THOMAS JAMES WALKER

The Depot for Prisoners of War at Norman Cross, Huntingdonshire. 1796 to 1816

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Содержание

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FOREWORDS

In April 1894 an exhibition was held at the Grand Assembly Rooms, Peterborough, under the auspices of the Local Natural History and Antiquarian Society, the major portion of the exhibits being articles of various descriptions made by the French prisoners of war at the barracks built in 1796–97 for their confinement at Norman Cross. On that occasion, Dr. Walker drew up a short account of the buildings and their inmates, derived principally from recollections of old people and from old newspaper files. Now that most of the relics then exhibited, and many others collected from various quarters, have found a permanent home in the Society's Museum, it has been thought that the lecture embodying that history, which exists to-day only as a newspaper report, should be expanded and reproduced in the more accessible and permanent form of a small volume.

The lecture was incomplete, and to produce an exhaustive history it has been necessary to carry out systematic researches in the British Museum Library, in the Public Record Office, and in other repositories of information.

The general reader of a book is not concerned with the method of its construction, the complete structure is the only thing regarded, yet a very amusing digression could be given describing the difficulties attending the search, especially in the Government stores, for the material which is incorporated in this volume. Many of the documents utilised had never been looked at since they were placed in sacks at the close of the war, when Red Tape was more rampant than to-day, and when the jurisdictions of several departments overlapped, causing obstructive friction and consequent confusion. The official calendars and indices afford little or no indication as to the nature of the contents of bundles and rolls; in several cases valuable information has been obtained from bundles giving no hint of the contents, and simply marked "Various" or "Miscellaneous."

Under the cumbersome and complicated system in vogue in the various offices at the close of the eighteenth century, the very limited staff employed could not keep pace with the pressure of the war. At Woolwich, Sir William Congreve reported that in some branches of his department the accounts were three and four years in arrears, in one branch as many as seven years, and pleaded for an extra clerk, which request, after some correspondence, was granted. This pressure led to laxity of supervision, culminating in corruption even in high places, and at last in 1804 General De Lancey, the Barrack Master-General, the head of the department responsible for the buildings at Norman Cross and other depots, was dismissed for defalcations, and the report of a Commission appointed to investigate his accounts from 1792 to that date, affirms that he had "made the most extravagant bargains both for land and buildings, and actually entrusted the contract for the fittings of barracks to a single individual, upon the easiest and most insecure of agreements. . . . The Commissioners of Audit were ignored, and the authority of the Treasury set aside on the most ridiculous pretexts; and when inquiry was at last made in 1804, it was found that over nine million pounds of public money had been issued to the Barrack Master-General's department, and that no accurate account could be produced either of the public or private expenditure of the same." [1] This Report led to an inquiry by an eminent firm of accountants as to the method of keeping the accounts, and the following extract

[1] Fortescue: *History of the British Army*, iv. 904–6. Clode: *Military Forces of the Crown*, i. 240.

from their long and detailed report may be of interest, as showing the confused nature of the materials through which we have had to search for facts throwing light on our subject:

> "The Variety, extent and importance of the Business conducted by the Barrack Department, seems to require perhaps more than any other, that all the Accounts should be entered in the Books in such order, and with such precision as that a true Statement of the whole, or of any particular branch of the business may be produced whenever required without constant recurrence to the Vouchers and papers from which these Books are formed. This cannot be effected in any way so well as by regular Books kept in a manner that has been in use for many hundred years, is familiar to Men of Business in all Countries, is equally applicable to the finances of a Kingdom as to the Accounts of a private family, and upon which the best Accomptants have not been able to make much improvement: but in the Barrack Office, so far from adopting this method, they have no Waste Book or Day Book, nor have they any Journal which is the most essential of all Books, where there is a number of Entries to make, and without which they cannot record any transfer of property, nor any transaction whatever which does not come through the Cash Book.
>
> Their Ledgers are posted chiefly from Vouchers and accounts, and resemble more what is commonly called a Check Ledger, than one which has a regular reference to a Journal and Cash Book, from which only every Entry in the Ledger should be made. Their Ledgers can never be regularly balanced, nor can an error that may be made, by placing a sum of money to a wrong account, be easily detected—indeed no Examination of any Account in the Ledger can be made without referring to the Vouchers. Much time and labour is often uselessly spent in searching for them, and replacing them."

This report led to an immediate reform, and research through the documents bearing dates later than 1806 was far easier than that through those of the previous decade, at the commencement of which the Norman Cross Prison came into existence.

It is needless to say that the documents of the various Government departments now concentrated in the Public Record Office are numbered by millions, and of those relating to Prisoners of War there are over 700 volumes, besides hundreds of rolls, bundles, and packets, pertaining to the Admiralty and War Office departments; these include various branches now completely transformed, such as Transport Board, Commission for Sick and Hurt, etc. Huge Ledgers are not indexed, nor are the accounts entered consecutively. Rough minute books and letter books on all conceivable subjects are in the same chaotic condition, so that whole days have been wasted on a fruitless search, while on the other hand important results have been unexpectedly obtained in unlikely and unlooked-for quarters.

It may pardonably be allowed to refer to what little has been done by others in the same direction, both with regard to barracks and to prisons. A comparison with the following pages will show that earlier researches have been of a very superficial character. Matters have been left doubtful which a little further search would have made certain, and points, which tradition and writers with some claim to authority had left obscure, would have been cleared up. It would be invidious to go into further particulars, but it may be stated that Huntingdon, in which county Norman Cross is situated, although it has an important and eventful history, has as yet no exhaustive County History, and that the local guide books are of little value.

The results of these researches through official documents, through old newspaper files, and topographical works, in the British Museum Library, are, in the following pages, incorporated with information obtained locally from persons who in their early youth knew the prison, from topical

traditions, from printed narratives founded more or less on fact, from parish registers, and from old private letters and diaries.

To the officials at the British Museum and the Record Office our thanks are due for valuable assistance courteously rendered.

Unfortunately, for the completeness of this narrative, no record of the life at the Depot, written by a Norman Cross prisoner or by any official, is known to exist. Such sources of information exist in the case of at least one of the other prisons, and to fill a blank, which must have been left in this history, we are, by the kind permission of the author, Mr. Basil Thomson, enabled to include in this volume a reprint of Chapter V. from *The Story of Dartmoor Prison*, [2] and to make other extracts which throw light on the life of Prisoners of War confined in Great Britain between the years 1793–1815.

The Rev. E. H. Brown, Vicar of Yaxley, son of the late Rev. Arthur Brown, author of a tale *The French Prisoners of Norman Cross*, [3] and Mr. A. C. Taylor have kindly taken photographs for the illustrations; Mr. C. Dack, the Curator, and Mr. J. W. Bodger, the Secretary, of the Peterborough Natural History and Scientific Society, have been assiduous in collecting information.

Our thanks are also due to other friends too numerous to specify, who have given items of valuable information, or have communicated traditions the greater number of which have some foundation on fact.

The critical reader is asked to bear in mind the circumstances—so ill adapted to literary work, especially of an historical character—under which this book has been conceived and matured, to be lenient in his criticisms, and to accept it as a humble contribution to the history of those eventful twenty-two years, 1793–1815, when the pens of those recording the contemporary history of their country were occupied with the deeds of the British Army and Navy beyond her shores to the exclusion of the minor details of her social and domestic life.

T. J. W.
A. R.

[Without the aid of Mr. A. Rhodes, the author, whose time, except during his rare holidays, is wholly devoted to the active work of his profession, could not possibly have carried out the researches by which so much information has been obtained. Mr. Rhodes has in these “forewords” described some of the difficulties encountered, and the author is desirous to emphasise his appreciation of the work of the colleague whose services he was able to secure, and who now, unhappily, is totally incapacitated from work by severe illness.—T. J. W.]

[2] *The Story of Dartmoor Prison*, by Basil Thomson. (London: William Heinemann. 1907.)

[3] *The French Prisoners of Norman Cross*. A Tale by the Rev. Arthur Brown, Rector of Catfield, Norfolk. (London: Hodder Brothers, 18, New Bridge Street, E.C.)

CHAPTER I
URGENT NEED FOR PRISON ACCOMMODATION, NORMAN CROSS, HUNTS, SELECTED AS THE SITE, AND THE PRISON BUILT

I watched where against the blue
The builders built on the height:
And ever the great wall grew
As their brown arms shone in the light.

Trowel and mallet and brick
Made a wedding of sounds in the air:
And the dead clay took life from the quick
As their strong arms girdled it there.

Laurence Housman: The Housebuilders.

The Depot for Prisoners of War, at Norman Cross in Huntingdonshire, was the first, and during twelve years the only prison specially constructed for the custody of the prisoners taken captive in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars between 1793 and 1815. The Norman Cross Depot received its first inmates on the 7th April 1797; while of the other great prisons built for the same purpose, Dartmoor (since 1850 the Convict Prison) was not occupied until 24th May 1809, and Perth (converted into the general Prison for Scotland in 1839) received its first batch of 399 prisoners on the 6th August 1812.

Eight years before the building of the Norman Cross Prison the French Revolution had commenced. The storming of the Bastille had taken place in 1789, and during the following years events had advanced rapidly. In 1792, Louis XVI, yielding to the demands of the assembly, the Girondists, and the populace of Paris, had declared war against Austria. In 1793 the Republican Government had been established, Louis had been deposed and executed, and on the 1st February of the same year France had declared war against Britain, thus commencing that struggle which lasted, with two short intermissions, to the final overthrow of Buonaparte at Waterloo on the 18th June 1815.

This war—of which the historian Alison, writing in the first half of the last century, said, "It was the longest, most costly and bloodiest war mentioned in history"—cost England above two thousand millions of money, a colossal sum, which represented a proportionate number of lives sacrificed, and a proportionate amount of misery and want, not only to the combatants on both sides, but to the great mass of the civil population of every nation drawn into the conflict.

In recent years there have been wars of shorter duration, more costly and more deadly, but none in which so fierce a spirit of animosity reigned in the breasts of the combatants, none in which the miseries of war were dragged out to the same calamitous length.

The history of the prison at Norman Cross brings forcibly before us those prolonged miseries incidental to war, which are liable to be overlooked by such students as contemplate only

The neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

The poet paints the close of a hard-fought day when

Thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep and the wounded to die.

The matter-of-fact chronicler records the exact number of killed, wounded, and missing, and of guns, standards, and prisoners captured on either side; but the after-history of those prisoners is left unwritten, their sufferings are unrevealed! And yet, between 1793 and 1815, literally hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war were held in captivity by the various nations engaged in the conflict, and this confinement meant for the great bulk of them years of misery, long vistas of monotonous restraint, periods of indifferent treatment, occasionally great physical suffering, and, worse than all, for many, moral deterioration and degradation inseparable from the conditions in which they dragged out their existence. However humane the captors might be, these consequences to the unfortunate captives were inevitable during the protracted Napoleonic Wars of the close of the eighteenth and commencement of the nineteenth centuries; and there is only too much evidence that when matters on which not only the comforts, but the actual lives of the prisoners depended, were being debated by the two hostile Governments, the political and military interests of the nations concerned were regarded before those of the wretched captives.

The great Napoleon revolutionised the art of warfare, as the great Gustavus revolutionised the military organisations of Europe, and one result of this revolution was that the chivalrous treatment of prisoners of war and non-combatants, which prevailed up to Napoleon's accession to power, was materially changed. A great French authority on International Law, writing in 1758, said:

> "As soon as your enemy has laid down his arms and surrendered his body, you have no longer any right over his life. Prisoners may be secured, and for this purpose may be put into confinement, and even fettered, if there be reason to apprehend that they will rise on their captors, or make their escape. But they are not to be treated harshly, unless personally guilty of some crime against him who has them in his power. . . .
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> "We extol the English and French, we feel our bosoms glow with love for them, when we hear accounts of the treatment which prisoners of war, on both sides, have experienced from those generous nations. And what is more, by a custom which equally displays the honour and humanity of the Europeans, an officer, taken prisoner-of-war, is released on his parole, and enjoys the comfort of passing the time of his captivity in his own country, in the midst of his family; and the party who have thus released him rest as perfectly sure of him as if they had him confined in irons."

Abundant testimony can be adduced to the truth of what Vattel asserts from contemporary records as to both nations. [4] But between 1758 and 1773, the dates of the first and second editions of the French work just quoted, there was born, in Ajaccio in Corsica, a man who was to change all this—Napoleon Buonaparte, who, contemporaneously with the building of Norman Cross Prison, was erecting the pedestal on which he afterwards stood as Emperor, who for twenty years hung over Europe as a great shadow, keeping our ancestors in this country in very pressing terror of invasion, whom the British feared and hated, and whose dominant passion, as time went on, was hatred of England as the insuperable obstacle in his path of conquest. This little history will reveal to some extent the results of his methods as they affected the unfortunate soldiers and sailors who became prisoners of war. This is no place for discussing the right and wrong of the devastating Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars; the treatment of the prisoners of war, as shown in their prison life, alone finds its place in a History of the Depot at Norman Cross.

At the commencement of the war the prisoners on either side were comparatively few, but early in its progress embarrassment arose on the British side from the large numbers of French and

[4] Vattel, *Les Droits des Gens*, book iii, chap, iii, sec. 49, p. 150.

