Letter, 10th Sept 1855, to his parents from Assistant Surgeon T. Egerton Hale, describing the attack on the Redan at Sebastopol during the Crimean War, in the course of which Hale performed deeds of valour for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross when it was instituted in 1856

Monday

Camp Light Division - 7th Fusiliers -
Sept. 10th 1855.

My dear Parents & Eg & Alle -

It is astonishing what a difference a few days, yes, even a few hours makes in mens' prospects; in fact either may, and often alters them for the best or the contrary and as frequently for the latter: I dont exactly allude to myself but to the whole Army - I have so much to say that I scarcely know where to begin, but I will endeavour in a few words to describe to you the eventful incidents of the last few days.

By now you will know of what I intend to speak but I will mention what my regiment & myself had to do with it generally -

On Friday night last Lt Moorhead came in my tent & said, well Hale are you ready to accompany the regiment to morrow to storm the Redan - Of course I said I was but I expected him to tell me it was duty and not to rest merely on volunteering - he said well then you must go with the Regt to morrow, the 2nd Div & 2nd Brigade of the Light Div form the storming party, & this Brigade 7th 23rd 33, 34th & Rifles, form the reserve - good now I know what I have to do - at 9 A.M. on Saturday Sept 8th we marched down 400 strong of this Regt besides officers, and halted in the 3rd parallel - a heavy cannonade going on - in a few minutes

as it was arranged, the French attacked the Malakoff and in a few minutes longer we saw the French flag waving over the Malakoff. Our storming party 2nd Div.n &c - went at the Redan - they were sitting down in the trench, the men had been talking very loud amongst themselves, but showers of grape began to patter amongst us, & then there was a silence; we were astonished to hear the word 7th forward (I had about 20 men with stretchers and 2 men to be with me with bags of lint, bandages &c) then we marched up the approach to the next parallel, the grape came among us and wounded about a dozen - was among them & just the same exposure - poor Hickie was wounded in the head, I had to dress all & by the time I had finished the last had got on some distance. I ran on the shot striking all round me until I got into the advanced trench quite a mile beyond the advance in the April bombardment, there Major Turner in a minute or two was struck down, I dressed him (hit on the head) and then part only of the Regt got over the parapet and rushed at the Redan, & then I had to dress men continually, as many were wounded in the advanced sap where we were as in on the open ground, the iron, the pieces the bullets

shells & round shot was awful - I was occupied until 6½ P.M. I acted at the last as the regular Officer for I brought up the stragglers in different parts of the sap and keeping some & sending others off - Sergeant Fisher came to me & said there are several of our men lying wounded outside, I will go out & bring them in, I went with him, and got at the very top of the sap and called to some of our men and got them to crawl in, & then had them placed on stretchers and sent them off - all this time the Russians were firing showers of bullets at us, & many a one struck the ground close to our head - Brevet Col - Leyland had a ball right through the lower part of his leg - Capt Holcombe also wounded - Lieut Jones a grape shot on the chest which without penetrating caused a great swelling causing him to spit blood very copiously - Colt and Wright were killed - Turner, Leyland, Jones, Hickie & Hibbert wounded the four with a mark under their names were struck in the sap & about half of the men also we have about 30 killed & 50 wounded - so you may see that I was exposed like all the rest - I was the only Amer Surgeon who was exposed as I was - Fair was in the advanced trench & 2 more Ass Surgns in the Quarries - there were only four altogether regularly in the Assault - but only my in the sap

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night the enemy evacuated the Redan & set the town on
fire *

Photo. Berry, Nantwich.

THE LATE SURGEON-MAJOR T. E. HALE, V.C., C.B.,

One of the first Recipients of the Victoria Cross.

It was at the assault on the Redan, in the siege of Sevastopol, that Surgeon-Major T. Egerton Hale, who has died, in his seventy-eighth year, near Nantwich, performed the gallant exploit which won him the Victoria Cross, of which he was among the earliest recipients. He brought back wounded men into the trenches under a galling fire. At that time he was assistant-surgeon in the 7th Fusiliers. He also served in the Indian Mutiny. Latterly he was a J.P. for Cheshire, and received the C.B. in 1905.

