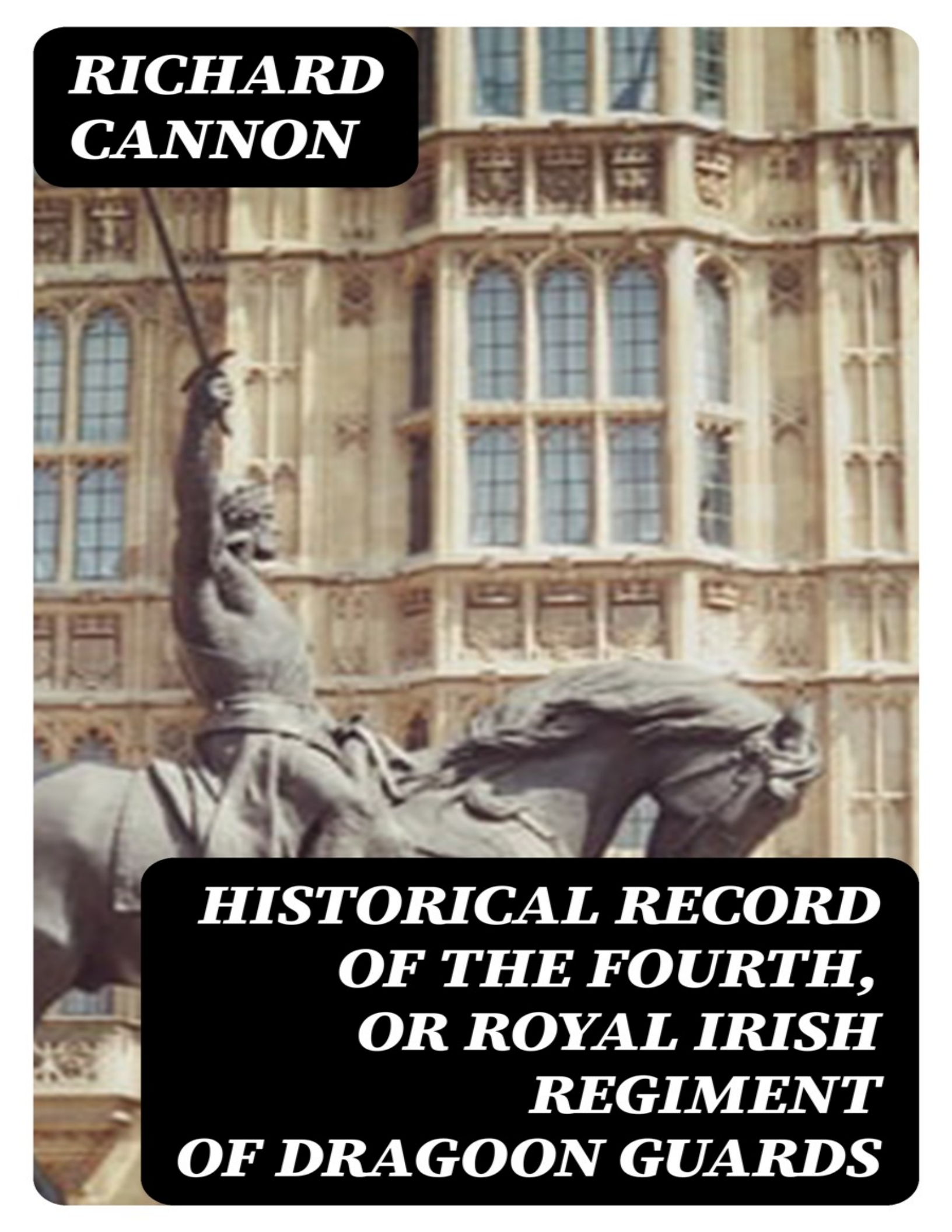


A bronze statue of a soldier on horseback, holding a sword aloft, in front of a large Gothic building. The statue is in the foreground, and the building is in the background. The building has many windows and is made of stone. The statue is made of bronze and is in a dynamic pose. The building is a large, multi-story structure with many windows and is made of stone. The statue is in the foreground, and the building is in the background. The statue is made of bronze and is in a dynamic pose. The building is a large, multi-story structure with many windows and is made of stone.