Dutch taken in the great naval victories of Howe, Jervis, Collingwood, and Nelson. To maintain these prisoners on a foreign shore or in the face of the enemy was impossible, and as their number increased it became evident that the existing prisons, and the few fortresses remaining in Britain, such as Porchester Castle near Portsmouth, Plymouth, Falmouth, and Fort George in Scotland, which had been hurriedly fitted up and converted into war prisons, were insufficient for the ever-increasing number of captives. To supplement these it became necessary to fit up special ships and maintain them as hulks, in the harbours of Portsmouth, Plymouth, and the Medway. These hulks were later used as places of confinement for malefactors among the prisoners, and also to relieve the prisons from overcrowding whenever an extraordinary accumulation took place in the country.

In an article published in *Chambers' Journal* in 1854, the writer points out "the ships were large battleships, they were cleared of all obstructions in each deck, and would hold 900 men prisoners and the guard, without much overcrowding; the mortality was very low." [5]

The French in the hulks and the English prisoners in France had undoubtedly to endure great hardships, but these hardships did not justify the exaggerated charges brought by each nation against the other—Englishmen pointing to Verdun as the embodiment of French cruelty and oppression, while Frenchmen enlarged with bitter invectives on the condition of their countrymen in the hulks and prison-ships in English harbours. This exaggeration and these bitter recriminations went on to the end of the war. Buonaparte himself was never tired of seeking to arouse in the hearts of his soldiers a spirit of hatred towards England by allusions to this subject, and before Waterloo he included these words in his address to the Army: "Soldiers, let those among you who have been prisoners of the English describe to you the hulks, and detail the frightful miseries which they have endured." [6]

The number of prisoners of war was so great that their care had been handed over to a new department of the Admiralty thus described:

> "The Transport Office is a newly created Board, and was instituted in July 1794 at first for the superintendence of the Transport Service only; but to that employment has since been added the management of the Prisoners of War, in health, at home and abroad." [7]

To this department all communications in reference to the prisoners of war had to be addressed, and through them all information reached the Admiralty. There was another special department of the Admiralty, that for the care of the sick and hurt, into whose charge the prisoners of war passed when they ceased to be "in health."

The following extract gives further details of the Transport Department, on which for twenty years the lot of the prisoners of war so greatly depended. The paragraph was written in 1803, when the war was supposed to be at an end.

> "Transport Office, Dorset Square, Westminster, established in August 1794, for the purpose of conducting the transport business which had hitherto been transacted by the Navy Office; it has also the care of the prisoners of war. It was at first managed by three commissioners, but the business having much increased two more were added in the year 1795. The salary of each commissioner is a thousand a year. They have under them, several resident agents at the different sea-ports both at home and abroad, to superintend the particular service of embarking, re-embarking of troops, etc., and seeing that the contracts made in this particular service are strictly adhered to. These agents are captains and lieutenants of the Royal Navy. There are also several agents afloat. The captains have one guinea a day; the lieutenants fifteen

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[5] "Prisoners of War," *Chambers' Journal*, No. 21, 1854, p. 330.

[6] It will be seen in a later chapter what class of men the prisoners were to whom these words would come home.

[7] July 1797—*Reports House of Commons*, "18th Report of Committee of Finance."

shillings, and nineteen shillings more per month for a servant. At the conclusion of the war in 1802, the Board was reduced to three commissioners; Capt. Schank retired on a pension of £500 per annum, and Joseph Hunt, Esq., was removed to the ordnance as clerk of the deliveries.

Commissioners.
Hugh Cloberry Christian, Esq., afterwards Sir Hugh, K.B. Philip Patten, Esq. Ambrose Serle, Esq.
September 1795.
Rupert George, Esq. John Schank, Esq. Wm. Albany Otway, Esq. John Marsh, Esq. Ambrose Serle, Esq.
January 1799.
Joseph Hunt, Esq., *vice* March. [7]

[7] Schomberg, *Naval Chronology*, chap. v., p. 213.

In order properly to understand the establishment of the Depot at Norman Cross, it is necessary to briefly review the events which led up to it. It arose at a very momentous era in our history. It was not officially called a barracks, or a prison, but a Depot. At that time there were few barracks in England, practically none, and what we term garrison towns were very scarce. Our regular army was abroad fighting, and the internal defence was in the hands of the Militia and Yeomanry. Service in the former was compulsory, but substitutes could be purchased, so that it is easy to judge who would actually serve, especially at a time when scarcity and high prices were the rule, while the Militia were well fed. In the Yeomanry were enrolled the gentry and well-to-do persons of each locality; this was a very large force. There was a special troop of Norman Cross Yeomanry, in which the farmers and others from the neighbouring villages gave their services, and there were one or more troops in Peterborough and the neighbouring towns. The duty mainly consisted in putting down the various small riots that arose in different parts of the country. In their travels they were “billeted” on the publicans and the public at a tariff fixed by the Government, and which, not being very extravagant, gave rise to much dissatisfaction, oppression, and fraud.

As the foreign wars continued, the number of prisoners sent to Britain multiplied and the military duty increased. In 1793 the Supplementary Militia Act was passed, and it was determined to spend about £2,000,000 in erecting barracks, and out of this sum Norman Cross was built. It was always hoped that peace was at hand, and the prisoners of war had hitherto been confined not in places built for, or exactly suitable for, their retention, but in fortresses or castles or ships, and when these became overcrowded, in empty warehouses or similar buildings specially hired. It was not considered safe to keep prisoners of war in sea-ports, or even near the coast. Ireland was in a state of rebellion, and had to be kept down with a strong military force, hence the great Depot at Kinsale was formed.

We must bear in mind that at this period the Parliamentary Reports were very closely watched by our enemies, and information which might be of service to them was suppressed and consequently is sought for in vain to-day. The country was in a state of turmoil, the Government departments were overladen to a terrible degree, and red tape, far more than now, reigned supreme. These conditions led to careless supervision and defalcations even in high positions; the Barrack Master-General, General Oliver de Lancey, was dismissed from the Army after a Commission had investigated his accounts. He was responsible for Norman Cross, and it is in accordance with the finding of the commission referred to in this preface that no official account of the original cost can be found. The ground

was purchased from Lord Carysfort. [8] It is from measurements of foundations remaining on the site, from plans, and from scattered and brief references to reports, of which the originals cannot up to the present be found, that a history and description of the original buildings can be given. They were begun in haste, hurriedly built, and in a continual state of repair and alteration during the whole of their existence.

In 1793 a large sum of money was voted by Parliament for barracks both permanent and temporary. A Barrack Master-General had already been appointed. The first measure taken by this official was the conversion of existing buildings to meet their new object—viz. the safe custody of the captive soldiers and sailors, and the provision of suitable accommodation for lodging and maintaining them and the troops who guarded them. Even in the first three years of the war these efforts were barely sufficient to meet the requirements, and in February 1796 the matter of prison accommodation had become most urgent. The Dutch Fleet was at sea, and a meeting with the English Fleet being probable, it was reported to the Admiralty, in reply to their inquiries as to the means of disposing of the large number of prisoners expected in the event of a successful battle, that Porchester Castle was capable of containing 2,000 men, and the Dutch prisoners could be kept separate from the French. Forton would be of little use, as not more than 300 extra could be accommodated; it was already full, 6,000 being incarcerated in the hospital there.

On the 20th June of the same year it was reported that the number of prisoners had increased, until every prison was overcrowded. At Mill Prison, Plymouth, calculated to hold 3,300, there were confined 3,513, and in consequence of the report 200 were transferred from this prison into a ship; this in turn also became crowded, and another ship had to be pressed into the service. Fresh prisoners still poured into the country. Sir Ralph Abercrombie reported that he was sending upwards of 4,000 from the West Indies, and the urgency was such that it became absolutely necessary to construct with the utmost rapidity a new prison.

In selecting a site, several requirements had to be considered. To be suitable for its purpose the prison must be within easy reach of a port, in order that prisoners might be landed, and conveyed rapidly and at small cost to their place of confinement. At the same time it must not be too near an unfortified port, as such a situation would offer facilities for escape, and there would be danger of support from the sea, in the event of a general rising, and a combined attempt to restore to the fighting ranks of the enemy the thousands of captive soldiers and sailors who were in captivity *hors de combat*. The site must be healthy, well supplied with water, and conveniently situated for the provision of the necessaries of life—and further, it must be near trunk roads, for convenience of administration, and in order that in the event of a rising, troops sufficient to quell the mutinous prisoners could be concentrated on the spot.

The site chosen for the Norman Cross Depot possessed all these advantages. It was situated on the Great North Road, one of the most important in the country, the Ermine Street of the Romans, and it was only seventy-six miles from London. The situation was altogether suitable from a sanitary point of view, although later, at a period when the bulk were ill clad, the poor half-naked French, accustomed to a warmer climate, complained bitterly of its cold and exposed position. An abundant supply of excellent water could be obtained by sinking deep wells, the surrounding country was agricultural, the land fertile and well stocked; there were small towns near from which supplies could be obtained, and, finally, the transports could be brought to the ports of Yarmouth, Lynn, or Wisbech, and the prisoners landed there could be cheaply conveyed by water to Yaxley, Stanground, and Peterborough, all of which places were within a few miles' march from the prison gates. As an alternative the prisoner could march direct from the ports to the prison.

[8] In 1803 the Earl of Carysfort of the Irish Peerage took the title of Lord Carysfort of Norman Cross, as a Peer of the United Kingdom.

On the 8th December 1796 the Transport Commissioners applied to the Barrack Office for estimates for a building to contain 10,000 prisoners, but official red tape could not be disregarded, and the Barrack Master-General replied that as the Admiralty had not authorised the construction of any such buildings, he could not give any opinion on the subject. In the Transport Office, however, were officials who recognised the urgency of the situation, and when at length on the 13th February 1797 the Barrack Master-General wrote to the Transport Board, referring to his letter of the 19th December of the previous year, and asking for an order for the building, he was too late. The Transport Commissioners were already at work, the prison had been planned, and the work, started in the previous December, was, under the direction of William Adams, Master Carpenter to the Board of Ordnance, already making such rapid progress that portions were nearly complete.

The material selected for the structure was wood; this was economical, and suited to the temporary character of the building. No one, however pessimistic, thought in 1796 that the prison would be required to house prisoners of war, with only two short intervals, for another nineteen years. Such wooden buildings, the outer walls constructed of a strong framework, with feather-edged boards overlapping one another covering and casing in the framed work, were much used in domestic architecture at this period, and many houses thus constructed may be seen in the neighbourhood of London. A good example of a village mansion of this kind may be still seen in Lower Sydenham, where it is at present occupied by Lady Grove, the widow of Sir George Grove. The wooden buildings were erected on a buried brick or stone foundation.

Above all, wood lent itself to rapidity of construction, which was an urgent and essential requirement at this crisis.

When nine years later, in 1805, fresh accommodation for the ever-increasing number of prisoners flowing into Great Britain was necessary, and Dartmoor was selected as the site for a new prison, granite was the material adopted for its construction. The stone was obtainable on the spot, while the price of timber was prohibitive, in consequence of the blockading of the Prussian ports. [9]

The granite prison at Dartmoor, commenced in 1805, received its first batch of prisoners in May 1809. The stone building took four years to build, it served its original purpose for seven years, stood empty for thirty-four years, and is at the present time, and has been for sixty-one years, a convict prison. The wooden buildings of Norman Cross, commenced in 1796, were ready for use in four months, served their purpose for eighteen years, and were rased to the ground in 1816.

The earliest official information, as to the plan and the buildings of the Depot, is found in a long report by General Beathand dated 13th January 1797; later official reports and documents, paragraphs in the newspapers, and other sources of information show that the original plans were modified and expanded as the work of the prison progressed.

The timber framework of the building was made in London, and was carted down to Norman Cross, where 500 carpenters and others were employed day and night, and seven days a week, those who would not work on Sunday being discharged. The erection of the prisons, the accessory offices, and the barracks for the Military Guard progressed very rapidly, and on the 4th February (nine days before the Barrack Master-General applied for the order to start the work!) such progress had been made that the Admiralty instructed Mr. Poore, a surveyor, to proceed to Stilton "to survey the buildings erected near there for the confinement of prisoners of war." He did so, and reported that a portion of the building was already complete. General Nicolls, the officer commanding the district, was sanguine enough to report on the 13th February that the prison at Norman Cross would be ready in about three weeks for the reception of prisoners from the citadel (Plymouth).

[9] The price of timber had risen in December 1806 to £8 8*s.* a load; at one date the contractor complained that even by paying £12 a load he could not obtain fifty loads in Plymouth. *The Story of Dartmoor Prison*, Basil Thomson. (London: William Heinemann, 1907.)

This estimate of the date when the barracks would be finished was too sanguine, although the work was being carried out with all possible speed. By the end of January the sum of £6,000 had been paid to and disbursed by Mr. Adams in wages alone. [10]

The total amount paid on account of the Norman Cross Depot up to the 19th November 1797 being so large, while the large expenditure on the alterations of old prisons and fortresses in the country was going on simultaneously, it is not surprising that on the 14th April 1797 a question was asked by an economist in the House of Commons as to the extraordinary expenditure on barracks; nor, looking to the rate at which the building of the Norman Cross Depot was being pushed forward, can we be surprised at the curt reply of the Secretary of State: "Extraordinary exertions involve extraordinary expenses."