Royal Fusilier Theatre,

NORTH CAMP,

B LINES.

A PERFORMANCE BY THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL FUSILIERS WILL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 21st, 1857,

When will be represented, (by the kind permission of the Author,)

OUR WIFE;

OR,

THE ROSE OF AMIENS,

A Comic Drama in Two Acts.

MARQUIS DE LIGNY (Capt. of the king's guards) T. E. HALE, Esq.
COUNT DE BRISSAC.. (his friend).. C. RICKETTS, Esq.
POMARET ..... R. W. SPARKS, Esq.
DUMONT ..... C. H. MALAN, Esq.
FIRST OFFICER ..... J. K. McADAM, Esq.
SECOND OFFICER ..... A. TIBEAUDO, Esq.
ROSINE..... .. (Pomaret's daughter)..... .....Miss LESLIE.
MARIETTE.. .... (her cousin)..... .... Miss FERRERS.

A SONG BY MISS FERRERS.

To conclude with

THE QUEEN'S HORSE,

A Farce.

TOM TUBBS .... F. COLE, Esq.
CORPORAL MURPHY ..... C. O'BRIEN, Esq.
SAM..... ..... F. BEAUCHAMP, Esq.
CAPT. FORECASTLE, R.N. ..... J. K. McADAM, Esq.
ADJUTANT ..... C. GURNEY, Esq.
MARY WAKEFIELD ..... Miss FERRERS.

For the convenience of Officers attending after Mess, the doors will open at half-past Eight o'clock, and the performance will commence at Nine o'clock precisely.

TICKETS 3s. LADIES' TICKETS FREE.

ADMISSION by tickets only, to be obtained from the Sergt.-Major, at the Orderly Room, Royal Fusiliers Lines, North Camp.

N.B.—LADIES' TICKETS MUST BE APPLIED FOR WITHOUT DELAY.

THE BAND

During the evening will play the following Selections:

SELECTION - -	Opera "Semiramide," - -	*Rossini.*
WALTZ - - -	"Marien," - -	*Gungl.*
SELECTION - -	"La Traviata," - -	*Verdi.*
QUADRILLE - -	"French," - - -	*Jullien.*
TROOP - - -	Opera "Giralda,' - -	*Adam.*

VIVAT REGINA.

TO-NIGHT.

Royal Fusilier Theatre,

NORTH CAMP,

B LINES.

A PERFORMANCE BY THE OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL FUSILIERS, WILL TAKE PLACE THIS EVENING, APRIL 4th, 1857,

When will be performed,

TIME TRIES ALL,

A Drama in Two Acts.

MATHEW BATES.....T. E. HALE, Esq.
Mr. LEESON..... H. KERR, Esq.
Hon. Augustus COLLANDE YAWN .....M. WATSON, Esq.
CHARLES CLINTON.....C. GURNEY, Esq.
TOM TACT.....F. COLE, Esq.
LAURA LEESON.... ..... Miss LESLIE.
FANNY FACT.....Miss FERRERS.

A SONG BY MISS FERRERS.

To conclude with

A LOAN OF A LOVER,

A Musical Farce.

CAPTAIN AMERSFORT..... M. WATSON, Esq.
PETER SPYK..... C. RICKETTS, Esq.
SWYZEL .... H. KERR, Esq.
DELVE..... C. E. HOPE, Esq.
GERTRUDE..... Miss FERRERS.
ERNESTINE ROSENDAAL..... Miss LESLIE.

Doors open at half-past Eight o'clock, and Performance will commence at Nine o'clock precisely.

Officers..... Two Shillings.
Non-commissioned Officers.....Sixpence.
Privates..... Threepence.

VIVAT REGINA:

Andrews & Lucy, Farnham.]

Containing two Theatrical Bills
of the "Royal Pavilion Theatre"
while at Aldershot in 1856 –
I took parts in both as will be seen.