***RICHARD
CANNON***

***HISTORICAL RECORD
OF THE FOURTH,
OR ROYAL IRISH
REGIMENT
OF DRAGOON GUARDS***

Richard Cannon

Historical Record of the Fourth, or Royal Irish Regiment of Dragoon Guards

**Containing an Account of the Formation of the
Regiment in 1685; and of Its Subsequent Services to
1838**

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Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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PREFACE.

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The character and credit of the British Army must chiefly depend upon the zeal and ardour, by which all who enter into its service are animated, and consequently it is of the highest importance that any measure calculated to excite the spirit of emulation, by which alone great and gallant actions are achieved, should be adopted.

Nothing can more fully tend to the accomplishment of this desirable object, than a full display of the noble deeds with which the Military History of our country abounds. To hold forth these bright examples to the imitation of the youthful soldier, and thus to incite him to emulate the meritorious conduct of those who have preceded him in their honourable career, are among the motives that have given rise to the present publication.

The operations of the British Troops are, indeed, announced in the 'London Gazette,' from whence they are transferred into the public prints: the achievements of our armies are thus made known at the time of their occurrence, and receive the tribute of praise and admiration to which they are entitled. On extraordinary occasions, the Houses of Parliament have been in the habit of conferring on the Commanders, and the Officers and Troops acting under their orders, expressions of approbation and of thanks for their skill and bravery, and these testimonials, confirmed by the high honour of their Sovereign's Approbation, constitute the reward which the soldier most highly prizes.

It has not, however, until late years, been the practice (which appears to have long prevailed in some of the Continental armies) for British Regiments to keep regular records of their services and achievements. Hence some difficulty has been experienced in obtaining, particularly from the old Regiments, an authentic account of their origin and subsequent services.

This defect will now be remedied, in consequence of His Majesty having been pleased to command, that every Regiment shall in future keep a full and ample record of its services at home and abroad.

From the materials thus collected, the country will henceforth derive information as to the difficulties and privations which chequer the career of those who embrace the military profession. In Great Britain, where so large a number of persons are devoted to the active concerns of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, and where these pursuits have, for so long a period, been undisturbed by the *presence of war*, which few other countries have escaped, comparatively little is known of the vicissitudes of active service, and of the casualties of climate, to which, even during peace, the British Troops are exposed in every part of the globe, with little or no interval of repose.

In their tranquil enjoyment of the blessings which the country derives from the industry and the enterprise of the agriculturist and the trader, its happy inhabitants may be supposed not often to reflect on the perilous duties of the soldier and the sailor,—on their sufferings,—and on the sacrifice of valuable life, by which so many national benefits are obtained and preserved.

The conduct of the British Troops, their valour, and endurance, have shone conspicuously under great and trying difficulties; and their character has been established in Continental warfare by the irresistible spirit with which they have effected debarkations in spite of the most formidable opposition, and by the gallantry and steadiness with which they have maintained their advantages against superior numbers.

In the official Reports made by the respective Commanders, ample justice has generally been done to the gallant exertions of the Corps employed; but the details of their services, and of acts of individual bravery, can only be fully given in the Annals of the various Regiments.

These Records are now preparing for publication, under His Majesty's special authority, by Mr. RICHARD CANNON, Principal Clerk of the Adjutant-General's Office; and while the perusal of them cannot fail to be useful and interesting to military men of every rank, it is considered that they will also afford entertainment and information to the general reader, particularly to those who may have served in the Army, or who have relatives in the Service.