There is reason to believe, however, that the question was not put without good reason. The want of method and the overlapping of departments were not conducive to clear statements of accounts. The action of the newly appointed Transport Board in commencing the building of the prison, while the Barrack Master was refusing to undertake this urgent work because he considered that official routine had been neglected, has already been alluded to. The Barrack Master's Accounts were very confused. In the Records of the Audit Office (Roll 354, Bundle 146, Declared Accounts) the total expenditure by the Barrack Master at Norman Cross, from 1st January 1797 to Christmas 1802, is only £5,175 3*s.*, and it is evident that the sum of £34,518 11*s.* 3*d.* does not appear in the Barrack Master's account. The total expenditure of his department amounted, when an inquiry was held, in 1802 to £1,324,680 12*s.* 5*d.* and there was a deficiency of £40,296 9*s.* 11¼*d.*

Out of the confused chaos of figures there emerges the interesting fact that, between the 25th December 1796 and the 24th June 1797, £390 10*s.* 1*d.* was spent on coals supplied to the Norman Cross Depot! A large coal bill for half a year, when we consider that in none of the blocks occupied by the prisoners, excepting the hospital blocks, was there any artificial heat.

As the work went on, there were, as has been already stated, various alterations in the plans; thus in February and March 1797 it was ordered, that a hospital for the sick should be provided by adapting some of the blocks originally intended as prisons to this purpose, and that increased accommodation for prisoners should be obtained by adding a storey to each block in course of erection, in preference to multiplying the buildings.

On 21st March a payment was made to Mr. Poore of £142 2*s.* for his services in surveying and *settling the establishment* at Norman Cross. This shows that within three months from the commencement of the buildings they were in a sufficiently advanced condition to make the consideration of the necessary staff for the administration of the prison when it should be opened, a matter requiring Mr. Poore's immediate attention.

By the 25th March the staff had been engaged, and on that day it was reported that a section of the buildings, sufficient for the custody of 1,840 prisoners, was ready for their reception. On the day before this report was sent, a portion of the military barracks had been occupied by the small number of troops considered sufficient for the moment. These marched in on the 24th, and were ready to mount guard over the expected prisoners.

The work of building went rapidly on during the rest of the year, and nine months from its commencement Mr. Craig, a principal architect of the department, was sent down for the final inspection. As will be seen by the footnote, page 14, payments to W. Adams, Chief Carpenter, went on up to 29th November 1797, when we may assume that the prison in its first form was complete.

From the time of its occupation, this prison was, like others of its class, known as a "depot"—"The Norman Cross Depot for Prisoners of War." Locally it was frequently spoken of

[10] The sum of £14,800 was paid to Adams between the 1st January 1797 and 29th November 1797 in the following instalments:The total amount paid to 19th November 1797 for the Norman Cross Prison was £34,518 11*s.* 3*d.*, for Hull £22,600, for Lewes £12,400, and for Colchester £15,620.

and written about as the Norman Cross Prison, or the Norman Cross Barracks, or even Yaxley or Stilton Barracks. The term depot included the prison proper, the barracks, and all other Government buildings. In the succeeding chapter this Depot is fully described, and its necessary establishment touched upon. [11]

[11] As illustrating the hardship which, already in its fourth year, this war had imposed upon the nation, the following extract from the report furnished to the Transport Office, by Captain Woodriff, R.N., agent to the Commissioners, of the average price of provisions and the rate of wages in the district in which the Depot had been established, during the time that the prison and barracks were erecting, may be of interest. Mutton was 10½*d.* per lb., beef 1*s.* per lb., bread 1s. per quartern loaf. Carpenters' wages were 12s. per week, shoemakers' 10*s.*, bakers' 9*s.*, blacksmiths' 8*s.*, and husbandmen 7*s.* Starvation wages were then a literal truth. Four years later from a Parliamentary Report we find the Government granting a bounty on all imported wheat, in order to keep the price down to £5 a quarter, other grain being treated in the same way. We can well understand that, as the price of provisions went up, and the taxation increased with the prolongation of the war (a war which, however it originated, was prolonged for years by the ambitious projects of Buonaparte for the aggrandisement of himself and of France), the animosity not only of the actual combatants, but also of the suffering men, women, and children, steadily grew against the man and the nation whom they regarded as the authors of all their misery.

CHAPTER II
THE PRISON AND ITS ESTABLISHMENT

It is no flattery to a prisoner to gild his dungeon.
Calderon, Fortunas de Andromed et Persus.

The following description of the Depot is founded on personal observations of the site, on contemporary plans and records, of greater or less accuracy, on the meagre information which could be obtained from the few old people who had in their early days seen and known the place, and who were still alive in 1894, when the materials for the lecture on which this narrative is based were collected, and on facts recorded by recent writers the accuracy of which can be verified.

The site of the Depot was a space of forty-two acres, situated in the angle formed where, seventy-six miles from London, "the Great North Road" is joined, five miles from Peterborough by the old Coach Road from Boston and East Lincolnshire.

The ground rises here, by a rapid slope from the south and east, to a height of 120 feet above the level of the adjoining Fens, and it was in this elevated and healthy spot that the prison and barracks were built. It had been ascertained that by sinking deep wells an abundant supply of good water could be obtained, and it is said that there were about thirty such wells, although in the best extant plan of the Depot nineteen only are shown. Some of these are still in use at the present day, and each well is nearly 100 feet deep. Great attention was paid to the sanitary arrangements, a very necessary matter, when one considers that it was resolved suddenly to concentrate in one spot a population (including prisoners and garrison) of nearly 8,000 adult males, who were to live for several years on about forty acres of ground. There is a legend that the site is even now honeycombed with sewers, and that within recent years a ferret turned into one of them, which had been accidentally opened, at once took out 150 yards of line. This, like many other traditions, is not, I believe, founded on fact. The main feature of the sanitary arrangements was that all refuse should be removed in soil carts, without the intervention of drains, cess-pools, or middens. For further information on this and many other matters connected with the structure of the Depot, the reader may study the *Report of a Survey* by Mr. Fearnall in 1813. It is evident from this report that the maintenance and repair of the buildings had been greatly neglected during the seventeen years which had elapsed between their erection and the date of the report. [12]

The Peterborough Natural History Society, which has in its museum the finest collection in Great Britain, if not in the world, of straw marquetry work, bone carving, and other artistic manufactures executed by the French prisoners, possesses three plans of the prison. The earliest of these is a pictorial plan (Plate II., Fig. 1, Plan A), which was bought at a sale at Washingley Hall, and which I therefore call the Washingley Plan. It was presented in 1906 by the Mayor, T. Lamplugh, Esq.; it is an east elevation. Another (Plate II., Fig. 2, Plan B) of about the same date is a ground plan, and was presented by Miss Hill, the daughter of the late Mr. John Hill. This is taken from the west. Mr. Hill, who was born in 1803, and was thus only thirteen when the prison was demolished, was said to have drawn the plan himself; if he did so, it must have been copied from one made a few years before he was born, as the plan is that of the Depot in the first period of the war, which came to a close in March 1802.

Both these plans are of a very early date in the history of the prison. A third (Plate II., Fig. 3, Plan C) is that which belonged to Major Kelly, who, as Captain Kelly, was Brigade-Major at the time when the prison was closed; this includes a pictorial plan, or bird's-eye view, with the Peterborough

[12] Appendix A.

Road on the south to the left hand and the North Road above, a ground plan, and above this the north elevation of the whole group of buildings. It is of later date, probably about 1803–4, the commencement of the second period of the war. A fourth plan (Plate II., Fig. 4, Plan D) was made by Lieut. Macgregor of the West Kent Militia, and dedicated to the officers of his regiment which was quartered at Norman Cross in 1813. This was engraved and published by Sylvester of the Strand. An almost perfect copy of the print is in the possession of the Reverend Father Robert A. Davis; it shows the Depot in its final state two years before Waterloo and three years before it was demolished.

In the Musée de l'Armée at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris, is a model of the Depot, the work of a French prisoner named Foulley, who was confined at Norman Cross five years and three months. M. Foulley constructed the model after his return to France. It represents the prison as it appeared on the occasion of the rejoicings at the departure of the first detachment of prisoners to France after the entry of the allied armies into Paris, and the abdication of Buonaparte in 1814. By the courtesy of General Niox, the Director of the Museum, and of his Adjutant, Lieut. Sculfort, a photograph of the model has been taken for me; this is reproduced at page 251, chapter xii., where the final clearing of the prison is described. The model corresponds in its main features with the plans which I have enumerated. It is on a large scale, beautifully executed, and its production must have required months of hard work. It is the only plan, or model, which shows a prisoners' theatre in the centre of the south-east quadrangle.

M. Foulley's model is incorrect in certain details. It represents the prison wall as quadrilateral inclosing a square, instead of an octagonal space. It omits the large and deep embrasures, in the recesses of which each of the four gates of the prison stood. The wide fosse which encircled the prison at the foot of and within the wall is omitted, nor is there a sufficient space left between the wall and the prison buildings to admit of such a fosse being shown in the model.

Outside the wall of the prison M. Foulley had to rely probably on the description of others, as from within the wall the prisoners could only gaze at its dismal brick surface. Of what was beyond he could have no personal knowledge during the long years of his captivity, unless he was fortunate enough on occasions to be a delegate to the market without the Eastern Gate. Hence probably it arises that the buildings representing the quarters of the military guarding the prison are huddled together, in confused order, which bears no relation to that which was their actual position.

Although the model is not, as a whole, made accurately to scale, the reader will appreciate its size from the fact that the caserns are modelled on a scale of about 1 to 171—the actual length of each casern was 100 feet, the length in the model is nearly 7 inches. A key plan of the model and M. Foulley's description are given with the photograph in chapter xii., p. 251.

To avoid confusion in following the description, the reader must bear in mind that the Washingley Pictorial Plan, Major Kelly's plans, and Lieut. Macgregor's plan are all east elevations —that is, the observer is supposed to face the west, with the Peterborough Road to his left hand— whereas in the plan copied by Mr. Hill the figures and their references are all placed to be read as the observer looks east, with the Peterborough Road on his right hand; therefore the left-hand bottom corner (where the military hospital was situated) in Mr. Hill's Plan is the right-hand upper corner in the three other plans.

The site was a right-angled oblong, with a small space sliced off at the north-west angle. It measured in its long diameter from east to west 500 yards (1,500 feet)—that is, 60 yards more than a quarter of a mile—while across from north to south it was 412 yards (1,236 feet), or 28 yards short of a quarter of a mile. The space enclosed was 42 acres, 7 poles, which is about six times the area of Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, and about four times that of Trafalgar Square. To the south it was bounded in its whole length by the Peterborough Road, on its other three sides it was surrounded with fields. A strip of land (B B in Mr. Hill's plan), crossed by a wide roadway leading to the West Barracks, and varying in depth from 125 yards at the Norman Cross corner to 40 yards at the north-west corner, intervened between the western boundary of the site and the North Road.

The prison itself occupied 22 acres in the centre of the space. It was enclosed by an octagonal brick wall. Originally the structure was a strong stockade fence, but about the year 1805 the fence was replaced by the brick wall, of which 30 yards are still standing.

The two east and two west sides of the octagonal space, which was the prison proper, were longer than the two north and two south sides; the long diameter of the octagon therefore ran across that of the site, extending almost to its north and south limits, while the short diameter stopping short of the boundary by 300 feet, left, east and west, ample room for the barracks of the military garrison and for other buildings.

In the very centre of the site, which is also the centre of the prison, was an octagonal block house, mounted with cannon. This is represented in the illustration, a photograph of one of several models made by the prisoners. This model is in the possession of Colonel Strong of Thorpe Hall, by whose grandfather Archdeacon Strong it was bought from its maker at the prison.

The frontispiece is from a sketch of the centre of the prison, by Captain George Lloyd of the Second West York Militia, taken in 1809. The original is in the collection of the United Service Institution, Whitehall; it shows the accuracy of the model of the block house. In describing the various courts and buildings, it is best to start from the centre, and to trace the arrangement of the parts of the Depot round this point. Symmetrically arranged round this block house, and commanded by its guns, were four quadrangular courts, each strongly fenced by a high stockade fence. The area of each of these courts was about 3½ acres; they were separated from one another by four cross roads, each about twenty feet wide. These roads met in the centre, where the corners of the quadrangular courts were cut off to form the octagonal open space in which stood the block house.

Each quadrangle contained four wooden two-storied barracks, or caserns, 100 feet long and 22 feet wide, roofed with red tiles, the shallowness of their depth from back to front adding to their apparent height. The sixteen buildings faced the east, eight with their outer ends to the south fence, and eight with their outer end to the north fence. The four caserns in each square were placed one behind the other, leaving between each block and the next in front a space which was strongly fenced off at either end, forming an enclosure about 100 by 70 feet, in which the prisoners of each casern were confined when the gates opening into the quadrangle, or airing-ground, were locked at sunset.