J. E. Dale.

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of the "Royal Pavilion Theatre"
while at Aldershot in 1856 –
I took parts in both as will be seen.

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DREAD GOD

Monday

Camp Light Division - 7th Fusiliers

Sept 10th, 1855

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On Friday night last H. Moorhead came to in my tent and said, Well Hale are you ready to accompany the regiment tomorrow to storm the Redan. Of course I said I was but I expected him to tell me it was duty and not to ~~notote~~ act on volunteering - he said well then you must go with the regiment tomorrow, the 2nd Divn and 2nd brigade of the Light Divn form the storming party, and this Brigade 7th 23rd, 33, 34 Rifles, form the reserve - good - now I know what I have to do - at 9 a.m. on Saturday Sept 8th we marched down 400 strong of this regiment besides officers, and halted in the 3rd parallel - a heavy cannonade going on - in a few minutes as it was arranged, the French attacked the Malakoff and in a few minutes longer we saw the French flag waving over the Malakoff. Our storming party 2nd Divn &c - went at the Redan - We were sitting down in the trench, the men had been talking very loud amongst themselves, but showers of grape began to patter amongst us, and then there was a silence; we were astonished to hear the word 7th forward (I had about 20 men with stretchers and two men to be with me with bags of lint, bandages &c) then we marched up the approach to the next parallel, the grape came among us and wounded about a dozen. I was among them, - and just the same exposed. Captn Rickie was wounded in the head , I had to drop all and by the time I had finished the regt had got on some distance. I ran on the shots striking all round until I got into the advanced trench quite a mile beyond the advance in the April bombardment. There Major Turner in a minute or two was struck down, I dressed him (hit on the head) and then part only of the regt got over the parapet and rushed at the Redan, and then I had to dress men continually, as many were wounded in the advanced sap

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where we were as in on the open ground, the row, the firing, the bullets, shells and round shot was awful. I was occupied until 6½ p.m. I acted at the last as a regular officer. I brought up the stragglers in different parts of the sap and keeping four saw the others go off - Sergeant Fisher came to me and said there are several of our men lying wounded outside. I will go out and bring them in. I went with him and got at the very top of the sap and called to some of our men and got them to crawl out but we had to carry several of them in. I then had them placed on stretchers and sent them off - all the time the Russians were firing showers of bullets on us, and many a one struck the ground close to my head Brevet Col. Heyland had a ball right through the lower part of his leg - Captn Hibbert also wounded - Lieut. Jones a grape shot on the chest which without penetrating caused a great swelling causing him to spit blood very copiously. Colt and Wright were killed - Turner, Heyland, Jones, Hickie and Hibbert wounded. The four with a mark under their names were struck in the sap & about half of the men also. We have about 30 killed & 50 wounded so you may see that I was exposed like all the rest. I was the only Assist Surgeon who was exposed as I was. Fair was in the advanced trench & 2 more Asst Surgn in the Quarries & there were only four altogether regularly in the assault but only myself in the sap. Rendle Asst Surgn of 62nd was in a little bunk a long way off instead of being with his Regt, and there he stuck all day. You have no idea what it was. If I am spared to come home then I can spend hours in telling about the 8th Septr and yet we were defeated - the storming party were Driver Mack and then they called upon the reserve. We did not expect to assault but ours & 23rd were ordered at it, and altho' we could get in the Redan yet we could not hold it, for below it the Russians swarmed like bees and fired away very vigorously. When we were marching up the first approach a shell came right amongst us a yard or two before me and knocked down three, taking Levers leg off and wounding two others and then burst, how I escaped I don't know but I prayed to God before I went to cause me to do my duty in every sense, and I felt not the least afraid - at one time there was a panic & the men came rushing back, I thought now for a smash I drew my sword and thought I would sell my life as dearly as possible, but Hope and I shouted steady men steady and that rallied them. Hope said afterward to Marten that he believed I should have been the only man left with Jones, he was lying on the ground & I was cutting up his coat to get at his wound.