There exists in the breasts of most of those who have served, or are serving, in the Army, an *Esprit de Corps*—an attachment to every thing belonging to their Regiment; to such persons a narrative of the services of their own Corps cannot fail to prove interesting. Authentic accounts of the actions of the great,—the valiant,—the loyal, have always been of paramount interest with a brave and civilised people. Great Britain has produced a race of heroes who, in moments of danger and terror, have stood, "firm as the

rocks of their native shore;" and when half the World has been arrayed against them, they have fought the battles of their Country with unshaken fortitude. It is presumed that a record of achievements in war,—victories so complete and surprising, gained by our countrymen,—our brothers—our fellow-citizens in arms,—a record which revives the memory of the brave, and brings their gallant deeds before us, will certainly prove acceptable to the public.

Biographical memoirs of the Colonels and other distinguished Officers, will be introduced in the Records of their respective Regiments, and the Honorary Distinctions which have, from time to time, been conferred upon each Regiment, as testifying the value and importance of its services, will be faithfully set forth.

As a convenient mode of Publication, the Record of each Regiment will be printed in a distinct number, so that when the whole shall be completed, the Parts may be bound up in numerical succession.

INTRODUCTION.

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The ancient Armies of England were composed of Horse and Foot; but the feudal troops established by William the Conqueror in 1086, consisted almost entirely of Horse. Under the feudal system, every holder of land amounting to what was termed a "knight's fee," was required to provide a charger, a coat of mail, a helmet, a shield, and a lance, and to serve the Crown a period of forty days in each year at his

own expense; and the great landholders had to provide armed men in proportion to the extent of their estates; consequently the ranks of the feudal Cavalry were completed with men of property, and the vassals and tenants of the great barons, who led their dependents to the field in person.

In the succeeding reigns the Cavalry of the Army was composed of Knights (or men at arms) and Hobiliars (or horsemen of inferior degree); and the Infantry of spear and battle-axe men, cross-bowmen, and archers. The Knights wore armour on every part of the body, and their weapons were a lance, a sword, and a small dagger. The Hobiliars were accoutred and armed for the light and less important services of war, and were not considered qualified for a charge in line. Mounted Archers^[1] were also introduced, and the English nation eventually became pre-eminent in the use of the bow.

About the time of Queen Mary the appellation of "*Men at Arms*" was changed to that of "*Spears and Launces*." The introduction of fire-arms ultimately occasioned the lance to fall into disuse, and the title of the Horsemen of the first degree was changed to "*Cuirassiers*." The Cuirassiers were armed *cap-à-pié*, and their weapons were a sword with a straight narrow blade and sharp point, and a pair of large pistols, called petrenels; and the Hobiliars carried carbines. The Infantry carried pikes, matchlocks, and swords. The introduction of fire-arms occasioned the formation of regiments armed and equipped as infantry, but mounted on small horses for the sake of expedition of movement, and these were styled "*Dragoons*;" a small portion of the military

force of the kingdom, however, consisted of this description of troops.

The formation of the present Army commenced after the Restoration in 1660, with the establishment of regular corps of Horse and Foot; the Horsemen were cuirassiers, but only wore armour on the head and body; and the Foot were pikemen and musketeers. The arms which each description of force carried, are described in the following extract from the "Regulations of King Charles II.," dated 5th May, 1663:—

"Each Horseman to have for his defensive armes, back, breast, and pot; and for his offensive armes, a sword, and a case of pistolls, the barrels whereof are not to be und^r. foorteen inches in length; and each Trooper of Our Guards to have a carbine, besides the aforesaid armes. And the Foote to have each souldier a sword, and each pikeman a pike of 16 foote long and not und^r.; and each musqueteer a musquet, with a collar of bandaliers, the barrels of which musquet to be about four foote long, and to conteine a bullet, foorteen of which shall weigh a pound weight[2]."

The ranks of the Troops of Horse were at this period composed of men of some property—generally the sons of substantial yeomen: the young men received as recruits provided their own horses, and they were placed on a rate of pay sufficient to give them a respectable station in society.