Each casern was constructed to form the dwelling-place of about 500 prisoners, who slept in rows of hammocks, closely packed in tiers one above the other. It is almost certain that each of the two floors in these caserns was divided by partitions into three chambers, as at the sale each of the sixteen was sold in three lots—the north end, the centre, and the south end. The north end of the hinder block in the north-east quadrangle was bought on the 25th September 1816 by Mr. Dan Ruddle for £32. [13] He re-erected it for workshops in his building-yard, where it still stands, and it is thus possible to-day, to look upon the north end of the casern (No. 13, or letter M), which stood behind the three blocks adapted for the prisoners' hospital, and which in the second period of the war [14] was occupied by the French petty officers and by civilians who were captured, and whose position did not entitle them to parole.

In the south-east quadrangle, which was on the right of the central south entrance to the prison from the Peterborough Road, there were, in addition to these four caserns and their necessary offices, the superintendent's, or agent's offices, a storehouse, a room set apart for the clerks and other officials, a cooking-house, and, as in each of the other quadrangles, two turnkeys' lodges.

These smaller buildings in each quadrangle were in a court, cut off from the large space which formed the prisoners' airing-ground by stockade fencing similar to that surrounding the whole quadrangle, the turnkeys' lodges being immediately behind this fence. The only exit from the part of the quadrangle occupied by the prisoners was through this court, the gate situated in the inner stockade

[13] *Auctioneer's Catalogue*, (Jacobs' Peterborough, 1816).

[14] M. Foulley's description of his model on Key Plan, Pl. xx., p. 251.

fence being between the two turnkeys' lodges, facing another in the main fence of the square, which opened into the road between the quadrangles. There were in each quadrangle three wells, two in the airing-courts near the caserns, and one in the enclosed space in which were the accessory buildings.

In the south-western quadrangle, in addition to the caserns, the storehouse, and the cooking-house, there was a straw barn, from which, whenever necessary, fresh straw was served out for the prisoners' palliasses. In the enclosed court near the turnkeys' lodges was the black hole, where prisoners were confined for gross offences. This den of misery contained twelve cells, each secured by bars and padlocks, and had a cramped strongly fenced airing-court in front of it.

The north-eastern quadrangle was mainly given up to the hospital. Of the four caserns in the early years of the Depot, two, but later three, were fitted up for the reception of the sick and wounded and for the accommodation of the surgeon and assistant surgeons, the matron sempstress and the hospital attendants. Of the hospital blocks, one was set apart for the officers and other prisoners of similar social status. In the enclosed court behind the turnkeys' lodges were the special accessory buildings of the hospital, and in the corner behind the caserns was the mortuary, where, between their death and their burial, were laid the bodies of 1,770 unhappy men whose fate it was to end their captivity in a foreign grave.

In this quadrangle, as shown in Lieut. Macgregor's plan, was, in the year 1805, erected the surgeon's house, which was a substantial brick building, with an enclosed garden; this was built in the second period of the war after the Peace of Amiens, about eleven years before the demolition of the barracks. After the closing of the Depot, when peace was declared in 1814, we find Mr. George Walker the surgeon, on vacating his post, making application for permission to remove the young fruit trees which he had planted in the apparently newly laid-out garden. [15] In each quadrangle a space of about two acres was unoccupied by buildings, and constituted the airing-ground, in which the prisoners spent the greater part of their waking lives. This outdoor life, from sunrise to sunset, except in bad weather, was enforced by the Prison Regulations.

These airing-courts were bordered by a flag pavement, which enabled the prisoners to use them in any but the worst weather.

Completely surrounding the four quadrangles, and enclosing around them a vacant space, varying in width from 25 to 30 yards opposite the cross roads, to as many feet at the abutting angles of each quadrangle, was the prison wall. This in the earlier years was a strong stockade fence, and is so represented in the three earlier plans reproduced in the plates; but at a later date it was replaced by the brick wall shown in Macgregor's plan, and it is described in the auctioneer's catalogue of the sale, when the prison and its contents were disposed of in September 1816, as "a substantial brick wall

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[15] The following entry in the Register of Marriages in St. John's Church, Peterborough, probably explains the reason for the housing of the surgeon in a comfortable brick house within those prison walls, instead of in the very indifferent quarters in the hospital casern:—"October 18th, 1808, George H. Walker of Yaxley to Elizabeth Colinette Pressland of St. John's.—Witnesses: Thomas Pressland, Thomas Alderson Cook, James Gibbs." Mr. George H. Walker was the surgeon to the Prison, which was in the Parish of Yaxley, and Captain Pressland, R.N., had been for some years, after the renewal of the war in 1803, Superintendent of the Prison, so among all these dry details crops up the picture of our human life. We see the young medical officer passing through the door in the Prison wall which communicated with the Superintendent's house (the door over which the wall is seen rising with a ramp in the photographs of the only fragments of the wall now remaining) to spend happy hours with Captain Pressland's family. We see friendship ripening into love, the story told by the entry in the Register of St. John's Church, Peterborough, and then in the Register of St. Peter's, Yaxley, we are brought face to face with a tragedy, for the last entry of a burial from the Depot is "Captain Thomas Pressland, Norman Cross. March 21st, 1814. 59 years. Signed, J. Hinde, Curate," and there can be little doubt that from the house to which, mainly through his future father-in-law's influence, Surgeon Walker was able in the third year of its existence to bring Elizabeth Colinette Pressland as his bride, while the bells of Yaxley Church rang out a merry marriage peal, six years later passed the body of Captain Pressland himself to be laid in Yaxley Churchyard, while the death bell tolled its solemn note. For six years this house was the house of the couple for whom it was built. It was in the auctioneer's catalogue, when it was sold on the 2nd October 1810, nothing more than "An excellent brick dwelling-house, containing a cellar 12 ft. 6 in. by 11 ft. 2 in., parlour 13 ft. 3 in. by 13 ft. 8 in., etc., etc." To us, 100 years later, it is a part of the great tragedy of Norman Cross, and by the light of the registers we see it in those short eight years from its building to its destruction the scone of the brightest joys and the deepest griefs of men and women whose names we know, whose persons we can imagine, and who help to clothe those cold, dry records with the warmth of human life.

measuring 3,740 feet round, and containing 282 rods of brickwork more or less." Of this wall, 30 yards are still standing, forming a portion of the garden wall of the house originally occupied by the superintendent. The auctioneer's description does not altogether agree with that of the surveyor Mr. Fearnall, who in 1813 reported that it was "very indifferently built, and not of the best materials," and that much of it was in danger of falling, owing to the excavation at its foot within the enclosure of a ditch. This ditch, for its full length of nearly three-quarters of a mile, can be traced at the present day, with the deep embrasures shown in the plans, at each of the four prison gates. It was, at the time the buildings were demolished, about 9 yards wide and 5 feet deep, and it was paved with stone flags; this is supposed to be the "silent walk" of the sentries, excavated in 1809. An item in the barrack master's accounts for July in that year is £420 19*s.* 6*d.*, for the making a walk for the "silent sentries."

The area of the actual prison enclosed within the wall was in 1816 sold in one lot, and is described in the catalogue as "containing by admeasurement 22 acres, 2 roods, and 14 perches more or less."

In the boundary wall were four gates, opening on to the ends of the cross streets, which separated the four quadrangles. The north gate opened into a space at the back of the prison occupied by sheds and other accessories; the east and west gates on roadways which ran between the military barracks and the prison from the Peterborough Road; the south gate was opposite the central main entrance from that road into the Depot. Later, as shown in Macgregor's plan, there were, in addition to these four large gates, a door in the south wall adjoining the house of the agent, or superintendent, and another in the north wall, giving admission to a court outside the wall, in which had been erected a separate prison for the boys.

At each gate outside the prison wall was a guard house, a one-storied building fitted with separate rooms for the officers and men of the guard, with cells for prisoners, and with a wide-open shelter, or verandah, in front.

The ground between the boundary wall and the quadrangles was not built upon, but was studded over with the boxes of the sentries, who, with muskets loaded with ball cartridge, day and night patrolled the vacant area, ready to fire on any prisoner attempting to escape across it who did not obey the order to halt.

Beyond the boundary wall of the prison were situated east and west the military barracks. These comprised at each end three large caserns, similar to those in the prison, built to enclose, with the guard house, the barrack square. The casern facing the guard house was the officers' quarters, and was partitioned off into twenty-three separate officers' rooms, a mess-room, kitchen, and other offices. Those at either side accommodated the private soldiers; they were divided into ten separate rooms, each with sleeping-berths for sixty men. There were two smaller buildings for the non-commissioned officers, a large canteen, sutling-house, and various offices. The whole of these buildings, with the barrack yards, were enclosed by strong stockade fencing. Outside this fence there was, in the space allotted to the accommodation of the troops, east and west of the prison, a detached house for the field officers, two smaller houses for the staff sergeants, the powder magazine, a fire-engine house, a range of stabling, with stalls for thirty-five horses, [16] rooms for the batmen, a schoolroom, and various other necessary offices and sheds.

The Military Hospital occupied the north-west corner of the forty-two acres; it served for the whole of the troops in both barracks, and was complete in itself. It was enclosed within a separate stockade fence.

On the south side of the area, between the boundary wall and the Peterborough Road, were the houses of the barrack master, and of the agent (or superintendent). These are still standing,

[16] On a range of the stabling purchased in 1816 to be re-erected as farm buildings in a neighbouring village, over one of the doors there stands out in bold relief, owing to the protective influence of the paint, the letters B. A. T., and in the auctioneer's catalogue the Range is described as Bathorse Stable Range. From Stœqueler's *Military Encyclopædia*, we learn that "Bat" signified a pack saddle; "Bathorse," one which carried a pack; "Batman," the man in charge of the Bathorse. The latter term came to be used for an officer's servant, while the Bathorse Stable was applied to a military stable for draught and other horses.

the former having been purchased, when the prison and barracks were demolished and the site and materials sold, by Captain Kelly (Brevet Major, 1854), the last Brigade-Major. This officer had, in 1814, married the daughter of Mr. Vise, a surgeon practising in Stilton, [17] and, wishing to settle in the neighbourhood, he purchased the first of the lots into which the freehold was divided, and in which was situated the barrack master's house, described in the catalogue as "a comfortable house in the cottage stile," "built of substantial fir carcase-framing and rough weather-boarding on brick footings, and covered with pantiles."

To this house Major Kelly made considerable additions. It was occupied by him for forty years. He died, aged seventy-eight, in 1858. [18] His son Captain J. Kelly succeeded him, and the property has now passed into the hands of Mr. J. A. Herbert, J.P., the present occupant of the house. It is a useful landmark to those who visit the locality, as with its grounds it occupies the south-east corner of the forty-two acres, which were covered by the prison and barracks, and it forms a useful point from which to start in an attempt to conjure up the Depot as it was at the beginning of the last century. The first effort of the imagination must be to blot out the charming residence with its well-wooded grounds, and to substitute the bare, treeless (except for one old ash) spot on which stood the "comfortable house in the cottage stile, consisting of one room 20 ft. by 12 ft. 2 in., one ditto 14 ft. 8 in. by 12 ft. 3 in. . . . built of substantial fir carcase-framing and rough weather-boarding on brick footings, and covered with pantiles"—which was what Captain Kelly bought in 1816. [19]

Immediately to the west of the barrack master's house was the straw barn and yard, in which was stored the straw for the beds of the soldiers. Beyond the barn was a gate, from which a road or street ran across between the prison proper and the east barracks. Through this gate passed all those who came to attend the market at the east gate of the prison, or on other business. Beyond this gate was the house of the superintendent, or agent, who was practically the governor of the prison. The block contained two houses, the second being occupied by other officials. These houses, like the barrack master's, remain at the present time where they stood in the twenty years of the prison's existence, but they have been much altered, and are now surrounded by trees and shrubs, of which the ground was absolutely bare in the days of the prison.

The superintendent's and the adjoining house were cased with brick in 1816 by the purchaser, Captain Handslip, and were thrown into one house, which is now occupied by Mr. Franey. In the catalogue of the sale they are described as "two excellent contiguous dwelling-houses, built of substantial fir carcase-framing, and stuccoed, with lead flat top." Another range of buildings, 100 feet long, "comprising a large storeroom, coach-house, stable, etc.," also stood on this south side between the prison wall and the road, while in the centre was the main entrance, with, beyond and to the west of the gate, the south guard house.

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[17] In his interesting romance, *The French Prisoners of Norman Cross*, the Rev. Arthur Brown speaks of Mr. Vise as Chief Surgeon at the Prison; this, of course, is an error, the prisoners were not attended by the neighbouring practitioners. The statement that the surgeons were all English is also erroneous.