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LETTER FROM CRIMEA

War on Russia in aid of the Turks was declared by Britain and France on 29th March, 1854. In anticipation, the garrison of Malta had already been strengthened and the first troops, British and French, sailed from that island for Gallipoli and Constantinople and thence to Varna on the Danube, for the original plan of campaign contemplated the defence of Turkey's Balkan provinces rather than offensive action in the Crimea. Amongst the first to move from the British Isles after the declaration of war was the Light Division which included the 7th Fusiliers, a Regiment to which my grand-uncle by marriage, Egerton Hale of Cheshire stock, was attached as an Assistant Surgeon. He was 22 years of age having just qualified as a doctor.

Details of the embarkation are given in the Illustrated London News of 8th April, 1854:-

> "The 7th Fusiliers left Manchester 900 strong by the London and North Western Railway in 44 carriages. The men appeared to be in capital spirits and both divisions of the troops were accompanied in their march through the streets by some thousands of people who cheered them loudly. They arrived at Southampton on Tuesday evening and embarked on board the Orinoco."

Not all the Regiments went by the Bay of Biscay and Gibraltar. Anticipating - but for different reasons - the routing of troops to Egypt and Salonika in the 1914-18 war, cavalry were sent cross Channel to Boulogne and railed thence as far as Chalons. The railway from that town to Avignon was not completed till a year later, and the gap was bridged either by using river craft on the Rhone or by a seven day road march. At Avignon the troops were entrained for Marseilles where transports awaited them. The overland route appears to have been selected because the early screw steamers were so crank in a heavy sea that not only were the horses liable to serious damage but the stability of the ship itself was threatened when the horses were flung to leeward. As far as possible paddle steamers owing to their greater steadiness were selected as horse transports.

The Light Division however went by sea the whole way and passing by Constantinople were landed at Varna in the neighbourhood of which the whole of the British and French troops were gradually collected.

Except for a few officers and technical units attached to the Turks fighting on the Danube further north, none of the Allies had come into action against Russia when in July it was decided to create a diversion in order to relieve the weight of the attack on the Turks by a landing in the Crimea. The secrecy of present day warfare does not appear to have been preserved - except from the troops themselves. "The Times" and other English newspapers were, as early as 5th August, announcing the plans for transporting troops from Varna, Burgas and Baltechik across the 300 miles of the Black Sea and a British and French General landed near Sebastapol from a British Ship of War to reconnoitre the ground. The landing did not take place till 14th September although detailed Instructions had been circulated as early as 3rd September.

The Naval and Military Codes for Amphibious operations (in present day terminology combined operations) must have required considerable overhaul seeing that steam had to a large extent replaced sail, and indeed how many years was it since an operation of this kind had been undertaken. But whatever may be thought of some aspects of the higher strategy in the Crimea and of the chaos that was shortly to show itself in the medical administration of the Army at the base, nothing seems to have been left to chance in the meticulous instructions that were issued for the landing and for the medical care of the troops. It is only right to mention this in view of the prominence that has been given to the defects in the most recent and revealing biography of Florence Nightingale +.

Here are some of the points covered in the Instructions - Knapsacks to be carried, not worn, blankets not to be taken in the boats, firearms not to be loaded till after landing, three days bread and cooked salt meat to be carried by each Officer and man. Sketches were issued showing the position of each troopship and man-of-war and the positions to be taken up by the boats of the Merchant ships and the fleet. As the Light Division was to be the first to land, it is worth

+ Florence Nightingale by Cecil Woodham Smith. Constable & Co.

recalling the medical instructions with which the Assistant Surgeon of the 7th Fusiliers on board the transport "Victoria" had to familiarise himself.