On the breaking out of the war with Holland, in the spring of 1672, a Regiment of Dragoons was raised[3]; the Dragoons were placed on a lower rate of pay than the

Horse; and the Regiment was armed similar to the Infantry, excepting that a limited number of the men carried halberds instead of pikes, and the others muskets and bayonets; and a few men in each Troop had pistols; as appears by a warrant dated the 2nd of April, 1672, of which the following is an extract:—

"CHARLES R.

"Our will and pleasure is, that a Regiment of Dragoones which we have established and ordered to be raised, in twelve Troopes of fourscore in each beside officers, who are to be under the command of Our most deare and most intirely beloved Cousin Prince Rupert, shall be armed out of Our stoares remaining within Our office of the Ordinance, as followeth; that is to say, three corporalls, two serjeants, the gentlemen at armes, and twelve souldiers of each of the said twelve Troopes, are to have and carry each of them one halbard, and one case of pistolls with holsters; and the rest of the souldiers of the several Troopes aforesaid, are to have and to carry each of them one matchlocke musquet, with a collar of bandaliers, and also to have and to carry one bayonet[4], or great knife. That each lieutenant have and carry one partizan; and that two drums be delivered out for each Troope of the said Regiment[5]."

Several regiments of Horse and Dragoons were raised in the first year of the reign of King James II.; and the horsemen carried a short carbine[6] in addition to the sword

and pair of pistols: and in a Regulation dated the 21st of February, 1687, the arms of the Dragoons at that period are commanded to be as follow:—

"The Dragoons to have snaphanse musquets, strapt, with bright barrels of three foote eight inches long, cartouch-boxes, bayonetts, granado pouches, bucketts, and hammer-hatchetts."

After several years' experience, little advantage was found to accrue from having Cavalry Regiments formed almost exclusively for engaging the enemy on foot; and, the Horse having laid aside their armour, the arms and equipment of Horse and Dragoons were so nearly assimilated, that there remained little distinction besides the name and rate of pay. The introduction of improvements into the mounting, arming, and equipment of Dragoons rendered them competent to the performance of every description of service required of Cavalry; and, while the long musket and bayonet were retained, to enable them to act as Infantry, if necessary, they were found to be equally efficient, and of equal value to the nation, as Cavalry, with the Regiments of Horse.

In the several augmentations made to the regular Army after the early part of the reign of Queen Anne, no new Regiments of Horse were raised for permanent service; and in 1746 King George II. reduced three of the old Regiments of Horse to the quality and pay of Dragoons; at the same time, His Majesty gave them the title of First, Second, and Third Regiments of *Dragoon Guards*: and in 1788 the same alteration was made in the remaining four Regiments of

Horse, which then became the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Regiments of *Dragoon Guards*.

At present there are only three Regiments which are styled *Horse* in the British Army, namely, the two Regiments of Life Guards, and the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, to whom cuirasses have recently been restored. The other Cavalry Regiments consist of Dragoon Guards, Heavy and Light Dragoons, Hussars, and Lancers; and although the long musket and bayonet have been laid aside by the whole of the Cavalry, and the Regiments are armed and equipped on the principle of the old Horse (excepting the cuirass), they continue to be styled Dragoons.

The old Regiments of Horse formed a highly respectable and efficient portion of the Army, and it is found, on perusing the histories of the various campaigns in which they have been engaged, that they have, on all occasions, maintained a high character for steadiness and discipline, as well as for bravery in action. They were formerly mounted on horses of superior weight and physical power, and few troops could withstand a well-directed charge of the celebrated British Horse. The records of these corps embrace a period of 150 years—a period eventful in history, and abounding in instances of heroism displayed by the British troops when danger has threatened the nation,—a period in which these Regiments have numbered in their ranks men of loyalty, valour, and good conduct, worthy of imitation.

Since the Regiments of Horse were formed into Dragoon Guards, additional improvements have been introduced into the constitution of the several corps; and the superior