[18] Major Kelly was highly esteemed and at the time of his death (when the Indian Mutiny was not yet quelled) the following lines were published in a local newspaper:—A MONODY ON THE LATE MAJOR KELLYPeace to the virtuous brave! Another son of chivalry lies low: Not in the flush of youth he finds a grave, Not stricken to the dust by foreign foe He fainting falls;—but laden with full years, With white-hair'd glory crown'd, he lays him down In earth's maternal lap, and with him bears Benevolence, high honour, renown, And love-begetting mem'ries, such as throw A halo round the thoughts of mortals here below. Earth! keep thy treasured dead Awhile, in holy trust! Not with vain tears Wail we the loss of him who bravely bled For England's might and weal, in early years, When life's warm pulse beat high, and buoyant hopes On tip-toe look'd afar at distant fame; When views of greatness fill'd his vision's scope, And daring deeds lent glory to a name: Here on our soldier's grave no tear should fall; All hidden be our grief, as 'neath a funeral pall. O! that in this, our need, This hour of trial, when the swart Sepoy Blurs the fair front of nature, with each deed Of villainy conceiving; when the joy That, like the sun, lights up affection's eyes, Is blotted out by Indian hate and lust—O! that a host of Kellys could arise, And with avenging steel, unto the dust, Smite down the Smiter, that the world might know How true the Briton as a friend, how mighty as a foe! O. P. The Peterborough Advertiser, 13th February 1858.This monody not only shows the esteem in which the Major was held by the local poet and his neighbours, but in the last stanza it revives the memory of a crisis in the history of the empire, and of the throes of the Indian Mutiny, from which our country was suffering when Major Kelly died.

[19] *Auctioneer's Catalogue* (Peterborough: G. Robertson, Bookseller. 1816!)

On the ground plan are shown four entrances to the depot—three from the Peterborough Road, the centre entrance just mentioned, and two others, one at either end, the roads from which ran between the barracks and the prison. The fourth entrance was approached from the North Road by a broad drive, crossing the narrow field lying between the prison and the Great North Road, from which it is now, as then, fenced off on either side. This entrance was exactly opposite the centre of the Western Military Barracks, the main guard facing it. It was by this western entrance that the stores and provisions were daily brought into the prison, [20] and through it the bodies of those who died were carried to the prison cemetery on the opposite side of the North Road.

Macgregor's plan shows a paled fence surrounding the forty-two acres and forming the outer boundary of the whole site, but this may have been a mere artistic finish to the plan.

The prison and barracks were excellently planned, although, as a place of safe custody, the former would have been practically useless without the latter.

The guns of the block house commanding the whole prison, the cordon of sentries frequently changed, always alert, ceaselessly pacing their beats within and without the wall, day and night; the strong guard mounted at each gate of the prison, and the large force of military in the two barracks, ready to act on the slightest alarm, constituted a more efficient safeguard against mutiny or escape than would have been afforded had trust been placed in strong stone structures instead of in the wooden walls and buildings which had been so rapidly run up.

In the summer of 1911, when the heat and drought were exceptional, the stone and rubble footings upon which the wooden buildings were erected were, after the first few showers of rain, in many parts of the site, mapped out clearly in brown on a field of green, the grass upon them having withered, so that it could not spring up fresh as it did in the surrounding pastures. This enabled the author to demonstrate the actual size of the buildings, and to correct many measurements which had been taken from the plans. It also proved that none of the extant plans were drawn to scale.

These are the dry details taken from actual measurements on the ground, from surveyors' plans, and similar documents, but we have a word-picture of the effect produced by these wooden buildings and their inhabitants on the mind of an imaginative and emotional boy, who afterwards became one of the most picturesque writers of the middle part of the nineteenth century. George Borrow's father was quartered at Norman Cross in 1812–13, and his little boy, not yet in his teens, was moved from Norwich to this place. Forty years later, in the pages of *Lavengro*, he thus describes in eloquent language the vivid, if not absolutely accurate picture which the prison had impressed upon his receptive and observant brain.

> "And a strange place it was, this Norman Cross, and, at the time of which I am speaking, a sad cross to many a Norman, being what was then styled a French prison, that is, a receptacle for captives made in the French war. It consisted, if I remember right, of some five or six casernes, very long, and immensely high; each standing isolated from the rest, upon a spot of ground which might average ten acres, and which was fenced round with lofty palisades, the whole being compassed about by a towering wall, beneath which, at intervals, on both sides sentinels were stationed, whilst, outside, upon the field, stood commodious wooden barracks, capable of containing two regiments of infantry, intended to serve as guards upon the captives.
>
> Such was the station or prison at Norman Cross, where some six thousand French and other foreigners, followers of the grand Corsican, were now immured.

[20] The most valuable direct evidence as to the appearance of the barracks and prison which I was able to obtain in 1891, was from an old Mr. Lewin of Yaxley, who was born in 1802, and had been very familiar with the Depot in his childhood. He used frequently to ride in through this west gate in the tradesmen's carts, but he spoke always of the entrance on the south front as the main entrance. This old gentleman's memory was wonderfully clear, and his accounts I regarded as thoroughly trustworthy.

> "What a strange appearance had those mighty casernes, with their blank blind walls, without windows or grating, and their slanting roofs, out of which, through orifices where the tiles had been removed, would be protruded dozens of grim heads, feasting their prison-sick eyes on the wide expanse of country unfolded from that airy height. Ah! there was much misery in those casernes; and from those roofs, doubtless, many a wistful look was turned in the direction of lovely France. Much had the poor inmates to endure, and much to complain of, to the disgrace of England be it said—of England, in general so kind and bountiful. Rations of carrion meat, and bread from which I have seen the very hounds occasionally turn away, were unworthy entertainment even for the most ruffian enemy, when helpless and a captive; and such, alas! was the fare in these casernes. And then, those visits, or rather ruthless inroads, called in the slang of the place 'straw-plait hunts,' when, in pursuit of a contraband article, which the prisoners, in order to procure themselves a few of the necessaries and comforts of existence, were in the habit of making, red-coated battalions were marched into the prisons, who, with the bayonet's point, carried havoc and ruin into every poor convenience which ingenious wretchedness had been endeavouring to raise around it; and then the triumphant exit with the miserable booty; and, worst of all, the accursed bonfire, on the barrack parade, of the plait contraband, beneath the view of the glaring eyeballs from those lofty roofs, amidst the hurrahs of the troops, frequently drowned in the curses poured down from above like a tempest-shower, or in the terrific war-whoop of 'Vive l'Empereur!'"

Another writer records his impression of the Depot, which he visited in 1807. The quotation is from an article in *Notes and Queries*, 8th series, vol. x., p. 197, which gives an account of a trip to Peterborough made by the Rev. Robert Forby, vicar of Fincham, and a Mr. G. Miller of the same place. They started on their tour on the 25th June 1807, and the vicar chronicles his visit to Norman Cross in the following words:

> "Pursuing our journey through suffocating clouds of dust, in the evening we reached Stilton, a miserable shabby town, where all we found to admire was some excellent cheese for our supper. [21] Having disposed of our horses at the inn and secured our own lodgings, we walked back a mile or so to Norman Cross to see the barracks for French prisoners, no less than 6,000 of whom are confined here. It is a fine healthy spot. Among them there is very little disease; their good looks in general prove the excellent care taken of them. In particular the boys are kept apart and taught, so that in all probability their captivity is a benefit to them. Their dexterity in little handicraft, nick-nacks, particularly in making toys of the bones of their meals, will put many pounds into the pockets of several of them. We were very credibly assured that there are some who will carry away with them £200 or £300. Their behaviour was not at all impudent or disrespectful as we passed the pallisades within which they are cooped. Most of them have acquired English enough to chatter very volubly and to cheat adroitly. They are guarded by two regiments of Militia, one of them the Cambridge; we had the advantage of knowing Captain Pemberton of that regiment, who gave us tea in his luggage-lumbered hut. The country is under very great obligations to gentlemen of family and fortune who will forego the comforts of home for the miserable inconveniences of barrack service. We had never seen it

[21] The well-known Stilton cheese was never made at Stilton, which was not in a dairy district; it was made in Leicestershire and sent to Stilton, where Mr. Cooper Thornhill, the sporting landlord of the old sixteenth-century coaching inn, The Bell (he once for a wager rode 218 miles on horseback in 12 hours and 15 minutes), used to supply it to his customers, selling the cheeses, it is said, at half a crown a pound.

> before, and have not the least wish to see it again. It is horrible. The only privacy of an officer by day or night is in these wretched hovels, in which they must alternately sweat and shiver. The mess-room is open indeed at all hours. It is a coffee-room, news room, lounging-room, at all times, as well as that of dinner, to the officers of a regiment. Between eight and nine o'clock we found two who had outstayed the others; they were boozy and still at their wine, merely perhaps from having nothing to do. Our friend, who is a man of great good sense and exemplary manners, must be strangely out of his element here."

The wretched hovels of which Mr. Forby speaks were the rooms in the officers' barracks, the walls of which were only one thickness of boards. There were sixty such little rooms, not luxuriously furnished, for at the first day's sale of the contents of the barracks, on the 18th September 1816, twenty-seven lots of the officers' furniture, consisting of six Windsor chairs and one deal table, realised for each lot from 9*s.* to 32*s.*; for twenty-six lots, each comprising one table and two chairs, the price varied from 2*s.* to 17*s.* 6*d.*; while for sixty lots, consisting of one officer's shovel, poker, tongs, fender and bellows, the price per lot varied from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* The bellows in each room suggest that the fuel supplied was the peat from the adjoining fens, which was usually burned in the district, and which, although it warmed the thatched cottage with thick walls, would give poor comfort to the shivering officer with only a board between him and the outer air.

The account of the Depot is incomplete without the mention of a detached field, situated a few hundred yards north of the site of the prison, on the opposite, that is the west, side of the Great North Road. Shortly after the prison was occupied, the lower part of this field was purchased by the Government for a burial place for the prisoners, and was resold in 1816. To it, during the occupation of the Depot, were carried across the bodies of some 1,750 prisoners, whose fate it was to die within the prison walls. There is nothing now to distinguish this prison cemetery, except the mounds, called by the inhabitants of the district "The Lows"; it will be dealt with in a further chapter.

It must be borne in mind that the buildings which have been described were originally only intended to be of a temporary character, and that from various causes detailed in the report given in the Appendix, certain portions of the woodwork had perished during the seventeen years of the Depot's existence before the date of that report. That document also shows that there was occasional "scamping" by those employed in the work required to maintain the fabrics. The general excellence and durability of the materials are however proved by the fact that even now, at the end of a century, portions of them are still serving the purposes of cottages, workshops, or farm buildings in the neighbouring towns and villages to which they were transported at the sale in 1816.

Examples in Peterborough include the portion of a casern, already alluded to as purchased by Mr. Ruddle and re-erected at his works—it still forms part of a carpenters' shop in the extensive works of the firm of John Thompson, contractors, so famous as cathedral restorers; a group of tenements known as Barrack Yard; and two cottages, the latter being one of the turnkeys' lodges reconstructed. These cottages are still inhabited, but are clearly destined to be very shortly improved off the face of the earth. That they were in old days vulgarly called "Bug Hall" gives a hint as to one minor discomfort which the densely packed French prisoners endured in these wooden buildings. Such was the Depot, which term included the prison, with its various necessary adjuncts, official residences, offices, etc., and the military barracks, complete for a force of two infantry regiments, with hospital, a sutling-house and canteens, the two latter let to contractors at rents respectively of £12 and £10 16*s.* a month, bringing into the Government the sum of £270 6*s.* a year. The Depot was unfortunately under a divided control, the barrack master-general was responsible for the buildings and a barrack master appointed by him resided in a detached house at the Depot. The "Transport Office" was responsible for the management of the prisoners of war at home and abroad. The responsibility of

the Transport Commissioners included the arrangements for the feeding and the discipline of the prisoners. The details were left to their representative agent, who also resided in the Depot. [22]

The military commander, the brigade-major, of course had control of the troops (usually two Militia regiments) quartered in the barracks, east and west of the prison. [23]

As the first portion of the buildings approached completion, it became necessary to make provision beforehand for the reception and maintenance of the prisoners waiting to occupy it, and from the buildings attention must now be directed to the officials and the organisation of the Depot. To each Depot in the country an agent was appointed, who was at every other prison a post captain in the Royal Navy on full pay; but at Norman Cross in the first instance a departure from this rule was made. The following extracts from a letter written by the Transport Board to Mr. Delafons on his appointment to the office are of interest as throwing light on the nature of his duties.

"Transport Office,
"18th March 1797.

"*To* John Delafons, Esq.

"Sir,

"We direct you to proceed without delay to the prison at Norman Cross, to which you are appointed Agent, and report to us the present state thereof, as well as the time when in your judgement it will be ready for the reception of prisoners of War.

"We have ordered bedding for six thousand prisoners to be sent to Norman Cross as soon as possible, and we expect it will arrive there before the end of this month.

"As you are provided with a list of such articles and utensils as will be necessary for carrying on the service, we direct you to make enquiry at Peterborough respecting the terms on which those articles may be procured at that place; and you are to transmit to us a list of such of them as you may think are to be obtained at more reasonable rates, or of a better quality in London. We have appointed Mr. Dent, now one of the clerks at Porchester Castle, to be your first Clerk and Interpreter, with a salary of £80 per annum, and have directed him to proceed forthwith to Norman Cross. We have appointed Michael Brien as one of the Stewards in consequence of your recommendation. A supply of printed Forms will be sent to you from this Office, and you are to be allowed ten guineas per annum for the stationery."