Dr. Hall, Inspector General of Hospitals, (later to be the bane of Florence Nightingale) gave minute instructions. Divisional ambulance equipment was to consist of two large store waggons containing a reserve supply of medical dressings, medical comforts, tents and bedding. Each battalion surgeon was to have a pack-horse to carry his instruments, a few comforts for immediate use, e.g., a bottle of brandy, quarter pound of tea, 1lb. sugar, 4 ozs. arrowroot, essence of beef, medicines and surgical material. A spring waggon was to be attached to each battalion for removing the wounded. Two stretcher bearers to every 100 men were to be told off. The surgeon of each regiment is exhorted to instruct bandsmen how to apply field tourniquet, how to restrain haemorrhage.

When troops were deploying for action only one medical officer per regiment was to accompany the men, the rest were to keep out of musket range and have everything ready for primary operations. Then comes this remarkable instruction:-

> "Dr. Hall takes the opportunity of cautioning Medical Officers against the use of chloroform in the severe shock of serious gun-shot wounds as he thinks few will survive where it is used; but as public opinion, founded perhaps on mistaken philanthropy, he knows is against him, he can only caution Medical officers and entreat they will narrowly watch its effects: for however barbarous it may appear, the smart of the knife is a powerful stimulant: and it is much better to hear a man bawl lustily than to see him sink silently into the grave."

The one medical officer for each regiment, generally the Junior Assistant Surgeon, who accompanies the troops into the firing line is to have the bearers under his orders. He will carry his pocket case of instruments, with ligatures ready cut, two tourniquets, lint and bandages. Three men will accompany him, one carrying a pint of brandy, 24 bandages, a half lb. of lint, three sponges, splints, two old sheets cut up, tape, pins, tow, a canteen of water and a cup. The second man is to carry the canvas stretcher and shoulder straps and a canteen of water. "The third man, I think, should be armed to protect the party against stragglers and marauders". The Junior is to pass the wounded to the Second Assistant Surgeon for conveyance in the waggon to the Staff Surgeon.

The medical instructions close with the advice that if the landing is opposed the men are to eat a good meal on board ship and cook suitable provisions: "Pork is better than beef for this purpose as it warms up more readily with any vegetables the men may find on shore." This last direction bears out the tremendous difficulty found by Florence Nightingale in finding where was the line of demarcation between the Hospital and the Purveyor's Departments.

The "London News" of the day supplies its readers with an illustration of the new two-horse ambulances, which unfortunately were noticeably absent on the field of battle: the horses were either not there or had died of starvation and the British Army had to seek help from the French who had devised mule panniers, for carrying the wounded.

It was against the background of these Medical Regulations that the unopposed landing at Kalamita Bay took place on 4th September. The 7th Fusiliers were good foragers and along with the Rifle Brigade captured 84 carts of Russian Government flour, a few cartloads of plums, 160 oxen and several dromedaries which the Tartars of the Crimea used as draught animals. All seemed set for a quick and well-fed campaign - were not the Tartars offering eggs at twenty-five for 6d., a fowl for 6d., a turkey for 18d. , and a sheep for 1/- ?

The victory of the Alma - an engagement in which Egerton Hale was for the first time under fire - followed on 28th September and all England was looking forward to the capture of Sebastapol within a week but the bloody battles of Balaclava and Inkerman in October and early November showed that the winter campaign which no one had prepared for was inevitable. Rain was falling continuously. The winds from the Steppes, the frost and snow, the pervading mud were soon to settle down on dumb suffering humanity. It was to be another six months before the Army could be pulled out of the slough in which it had sunk. Turkish ponies, mules from Spain, bullocks from Bulgaria, even camels from Constantinople - all died from overwork, lack of food and shelter. Men alone managed to survive and became the beasts of burden. There were no storehouses near the lines and men staggered knee-deep in mud for distances up to ten miles to fetch the daily supplies. Everything was being man-handled. Those at home seem tacitly to have assumed that man was a beast of

burden. In the Illustrated London News of November 11th, 1854, there is a picture of an "electric Telegraph wagon for the seat of war" drawn, it is true, by two horses but accompanying it is a sketch of "a plough for laying the wire". Eight men are harnessed to two cart wheels which carry a revolving drum out of which the cable as it is unwound runs over pulleys to a plough guided by a Sergeant: thus the trench is cut for the cable and the line laid.

