march in order to get to Quannah (Kennah) on the Nile.

He wrote to Colonel Beresford, who was now a Staff Officer, of all these things and went forward for temporary work to about twelve miles from Kosseir to see things for himself. There he decided to send on the 10th Foot to Moilah, and from Moilah to Legata, where there was reported to be water in plenty at a place called Mansh-har near-by; at least by digging for it; and so on. He returned to Kosseir on June 22 and was met by a rumour that there were about 15,000 French troops at Cairo who would have to be dealt with. On the 24th, having completed his arrangements for provisions and water, he was in much better spirits and feeling quite confident again. "We must trust to the 'Puckallies' (mussocks) or find water in the desert!" Thus he muses: "The 88th must take their puckallies to Legata and, after the next day's march thither, send them back to Legata for the next Corps." The 10th should take their bags to Moilah and, after the next day's march, send their bags back to Moilah for the next Division."

Thus did Sir David Baird overcome the difficulties of getting his troops over waterless distances of thirty or forty miles; a very successful method as we also found in the Sudan when we were faced with the same problem; but we imagined that we had hit on a new technique whereas Baird had been before us with it by over a hundred years—and probably many before him! ("Life of Sir David Baird.")

We return to McGrigor who we had left at Kosseir struggling with his own

problems as well as with a bad attack of fever—no doubt, malaria—an attack which was not allowed, however, to interfere with his duties of Senior Medical Officer, as had been his charge from the start. Here he met with a great deal of obstruction, at first, from the medical officers of the Company's troops from the Bengal and Madras Presidencies who did not know him and who did not like, incidentally, to find themselves serving under a King's officer; but all this feeling passed away as time went on and he became known to them and he is able to speak of "the most readily perfect obedience on all occasions," as characterizing these officers under the stress of war and of desperate illness which the campaign was destined to bring forth.

The Connaughts succeeded in crossing the desert without great difficulty owing to Sir David Baird's scheme for carrying water and the regiment rested at Quenna, as did all the formations arriving, for a while. In this interval, a Dr. Shapter arrived from England who was senior to McGrigor and to whom the latter handed over; but it was arranged that McGrigor should continue in charge until Egypt was reached when it would be, in any case, necessary for a senior British Officer to take charge of all the Troops.

From Quenna, Dr. McGrigor left by the first "Djerm," or the first *gyassa* as we should have said at a later time, and in her got safely to Ghiza where was the first portion of the English Army. Here Dr. Frank, Inspector of Hospitals, was in charge and at once asked McGrigor for returns of the sick from the Indian Army. This does not seem a great thing to have demanded but McGrigor refused to provide them and was supported, in this, by Sir David Baird; which shows that the two divisions of the forces were separated by an intricate kind of gulf across which it was not considered quite tactful to pass! There was nothing, apparently, of a personal nature about this. Dr. Shapter, for instance, who was much run down after the crossing of the desert, was quite naturally the guest of McGrigor who was already installed. He himself, however, was shortly laid out with a severe attack of some kind of fever, probably malarial in type, but thought at first to be the plague until, in a very few days, his health recovered to an extent which became complete after a voyage to Rosetta. On this voyage, which was executed as part of the movement of the 88th, the men were, as usual, very kind "when they saw the Doctor in such a state." So kind, in fact, were they that they stole a sheep and some chickens for him! He had to pay for these when the facts came out.

McGrigor, once at Rosetta, became his old self again and settled in very comfortably. He was now at El Hamed and settled there with his usual attention to his own conditions. "I had upwards of a dozen Indian servants, with their wives, besides my English soldier-servant, and, for my stock, three camels, two horses, twenty-three sheep, three goats, several dozen fowls, with a good many rabbits, pigeons, etc." "My own large Indian Marquee was in the centre and around were small Arab tents which my servants had raised for themselves. . . . Outside the whole I had a high mound thrown up, made from the vegetation of the bank of the river, having only one large gate to my

premises." Accommodation on this large scale must have allowed of much hospitality, for one thing, and have invested him with the kind of sumptuosity which he thought his due. Nevertheless, he now devoted himself entirely to the medical care of the Connaught Rangers only, Dr. Shapter once more having the superintendence of all the troops, British and other.

After a little while, however, General Baird appears to have grown tired of doing without him and asked for him back as S.M.O. to the whole of the Indian Forces; this being at once allowed. McGrigor now turned his whole attention to steps to be taken in case plague appeared; this dreadful disease had not yet visited the troops but it appeared certain that it would soon be a heavy scourge, the season of plague being now almost on them. It was therefore necessary to have pest-houses ready as well as houses of observation, quarantine, etc., as well as the formation of a Board of Health. All these things were accomplished through the kind help of General Baird. The whole of the Indian Army was now moved to Alexandria, the English Army being, for the most part, embarked for home.

The troops from India were now quartered at Rosetta, Damietta, and such places as were conveniently near to Alexandria, and McGrigor had his own Headquarters at Alexandria itself. The regimental hospital of the Connaught Rangers had, amongst other conveniences, two large rooms, each with a court in front, in one of which McGrigor, apportioning it as a "receiving room," had three large portable baths arranged, where every man was washed prior to his being admitted and given "hospital clothing." And yet, in spite of these sound sanitary precautions, it was in the 88th that the plague first appeared as if to mock the man himself who was taking such elaborate precautions against it! "One morning," he says, "as I was leaving the hospital, . . . I passed the receiving room and observed that one man who was coming out of the bath had buboes both in the groin and about the neck. . . . On my noticing this to the Hospital Steward he told me that several of the last admissions were so affected; and added that every one of the three corpses then in the Dead House, of men who had died the previous day and night were so affected." Here, then, was the Plague! The disease which everyone dreaded and which was known to be so fatal; and it was here, in the hospital of the Connaughts, that it had started! He reported at once to Sir David Baird who took the intelligence very quietly and only enjoined silence; issuing, however, the necessary orders "as to the carrying into effect of the precautionary measures which I had suggested."