This letter went on to authorise the agent to procure tin mess-cans, wooden bowls, platters, and spoons for 3,000 prisoners at Wisbeck [*sic*] and Lynn, and to inform him that 1,000 hammocks, 1,000 palliasses, 1,000 bolster-cases, also 5,000 sets of bedding, were on their way from London, and that the prisoners from Falmouth would bring their own hammocks with them. [24] At the end of the letter is a note as to stores as follows:

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[22] To the post of agent at Norman Cross there were appointed, during the seventeen years in which the prison was occupied, two civilians and four naval officers. Of the two civilians, Mr. John Delafons sent in his formal resignation eight days after his appointment.Mr. James Perrot, appointed on the 7th April 1797, held his office until January 1799.Captain Woodriff, R.N., appointed January 1799, held his office until the Peace of Amiens, April 1802 (see Appendix B).Captain Thos. Pressland, R.N., was appointed after the War was renewed in May 1803, and served from 18th June 1803 until August 1811.Captain J. Draper, R.N., succeeded to the post, and held it until his death in February 1813.Captain W. Hansell, R.N., became agent on the death of Captain Draper, and relinquished the post in August 1814 after the Abdication of Buonaparte and his retirement to Elba.

[23] There is evidence in correspondence still extant, that much friction arose between the commander of the Military Guard and the agent, as to the power of the latter to interfere in the steps required for the safe custody of the prisoners.

[24] This shows that about 4,000 prisoners were to be removed from Falmouth to Norman Cross, their hammocks, added to the 1,000 on the way from London, making the number correspond with the 5,000 sets of bedding.

Heath brooms	40 dozen
Large twine	6 ,,
Small twine	4 ,,
Tow	50 lb.
Black Paint	4 ,,
Turpentine	1 gall.
Boiled oil	1 ,,
Scrapers	3 dozen
Charcoal	50 bushel
Straw	10 ton
Brimstone	1 cwt.
Dirt Baskets	2 dozen
Cartridge paper	6 quire
White brown thread	8 lb.
Also 2 Chauldrons of coal for the dozen offices and Guard Room.	

These stores, it must be borne in mind, were only for the use of the occupants of that portion of the prison which was complete, about one fourth of the whole.

Mr. Delafons does not appear to have taken up the duties assigned to him, for on the 26th March, only eight days after the date of the letter appointing him agent, he sent in his formal resignation. Mr. Dent, the storekeeper, in conjunction with Captain Woodriff, the transport officer, acted till the appointment of James Perrot on 7th April 1797, at a salary of £400 a year and £30 for house rent, until quarters could be built for him in the prison. This amount was double that of any other agent, but it must be remembered that Mr. Perrot was not a naval officer in receipt of full pay. There was a difficulty in finding lodgings in the vicinity, and the clerks were allowed 1*s.* a day extra till accommodation could be found for them also at the prison.

To assist the agent, Mr. Challoner Dent was appointed storekeeper from 1st April 1797 on getting two gentlemen as security for £1,000. There were clerks and ten turnkeys, twelve labourers at 12*s.* a week, and a lamplighter at 13*s.* a week. The chief clerk and Dutch interpreter was Mr. James Richards.

The transport officer in charge, Captain Woodriff, had to make arrangements for the conveyance of the expected prisoners to Norman Cross, and for the victualling. As to the former, he was on the 23rd March directed without loss of time to proceed to Norman Cross near Stilton, and thence to Lynn to report as to the best anchorage there, and the best mode of transporting the prisoners of war expected. He was to consult a Mr. Hadley, who proposed 1*s.* a head for removing the prisoners, which was considered exorbitant and quite out of the question.

On 29th March, however, he was directed to enter into an agreement with Mr. Kempt, to convey the prisoners from Lynn to Yaxley at 1*s.* 6*d.* per head, and Kempt's partner was to victual them on the following daily ration: 1 lb. of bread or biscuit, ¾ lb. of good fresh or salt beef.

The time occupied by the barges in which the men were to be conveyed would probably be about three days, and the dietary could not be much varied. At the date when this contract was made, nearly fifty years before the first railway in this district was opened, the waterways offered the easiest and cheapest channel for the transport of heavy goods across the great Fen district. The rivers, natural and artificial, and the navigable drains and cuts, fulfilled a double purpose, and were maintained by taxes and tolls not only for the drainage of the Fens, but as waterways for the lucrative traffic which was constant along their surface.

It was by water that George Borrow and his mother travelled to join his father in his quarters at Norman Cross, and we have again a graphic account of the impressions left on the child's mind by

the journey from Lynn to Peterborough when the washes and Fenlands were flooded—an account written long after the child had come to man's estate, when distance had lent enchantment to the view and certainly depth to the pools on the towing paths.

> "At length my father was recalled to his regiment, which at that time was stationed at a place called Norman Cross, in Lincolnshire, or rather Huntingdonshire, at some distance from the old town of Peterborough. For this place he departed, leaving my mother and myself to follow in a few days. Our journey was a singular one. On the second day we reached a marshy and fenny country, which owing to immense quantities of rain which had lately fallen, was completely submerged. At a large town we got on board a kind of passage-boat, crowded with people; it had neither sails nor oars, and these were not the days of steam-vessels; it was a treck-schuyt, and was drawn by horses.
>
> "Young as I was, there was much connected with this journey which highly surprised me, and which brought to my remembrance particular scenes described in the book which I now generally carried in my bosom. The country was, as I have already said, submerged—entirely drowned—no land was visible; the trees were growing bolt upright in the flood, whilst farmhouses and cottages were standing insulated; the horses which drew us were up to the knees in water, and, on coming to blind pools and 'greedy depths,' were not unfrequently swimming, in which case the boys or urchins who mounted them sometimes stood, sometimes knelt, upon the saddle and pillions. No accident, however, occurred either to the quadrupeds or bipeds, who appeared respectively to be quite *au fait* in their business, and extricated themselves with the greatest ease from places in which Pharaoh and all his host would have gone to the bottom. Nightfall brought us to Peterborough, and from thence we were not slow in reaching the place of our destination." [25]

A Mr. James Hay of Liverpool was the first contractor for victualling the prisoners at Norman Cross, the specification for the quality of the food supplied being as follows:

Beer, to be equal quality to that supplied to H.M. ships.
Bread, to be made of wheaten flour, equal to what is known by bakers as thirds, to be baked into loaves of 4½ lb., each to be weighed 6 hours after baking.
Beef, to be good and wholesome and fresh and delivered in clean quarters.
Butter, to be good salt.
Cheese, to be good Gloucester, or Wiltshire, or of equal goodness.
Peas, to be of the white sort, and good boilers.
Greens, to be stripped of their outside leaves and fit for the copper.

The reader must bear these conditions in mind if he would be in a position to discount George Borrow's description (in the passage quoted a few pages back) of the food supplied to those prisoners whom he remembered with such sympathy in his later life; and he must, in forming his judgment of the treatment accorded to the prisoners, remember that, as evidence, the stern facts of a contract, with penalties of fine and imprisonment for its breach, are of more value than the recollections of a child, given in the rhetorical language of a romantic enthusiast.

The victualling under the terms of the contract commenced on the 12th April 1797. The contractor was called upon to supply per head daily, 1 lb. of beef, 1 lb. of biscuit, 2 quarts of beer, and to find casks and water at 11*d.* per day, being the same terms as those on which the goods were

[25] *Lavengro*, chap. iii.

supplied at Plymouth and Falmouth. Mr. Hay wrote that no butcher within fifty miles of Norman Cross would supply cow, heifer, or ox beef for less than 44*s.* per cwt., but he offered to supply it at 43*s.*, and this was agreed to. [26]

No tables or benches were to be provided. Hammocks were supplied, but no clews nor lanyards (the cords to suspend them by); these the prisoners had to make for themselves, jute being supplied to them for that purpose, one ton to every 400 men.

The new agent, Mr. Perrot, who came from the prison at Porchester Castle, appears to have applied for other comforts, as we infer from the following communication addressed to him from the Transport Office:

> "We cannot allow any razors or strops for the use of the prisoners at Norman Cross. We see no reason for your appointing barbers, to shave the prisoners, the razors sent to Porchester having been intended more for shaving the Negro prisoners from the West Indies."

Does the fact that the names of the two first agents appointed, Delafons and Perrot, were French, and that they were not naval officers as at other prisons, justify the supposition that our Government in their anxiety to study the interests of the prisoners and to satisfy the French, were trying the experiment of appointing a British subject of French birth or of French origin as agent to this Depot? Such a supposition might account for the fact of Mr. Delafons' resignation a few days after his appointment. A man in sympathy with the French might well find, on entering into the particulars of his duties, that he could not conform to the regulations regarded by the Government as necessary for the discipline of prisons—regulations, for breaking which, many prisoners lost their lives. Does not this letter to Mr. Perrot also read as though he were making a frivolous application to the Government?

Whatever the worth of this supposition may be, we find that on the 2nd January 1799, less than two years after his appointment, Mr. Perrot's name disappears from the books, and that Captain Woodriff, R.N., the transport officer who had been acting for the transport office in the district, was asked to take over the duties of the agent, receiving a small addition to his previous salary.

The duties of the Depot agent and the district agent must have previously overlapped, for it was Captain Woodriff, the Transport officer, who two years before was making all the arrangements for the reception and maintenance of the prisoners, and who shortly after their arrival, having employed some of them to spread the gravel in the exercise yards, paying them 3*d.* a day for doing it, was called upon by the Government to furnish the information as to the wages and the prices of provisions in the neighbourhood, given in the extract from his report printed in the footnote on p. 16.

Captain Woodriff held the post of agent at Norman Cross from his appointment in 1799 to the Peace of Amiens in 1802, having previously from 2nd September 1796, when he was appointed agent of the Transport Office at Southampton, been engaged in duties associated with the care of prisoners of war. In July 1808 he was appointed agent for prisoners of war at Forton, holding office until 1813. He thus spent, in all, eleven years of his long services as a naval officer, assisting the Transport Board in their important work as the custodian of the prisoners. In the Appendix will he found a short biography of Captain Woodriff, collated by Mr. Rhodes. It gives an insight into the adventurous and uncertain career which, during the epoch with which this history has to do, might be

[26] Evidence that two years later meat could be obtained at a much lower rate has come under my notice, from an unexpected source. On the fly-leaf of a copy of Batty's Bible, in the possession of a descendant of Mr. W. Fowler, is written below the name W. Fowler (in the same writing, but in paler ink), "Came down to Norman Cross March 10th, 1799, to serve the prisoners of War at Yaxley." In a different handwriting has been inserted after "Came down," "from London," and after Yaxley, "with Beef at 28*s.* the cwt." The date 1799 has also been altered in dark ink to 1795, which was of course a wrong correction, as there was no prison at Norman Cross until 1797.—T. J. W.

that of a naval officer of distinction, and shows that the custodian of the prisoners at Norman Cross and Forton was himself at one time an English prisoner at Verdun. [27]

On the 24th March the troops who were to form the garrison had marched into their quarters, this event being noted in his diary by John Lamb, a farmer and miller living at Whittlesey, about seven miles from Norman Cross—"24th March 1797 the soldiers came to guard the Barracks. The Volunteers did not much like it; they liked drinking better." All arrangements being sufficiently advanced, the prisoners sent from Falmouth, who for several days had been waiting, cooped up in the Transports at Lynn, were disembarked and put into lighters, to be brought by water to Yaxley and Peterborough, and the first prisoners passed through the prison gates on 7th April 1797, just four months from the commencement of the building.

[27] Appendix B, Biographical Sketch of Captain Woodriff.

CHAPTER III
ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION OF THE PRISONERS

A prison is a house of care,
A place where none can thrive;
A touchstone true to try a friend,
A grave for one alive;
Sometimes a place of right,
Sometimes a place of wrong,
Sometimes a place of rogues and thieves,
And honest men among.

Inscription in Edinburgh Tolbooth.

We have now arrived at that stage in the story of the Norman Cross Depot when, although the whole of the buildings were not yet erected, sufficient progress had been made for the occupation of a part of them. Two quadrangles were ready, each of them containing caserns and the necessary accessory buildings for the care and safe custody of 2,000 men. The other two quadrangles were rapidly approaching completion, one for 2,000 prisoners, the other, the north-eastern block, for a smaller number, as it was in part devoted to the accommodation of the sick, who slept in bedsteads instead of in hammocks, and therefore occupied a far greater space than the healthy men.

In this north-eastern square each casern was artificially warmed by fires, and in every extant plan these blocks are shown to have chimneys, while all the others have merely ventilators. The buildings were cut up by partition walls into wards, and surgeons' and attendants' rooms, which further interfered with their capacity; but, notwithstanding the limited number of the occupants of this quadrangle, it is probable that in the most crowded period of its occupation the prison held, including the sick, and the occupants of the boys' prison outside the boundary wall, at least 7,000 prisoners.

On the 10th April 1810 a return made of all the prisoners of war in England on that day shows 6,272 at Norman Cross. These returns are few and far between, and may well have missed a period of overcrowding; the lowest of any of them, one rendered in 1799, gives the number as 3,278.

To appreciate the details of the life of the prisoners, the reader must grasp the magnitude of the experiment which was being initiated at this Depot, where a number of men, equal to the adult male population of a town of 30,000 inhabitants, were to be confined within four walls, with no society but that of their fellow prisoners, no female element, no intercourse with the outside world, except that in the prison market, in which they were served by foreigners, whose language they did not understand. In this community order and discipline had to be maintained, while at the same time ordinary humanity demanded that these unfortunate men, who had committed no crime, who were in a foreign prison for doing their duty and fighting their country's enemies, must be treated with all possible leniency.