Out of this chaos some order was taking shape early in 1855. A contract was made with a civilian firm at home for constructing a light railway over a distance of 6½ miles from Balaclava to the trenches and by March 1855 the track was being laid at the rate of a quarter of a mile a day. The navvies for this work were recruited in the British Isles and the contractors appear to have taken far greater care for the men's comfort and clothing than did the War Office for the fighting men. They sent with them a Chaplain and a Surgeon and the only complaint on the part of this Labour Corps was the lack of beer for which a threefold issue of Army rum was not sufficient compensation. It is a curious fact that after the capture of Sebastapol the regular troops strongly objected to being employed on making roads and their good-will was only secured by a special addition to their pay. Pre-fabricated wooden huts which had been ordered in England and Trieste as storehouses and living quarters for the troops did not begin to arrive until the winter was over.

My granduncle survived that winter in the trenches escaping wounds and the diseases that reduced the strength of the Army by one-half. None of his letters home of this time are preserved but the following written in January 1855 by an officer from Balaclava Camp sufficiently describes the conditions:-

> "Twenty men died last night in the trenches. The line are on duty every alternate 24 hours and are without (warm) clothes. We are all on short allowance of food. I am told by the Chaplains and doctors that the state of the hospitals is dreadful. A sick man has nothing to lie on but his regimental blanket - of course a mere rag in most instances now. They have no lights for the hospital unless the Surgeon himself provides them. They have few medicines, and fewer still of the common requisites of sick diet. We have no proper supplies for field hospitals, no waggon train to bring up stores."

The 7th Fusiliers took part in the abortive attack on the Redan on 18th June, 1855 when the Colonel of the Regiment was killed. The second attack was made on 8th September when the Light Division succeeded in penetrating the fortifications, only to be driven out. But it was not a failure for it enabled the French to carry the Malakoff and Sebastapol was rendered untenable. The next day the Russians abandoned the city.

The letter which my grand-uncle wrote to his parents and his two brothers on 10th September, must be something unique not merely because of its first-hand description of the attack of 8th September but by reason of the fact that in narrating the part he played he was unwittingly describing deeds which earned for him one of the first Victoria Crosses when that award was instituted a year later. Here is his letter written from the Camp of the Light Division which so far as I am aware has never previously been published:-

> "It is astonishing what a difference a few days, yes, even a few hours makes in men's prospects; in fact either way, and often altera them for the best or the contrary, and as frequently for the latter. I dont exactly allude to myself but to the whole Army - I have so much to say that I scarcely know where to begin, but I will endeavour in a few words to describe to you the eventful incidents of the last few days. By now you will know of what I intend to speak but I will mention what my regiment and myself had to do with it generally -
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By way of anti-climax a postcript may be added.

Pillage was at that time permissible. A Staff Asst. Surgeon attached to the Light Division describes the scene in Sebastapol on 10th September:-

> "The pillage is enormous but not of very much value. The French are turning every house "out of windows". Drawing-room furniture is all smashed in the streets ..... you walk over fragments of pier-glasses. If I had a dozen waggons I could fill them with relics, for being a doctor the French admit me into their rambles. I have pockets full of crosses and medals: some I have taken, some I have bought. The French have pickets all round to prevent the (British) Army entering till they have sacked the place."

Assistant Surgeon Hale must have made use of the freedom of movement allowed to British Army Doctors: his share of the spoil was a sacred ikon, a small walnut table to which he later attached a brass plaque with the words, "Taken at the capture of Sebastapol, September, 1855," and a fine brass candlestick which he similarly inscribed. All three along with his Victoria Cross were eventually

handed down to my mother.

By April 1857 his Regiment was back in England and stationed in the North Camp, Aldershot. I have before me two hand-bills of the Royal Fusilier Theatre from which I learn that on 4th April the officers performed a drama "Times Tries All" and on the 21st April "Our Wife or the Rose of Amiens" with T. E. Hale, Esq.", taking the principal character in each. "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war."

(Sgd) G. C. DUGGAN.