The remaining time in Egypt was, in great measure, a hard struggle with that deadly disease, which, to the then medical officer, must have appeared the most obscure and the most mysterious of epidemics, appearing in spite of the most thorough precautions. Even had they known, as we know now, of the rôle of the flea in its transmission, they might still have struggled in vain to protect the natives or the rank and file in a country where the habits and the customs were all against them, though the officers and some of the men must have been saved from such a pest. All this, however, was in the womb of the

future and the cases were to appear in their midst without any clue pointing to the facts of the transmission from one to another. We shall follow the steps which McGrigor took in dealing with this plague epidemic when we start to examine his little book about the diseases of Egypt; a book specially written to describe his experiences with disease. But we must now quit Alexandria and follow him to the south as he prepares for the return of the Anglo-Indian troops back to their base, temporary or permanent, in India. Hostilities with France had now ceased and the country was quiet. McGrigor now proceeded to Cairo by "Djerm"—another name for Gyassa—and made contact with the rest of the Indian army, acting as their Senior Medical Officer and, in this capacity, preparing for their transport back to India.

It was at this time that he met with a little bit of romance which deserves to be recounted; not that it led on to any romance in his own history! When close to his Quarters he suddenly heard the screams of women and the rush and clatter of hoofs. It proved to be the case that three Greek or Circassian ladies were being rounded up by some Turkish soldiers who evidently had the idea of carrying them off for condign punishment. McGrigor, leaping on to his horse and shouting to his servant to come on with another, galloped hard after the miscreants and finally, after a long chase, put them altogether to flight; the Turks never turned on their pursuer and his syce though they might have done so very effectually had they had the courage, for neither McGrigor nor his man were armed. He now turned back to where the beautiful ladies were that had so closely escaped capture and found that they were some of the camp followers of the French army, now left to manage as best they could; the "*chères amies*" of French officers now deserted! It is very probable that they were subsequently re-captured by their tormentors for it was common for the Turks to punish these women for their offences against the faith by taking them away, tying them up in sacks, and then slipping them into the river! Nor was it only women who suffered; Mohammed, the servant of Captain Vandeleur, was very harshly treated when he went home as the result of his having been the servant of an Infidel and he therefore hid himself, as a stow-away, on the ship that carried McGrigor to India where he was discovered and remained the faithful servant of the S.M.O. himself for many years!

He had two more adventures: one following attempt was made by him, with Dr. Dick, Surgeon of the 80th Regiment, to ride to Suez and back, passing close to Moses' Well; It proved too much for them and, as a result, McGrigor had to ride in search of help for Dick who was altogether overcome by the fatigue and the absence of water. Again, McGrigor himself got into extreme difficulties while riding to see a man of the 7th Bombay Native Infantry who had been suddenly stricken with what seemed to be plague just as the Regiment was about to embark. The distance was really too great for one man and one horse, with only one day to do it in! He did it, however, but seized with a terrible thirst had to drink filth from an Arab well and to collapse in a Colonel Macquarrie's tent, before seeing General Baird. The regiment was temporarily

stopped from embarking, however, with Sir David Baird's authority, and McGrigor retained a wonderful memory of that cup of tea which Colonel Macquarrie provided for him in his extremity!

Though written several years later there is no better account of his sojourn in Egypt than that contained in his book, "Medical Sketches of the Expedition to Egypt from India." I therefore propose to give a sketch, from this publication, of the strictly professional notes about the expedition and, particularly, about the plague, as met with in epidemic form, during the expedition.

Now that we know the secret of the transmission of plague, at least in its bubonic form, from the sick to the healthy, by means of the infected flea, and of its direct transmission, in its pneumonic manifestation, from one human being to another, we realize what a serious malady it is and how hard to stop in a native or a military community; but nowadays we are in a position to act scientifically and we know, at least, that without the intervention of the flea, the bubonic type, the commonest, is not transmitted at all. This knowledge gives us great confidence in the protective effects of cleanliness and how anti-flea measures can be successful. It must have been terrible, indeed, to encounter the plague without it.

(To be concluded)

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## DR. JAMES BARRY

ELSEWHERE in this issue our readers will find the Review of a book dealing, in novel form, with the life of this exceptional individual. From time to time much has been written about her—and, no doubt, much more may be written in the future.

It so happens that, coincidentally with the appearance of this latest book, there has come into our possession a copy of a photograph of Dr. Barry together with an individual described variously as a "Malay Slave" or a "Coloured Servant." For this photograph we are indebted to Major T. A. Yorke, M.C., R.A., who sent with it a letter written to the Editor of *The Times* by his father, the late Colonel F. A. Yorke, in 1919.

It will be noted that there is some divergence of opinion as to the last resting place of the worthy Dr. Barry. In an article entitled "The Lady Army Doctor," by Marianne Robertson Spencer, which appeared in *The Lady's Realm* some years ago, the burial place is given categorically as "Kensal Green Cemetery, grave number 19,301; square 67; row 6." This is accepted as authentic.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Barry was commissioned as Hospital assistant in July 1813 when John Weir was Director-General. She became Deputy Inspector of Army Hospitals in May 1851, the year of Sir James