The exigencies of the war, and the circumstances under which many of the men arrived at the prison, were not conducive to peace and order, and the posts of agent of the Depot and of transport officer carried great responsibility. This we can realise from an occurrence, a vivid example of the horrors of war, concerning which Captain Woodriff had to hold an inquiry as one of his first duties in connection with the Depot. Among the thousand prisoners who, when the prison was opened, were already on their way to Norman Cross from Portsmouth, Falmouth, Kinsale, and Chatham, were men who had been conveyed on board the *Marquis of Carmarthen* transport, on which ship there had been a mutiny of the prisoners. In the fray seven men were killed and thirty-seven dangerously

wounded, but the mutiny was quelled and all the prisoners accounted for, except one, who was the murderer of one of the crew. Next day he was discovered and placed in irons, with a sentry over him. He asked to be shot, and in the absence of the captain of the vessel, who protested against his wish being acceded to, the officer commanding the troops, one Lieutenant Peter Ennis of the Caithness Militia, shot the unfortunate man, and had the body thrown overboard. This happened three days after the mutiny. The matter was investigated and reported upon by Captain Woodriff at Norman Cross. The prisoners gave evidence that they had mutinied on account of the badness of the water and provisions, and complained that Inglis, or Ennis, was brutal to them. [28] The same causes were assigned for another mutiny on the *British Queen* transport, which had to be reported upon by the agent at Norman Cross. To quell this outbreak, the mutineers were fired on by the captain's orders, twelve being wounded, but none killed.

The earliest arrivals on the 7th April 1797 were the sailors from the frigate *Réunion* and 172 from the *Révolutionnaire* man-of-war, which had been brought in by *The Saucy Arethusa*. These were brought by water to Yaxley. The next batch arrived on the 10th, and were landed from the barges at Peterborough, proceeding to Norman Cross guarded by troopers.

The latter detachment was landed, according to Mr. Lamb's diary, at Mr. Squire's close on the south bank of the river at Peterborough. This Mr. Squire was later appointed the agent to look after the prisoners on parole in Peterborough and its neighbourhood.

Other prisoners followed in rapid succession, their names, with certain particulars, being entered in the French and the Dutch registers, which were kept at the prison. The French registers number six large volumes, ruled in close vertical columns, which extend across the two open pages. The first column, commencing at the left-hand margin, is for the numbers (the current number), which run consecutively to the end of the series; the second is headed, "Where and how taken"; the third, "When taken"; fourth, "Name of vessel"; fifth, "Description of vessel," such as Man-of-War, Privateer, Fishing Vessel, Greenlander; sixth, "Name of prisoner"; seventh, "Rank"; eighth, "Date of reception at the prison"; ninth, a column of letters which signify D, "discharged," E, "escaped," etc., and the date of discharge. The Dutch register is in five volumes only, but the entries are fuller than those in the French register, there being thirteen columns across the two pages. The first, the "Current number"; second, "Number in general entry book"; third, "Quality" (sailor, drummer, gunner, mate, etc.); fifth, "Ship"; sixth, "Age"; seventh, "Height" (range from 4 ft. 11½ in. to 5 ft. 10½ in.); eighth, "Hair" (all brown); ninth, "Eyes" (the majority blue, some brown and a few grey); tenth, "Visage" (as round and dark, oval and ruddy); eleventh, "Person" (middle size, rather stout); twelfth, "Marks or wounds" (e.g. None—Pitted with small-pox—Has a continual motion with his eyes); thirteenth, "When and how discharged" (Dead; Exchanged; etc.). [29]

In both registers there are occasional marginal notes. A few examples of the value of these registers as sources of information will suffice for this history. Commencing with the French, we find that 190 French soldiers, captured on 7th January 1797 in *La Ville de L'Orient*, were received into custody 26th April 1797. Of these, the first one recorded as dead was a soldier Jacques Glangetoy, on the 9th February 1798. Of ninety-four captured on 31st December 1796 on *La Tartuffe* frigate, many are only entered by their Christian names, as Félix, Hilaire, Eloy, Guillaume, etc. On 11th October 1799 there came a batch from Edinburgh, captured 12th October 1798 in *La Coquille* frigate, off the Irish Coast. On the 28th July 1800 the garrison of Pondicherry, captured 23rd August 1793, were, after seven years of captivity at Chatham, transferred to Norman Cross. On the 6th October of the same year, 1,800 prisoners captured at Goree, and other places in the West Indies, were transferred from Porchester.

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[28] So slowly did the Government inquiry which followed on Captain Woodriff's report progress, that it was not until two years later that judgment was pronounced.—*Naval Chronicle*, vol. i., pp. 523–6.

[29] For examples of the individual entries in the General Register, the Death Register, and the Register of Prisoners on Parole, see Appendix C.

From the Dutch register we gather that it was the Dutch prisoners who filled the prison to overflowing a few months after it was opened. The great naval battle already alluded to as imminent when the prison was building, took place on 11th October 1797, off Camperdown, when Admiral Duncan, after a severe engagement, defeated the Dutch fleet under Admiral de Winter, capturing the *Cerberus*, 68 guns; *Jupiter*, 74; *Harleem*, 68; *Wassenaar*, 61; *Gelgkheld*, 68; *Vryheid*, 74; *Delft*, 56; *Alkmaar*, 56; and *Munnikemdam*, 44. The Dutch fought gallantly, and the ships they surrendered were well battered.

The loss of life was appalling, and the number of Dutch prisoners brought in by the English Admiral was 4,954, the majority of these being ultimately sent to Norman Cross, where they began to arrive in November 1797. The first entry of prisoners taken in this great battle is a list of 261 from Admiral Ijirke's ship *Admiral de Vries*.

Subsequent arrivals were crews of privateers and merchant ships, fishermen, and soldiers. Entries in later years show that among the prisoners sent to Norman Cross were many other civilians besides the fishermen; these were not retained in the prison, but were allowed out on parole or were released. Many fishing vessels were captured, the crew averaging six; these sailors were sent to Norman Cross, and after a few days' confinement were "released" by the Board's order. The soldiers were entered in a separate register. The first batch were taken from the *Furie*, captured by the *Sirius* on the 14th October 1798, they were received at Norman Cross on the 20th November of the same year, and are described in the appropriate column as bombardiers, cannoniers, passengers, etc. To ascertain what was the ultimate destination of the prisoners, Mr. Rhodes has made an analysis of the information given in the registers for the individual members of the crew of selected ships. As to the first ship to which he applied this method, he found that of the crew, the quartermaster was exchanged, 7th April 1798, one of the coopers was allowed to join the British Herring Fishery, the majority of the officers were allowed on parole at Peterborough, several seamen joined the British Navy, one was discharged on the condition he elected to serve under the Prince of Orange, one enlisted in the York Hussars, and at various dates many enlisted in the 60th Regiment of Foot. Of the soldiers, the officers were allowed on parole at Peterborough, some privates joined the Royal Marines at Chatham, nine joined the 60th Foot, and in 1800 the remainder, with the sailors, were sent to Holland under the Alkmaar Cartel. [30] An analysis of the columns giving the disposal of the next ship's company shows that nine were on parole at Peterborough, two were sent to serve under the Prince of Orange, two joined the British Herring Fishery, seven the British Navy, two the Merchant Service, four the Dutch Artillery, three died, ninety-three enlisted in the 60th Foot, and the rest were sent to Holland.

In explanation of the preponderance of recruits for the 60th Foot, it may be pointed out that this regiment was originally raised in America in 1755, under the title of the 62nd Loyal American Provincials, and consisted principally of German and Swiss Protestants who had settled in America, the principal qualification being that they were "antagonistic to the French."

In 1757 the title was changed to the 60th Royal Americans, which title it bore till 1816. The regiment is now the King's Royal Rifle Corps. It served in America and the West Indies up to 1796. It was in England till 1808, when it went to the Peninsula. At Quebec it was described by General Wolfe as "Celer et Audax," which is now the regimental motto.

The crew of the *Jupiter*, with the captain, four lieutenants, and the Admiral's steward, 144 in all, were received 8th November 1797, and were ultimately distributed in much the same manner, fifty entering the 60th. In December, a month after their reception, the Dutch captain and two lieutenants of this ship were sent to London to give evidence against two British subjects who were taken in arms

[30] Cartel is an agreement between foreign states as to the exchange of the prisoners; its meaning was extended to the document authorising the exchange of an individual prisoner, and it was even used to signify the transport vessel engaged to convey the exchanged prisoners to their native country.

against this country on board the *Jupiter* when it was captured. Coach hire was allowed them, and double the subsistence usually given to officers on parole.

Of the crew of the privateer *Stuyver*, numbering thirty-eight, captured on 1st June 1797 by the *Astrea*, eight joined the English Navy.

From the registers we get information as to the length of time the various crews, etc., remained in captivity. Thus the crew of the *Furie*, a Dutch frigate, numbering 115, received at Norman Cross on the 4th October 1798, remained there until the Peace of Amiens in February 1802; the officers were out on parole, and the majority of them were released in February 1800, under the Alkmaar Cartel.

Unfortunately the registers are very imperfectly kept; they are filled in without any regularity; the entries appear to have been copied from other documents, and there are weeks and months when column after column is left blank. There is no doubt that the staff was too limited for the work that was expected of it. Incomplete and bad clerical work was the result. The names of several sloops and schooners are duly returned as "Taken," but in the columns "By whom and when taken," is the entry "Unknown." There is an entry of three names bracketed together, probably the crew of a fishing-boat: "Andreas Anderson, 1st Steerman; Johanna Maria Dorata Anderson, Woman, his wife; Margrita Dorothea Anderson, child. Received into custody 31st May 1800." On 3rd June they are marked as "On parole at Peterborough."

There are occasional marginal notes, of which the following is an example:

> "This man was brought in by an escort of the Anglesea Militia from Peterborough; never been here before.—Ideot."

The reader must decide for himself, without any assistance from the author, whether the word spelt "Ideot" was intended as a description of the *supposed escaped PRISONER*, or as that of the officer who had sent him in.

Norman Cross was not one of the prisons to which Americans were consigned in any numbers, and was not affected by the positive order against any natives of America being allowed to enter the British Service, or being exchanged on any account whatever. The surgeons captured were allowed special privileges in consideration of their devoting their professional skill to the service of their fellow prisoners.

The registers are sufficient to indicate the nationality and the social position of the population of the prison. The large number of the Dutch who joined the English service shows that their hatred of imprisonment was stronger than their hatred of the enemy who had captured them. As to the nationality of the prisoners, they were in the first period of the war, from 1797 to 1802, almost all French or Dutch; in the second period, 1803 to 1814, they were almost all French, and for those eleven years, although there were representatives of various nationalities who had been fighting on the side of the French, either as allies or actually serving in the French ranks, the captives were always spoken of in the neighbourhood as the French prisoners. There were published, in a recent issue of the *Peterborough Advertiser*, extracts from newspapers contemporary with the period of the Norman Cross Depot, the following paragraph from a newspaper, the name of which is not given, is included:

> "March 25th, 1814, Yarmouth. Yesterday morning the Dutch Volunteers from Yaxley Barracks, who were organised, and have been in training here about ten weeks, embarked in two divisions for the Dutch Coast. They amounted to over 1,000 men. They were completely armed and clothed, and made a soldier-like appearance. Their uniform was blue jackets, faced with red, white trimmings, orange sash, and white star on the caps. The cry of Orange Bonon, just after starting from the Jetty, was universal."

We have found no record of any numbers of Dutch prisoners being at Norman Cross in this or any other year of the second period of the war. The great bulk of this contingent, going out to serve against Napoleon, were probably not Dutch, but men of various nationalities, who had gained their

freedom by volunteering for service under the allies, who were, on the 25th March, within five days' march of Paris. This Dutch contingent was doubtless destined to join the army of Bernadotte.

The consideration of the prison life of our captives at the close of the eighteenth century will serve to accentuate the difference between their surroundings, their life, and their fate, and that of the prisoners taken one hundred years later by either side in the South African War; and the picture of the French and Dutch prisoners in the hulks or even in the Depots in 1800, contrasted with that of the Boers in St. Helena and Ceylon in 1900, must fill us with thankfulness for what the century's advance inhumanity, together with the altered conditions in which we live, have enabled us and other nations to do to mitigate the miseries of prisoners of war—woes which have existed from time immemorial, and which are recognised in the prayer in the Litany, which has been offered up for nearly two thousand years, invoking God's pity "for all prisoners and captives."

In 1900, steam navigation, telegraphic communication, and Britain's command of the sea made it possible for her to place her prisoners *hors de combat* in islands whence escape was almost impossible, and where the conditions of life were comparatively comfortable. In the war in which we were engaged one hundred years before, there is abundant documentary evidence to show that, although the conditions of that time made close confinement within prison walls a cruel necessity, nevertheless, in the treatment of our captives, the dictates of humanity were carried out, as far as was possible, without defeating the main object of our Government—the termination of the war with peace, safety, and honour for England.

In December 1795, M. Charretie, who had resided for some time in England, was appointed the commissary for France to look after the interests of his countrymen in captivity in this country, and he still occupied the post sixteen months later, when the first prisoners arrived at Norman Cross, Mr. Swinburne being the agent for the British Government in France.

At the time that the Norman Cross Prison was opened, the French and British Governments were mutually accusing one another of inhumanity and neglect in the treatment of their captives; the consideration of the facts which led to these charges must be left until the internal arrangements of the prison, disciplinary and economical, have been described.

CHAPTER IV
ADMINISTRATION AND DISCIPLINE

Wherever a Government knows when to show the rod, it will not often be put to use it.
Sir George Savile.

Excellent organisation was necessary in order to keep these 6,000 foreign soldiers and sailors in safe custody, in a good state of discipline, and at the same time in the best health and greatest comfort compatible with the circumstances.

To the heads of departments mentioned at the close of the second chapter should be added the surgeon appointed by the Government. He was responsible for the sick and wounded, to a separate department of the Admiralty, and not to the Transport Board. He lodged in the hospital, until in the early part of the nineteenth century the house was built for him in the hospital quadrangle.

The subordinate officials were comparatively few in number—clerks, interpreters, storekeepers, stewards, and turnkeys. These last had sleeping accommodation in their lodges; the others had lodging money, and slept in the neighbouring villages, with the exception of the chief clerk and interpreter, the head storekeeper, the hospital officials, and a few others.

A few selections from the appointments, which are recorded in official documents among the thousands of papers which have been searched by Mr. Rhodes for information, will show the status of these employés; they are taken from lists referring to the second period of the war, when the records are more numerous than before the Peace of Amiens. The officials enumerated were all in the establishment at Norman Cross when the prison was finally emptied.

> "Mr. Todd, appointed, 27th June 1803, as French Interpreter at £30 per annum, was, on 1st July 1813, appointed Agent's first Clerk and Principal Storekeeper at a salary of £118 per annum with no abatement for taxes."
>
> "J. A. Delapoux, entered, 19th August 1803, as Agent's Clerk at 30*s.* 6*d.* per week, and on March 1st 1806, as Steward, at an additional wage of 3*s.* 6*d.* per day, was a Roman Catholic, and probably of French birth, as it is recorded that it was necessary to satisfy his mind that the laws anent Aliens would not affect him." [31]

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[31] In All Souls' Church at Peterborough is preserved the Register, kept by the resident Priest at King's Cliff, of the baptisms performed by priests within the mission of his church. Stilton, the Depot, and the surrounding villages were within that district. Two of the entries are baptisms of the sons of Delapoux; they will be referred to in a future chapter. They have always been supposed to be those of the baptism of the children of a French prisoner, who had married an English wife (these marriages were of rare occurrence), and the discovery in the Record Office of this entry of John Andrew Delapoux's appointment as a clerk is an instance of the way in which research upsets old traditions. I find the entry of Delapoux's marriage to Sarah Mason on the 2nd September 1802, in the Register of Stilton church. His children were baptized as Catholics, and the priest specially calls Sarah Mason his lawful wife.

Another instance in this list, selected haphazard by Mr. Rhodes from papers in the Record Office, shows how in two generations a false family tradition may arise. In 1894 I visited, in search of information, the daughter-in-law, then a widow aged eighty-six, of the James Robinette whose engagement as a permanent mason and labourer at the Depot is recorded on page 61. She told me her husband's father was a French prisoner, who had been made a turnkey at the Barracks! On searching the church Register, 1 found that the Robinettes had been residents in Yaxley fifty years at least before the arrival of the prisoners at Norman Cross, and between 1748 and 1796 the records of three generations appear in the register—James, the son of James and Catherine Robinette, born in 1780, was doubtless the man appointed in 1813 to the job at the Barracks.The Robinettes were probably some of the many French Huguenots who came over after the repeal, on the 15th October 1685, of the Edict of Nantes, and settled in the neighbourhood of Peterborough to further reclaim and cultivate the lately drained fens. The fallacy of coming to conclusions, founded on names only without other evidence, is illustrated by the following sentence in a series of papers on Norman Cross published in the *Peterborough Advertiser* by the late Rev. G. N. Godwin: "At Stilton the names of Habarte, of Drage, and of Tesloff, and near Thorney the name of Egar, and at Peterborough, among others, the name of Vergette, still speak of the old war time." Of these names, Habarte alone is that of descendants of a French prisoner, the majority of those bearing the others are of the old Huguenot stock, while the Vergettes, who formerly believed themselves to be descendants of an ancestor of this same stock, now know that they were an old-established

"Con. Connell, entered 4th September 1804, as Agent's clerk at 30*s.* 6*d.* per week, and on March 13th, 1810, as Steward at an additional wage of 3*s.* 6*d.* a day."

"Geo. Kuse, entered, 22nd June 1813, as Agent's clerk at £80 per annum."

"Wm. Belcher, entered as Steward, 28th June 1803, at 3*s.* 6*d.* a day."

"John Bunn, entered as Turnkey, 30th July 1811, at £50 per annum."

"John Hayward, entered, 12th March 1812, as Turnkey at £50 per annum."

"James Parker, 20th April 1812, Turnkey at £50."

"John Hubbard, 15th September 1813, Turnkey at £50. (Discharged for misconduct, 17th July 1814.)"

"Wm. Wakelin, 28th December 1813, Turnkey at £50."

"Samuel Thompson, 17th September 1812, Turnkey at £50, and £10 per annum as superintending carpenter."

"In March, J. Hayward received a rise of 5*s.* a week for acting as Lamplighter as well as labourer."

"In February 1804, Payne Pressland was added to the clerks. He was discharged in the following June."

"In 1811, J. Draper signed on as agent."

"James Robinette, 10th June 1813, as Mason and labourer at £50 per annum."

"Benj. Werth, 22nd October 1813, Messenger at 15*s.* a week."

"W. Gardiner, 1st July 1813, superannuation £104 per annum. (Paid at the Head Office, London, after 31st July 1814.)"

"All these were paid off at the end of July 1814, the Board's Order for the Abolition of the Establishment at Norman Cross being dated 16th July 1814."

"There were six labourers put on for a few days, varying from three to twelve days in July 1814, at 3*s.* 4*d.* a day."

"The accounts certified by W. Hanwell, Agent."

For the safe custody of the prisoners, the two regiments of Militia or Regulars were quartered, one in the Eastern, the other in the Western Barracks; they furnished strong guards at each entrance in the prison wall, and cannon were mounted to command the whole area, while sentries were posted in all directions, and lamps were numerous to prevent the opportunity of escape in the darkness. The regiments of the garrison were continually changed, in order, among other reasons, that the soldiers, who came in contact with the prisoners when on guard, might not get too intimate with them, and render them assistance in their efforts to escape—or in the illicit trading which will be described later. For the care of the buildings and the maintenance of all connected with them, there was the barrack master and his assistant; the agent, or superintendent, was responsible to the Transport Board for the care and government of the prisoners; the care of the sick and wounded devolved upon the surgeon, who was assisted by French surgeons appointed from those who had been taken prisoners, the nurses being also men selected from the prisoners, who were paid for their services.

Discipline was maintained in accordance with the following code of regulations laid down for all prisons of war. Those specially affecting the prisoners were posted up in order that they might be familiar with them.

"By the Commissioners for Conducting His Majesty's Transport Service, and for the Care and Custody of Prisoners of War. Rules to be observed by the Prisoners of War in Great Britain, Ireland, &c.:

"1. The Agent's Orders are to be strictly obeyed by all the Prisoners; and it is expressly forbidden, that any Prisoners should insult, threaten, illtreat, and much

English family in 1555, when their ancestor, Robert Vergette, was Sheriff of Lincoln.

less strike the Turnkeys, or any other Person who may be appointed by the Agent to superintend the Police of the Prison, under Pain of losing Turn of Exchange, of being closely confined, and deprived of half their Ration of Provisions, for such time as the Commissioner may direct.

"2. All the Prisoners are to answer to their Names when mustered, and to point out to the Agent any Errors they may discover in the Lists, with which he may be furnished, in order to prevent the Confusion which might result from erroneous Names: and such Prisoners as shall refuse to comply with this regulation, shall be put on Half Allowance.

"3. Should any damage be done to the Buildings by the Prisoners, either through their endeavouring to escape, or otherwise, the expense of repairing the same shall be made good by a Reduction of the Rations of Provisions of such as may have been concerned; and should the Aggressors not be discovered, all the Prisoners confined in the particular Building so damaged, shall contribute by a similar Reduction of their Rations towards the expense of the said Repairs.

"4. Such Prisoners as shall escape from Prison, and be re-taken, shall be put into the Black Hole, and kept on Half Allowance, until the expenses occasioned by their Escape are made good; and they shall moreover lose their Turn of Exchange, and all Officers of the Navy or Army so offending shall, from that time, be considered and treated in all respects as common men.

"5. Fighting, quarrelling, or exciting the least Disorder is strictly forbidden, under Pain of a Punishment proportionate to the Offence.

"6. The Prisons are to be kept clean by the Prisoners in Turns, and every Person who shall refuse to do that Duty in his Turn, after having received Notice of the same, shall be deprived of his Rations, until he shall have complied.

"7. The Prisoners are from Time to Time to inform the Agent of the Clothing or other Articles which they may stand in need of, and have Money to purchase; and the Agent shall not only permit them to purchase such Articles, but also take care that they are not imposed on in the Price.

"8. The Prisoners in each Prison are to appoint Three or Five, from among their own number, as a Committee for examining the Quality of the Provisions supplied by the Contractor; for seeing that their full Rations, as to Weight and Measure, are conformable to the Scheme of Victualling at the Foot hereof: and if there should be any cause of Complaint they are to inform the Agent thereof; and should he find the Complaint well-founded, he is immediately to remedy the same. If the Agent should neglect this part of his Duty, the Prisoners are to give information thereof to the Commissioners, who will not fail to do them justice in every respect.

"9. All Dealers (excepting such as Trade in Articles not proper to be admitted into the Prison) are to be allowed to remain at the principal Gate of the Prison from six o'clock in the morning until three in the Afternoon, to dispose of the Merchandize to the Prisoners; but any of the Prisoners who shall be detected in attempting to introduce into the Prison Spirituous Liquors, or other improper Articles, or in receiving or delivering any Letter, shall be punished for the Abuse of this Indulgence, in such Manner as the Commissioners may direct."

The punishments inflicted for breach of the regulations and for other offences, were:

1st. Reducing the ration of the offender, and should his messmates condone his offence, the rations of the whole mess of twelve men, to which he belonged, were

reduced. Thus it became the interest of the whole mess to prevent any breach of discipline or misconduct by a member. If a whole mess were insubordinate, and the larger body into which the messes were grouped condoned the offence, the penalty was extended to them.

2nd. A more severe punishment was depriving a man of his chance of exchange by putting him at the bottom of the list; this was a fearful sentence, for although the actual chance of exchange was small, each man was daily longing and hoping for the arrival of the day when his cartel should come.

3rd. Imprisonment in the Black Hole, a veritable abode of misery, where solitude was added to the ills of imprisonment, was the penalty for serious offences, such as assaults on the staff, violent assaults on other prisoners, attempts to escape, and more heinous offences.

4th. Incorrigible prisoners, and those guilty of crimes which were considered as warranting even more severe punishment than imprisonment, in the Black Hole, were removed to the hulks, where, in addition to the discomfort of the crowded ships, they suffered all the other hardships experienced at that date by all criminals imprisoned in a gaol civil or military.

In case of heinous offences and obdurate insubordination, these punishments were combined —a man might not only be put into the Black Hole, but also be put on to reduced rations.

Closing the market at the east gate of the prison, either against the whole body of the prisoners or against those of one only of the four courts, was a punishment inflicted for some general malpractice, or in order to compel their fellow prisoners to disclose the names of some miscreants among them.

No record exists of those who were sentenced to confinement in the Black Hole at Norman Cross, but to show the character of the delinquencies for which this punishment was inflicted, we quote from Basil Thomson's *Story of Dartmoor Prison* [32] the following selections from the records of the "Cachot" at that Depot:

1812

"*February* 24*th*.—Louis Constant and Olivier de Camp, for striking a sentinel on duty."

"*May* 20*th*.—Jean Delchambre, for throwing a stone at a sentinel and severely cutting his head."

"*June* 14*th*.—F. Rousseau, for striking Mr. Bennet, the store-keeper, when visiting the prisoners."

"*June* 14*th*.—C. Lambourg, for striking and cutting open the head of a sentinel, and causing him dangerous injuries."

"*August* 19*th*.—F. Lebot, for throwing a stone at the postman, as he was returning from Tavistock."

"*August* 15*th*.—A. Creville, for drawing a knife on the hospital turnkey."

"*August* 25*th*.—A. Hourra, for attempting to stab William Norris, one of the turnkeys, with a knife."

"*September* 4*th*.—Jean Swan, for drawing a knife on the hospital turnkey."

"*September* 4*th*.—F. Champs, for striking R. Arnold, one of the turnkeys, with a stone and cutting his head."

[32] *Loc. cit.*, 93–95.

"*September* 24*th*.—S. Schamond, for throwing down a sentinel and attempting to take away his bayonet."

"*September* 30*th*.—A. Normand, for striking Mr. Arnold, the steward."

"*October* 16*th*.—G. Massieu, for attempting to stab one of the turnkeys."

"*October* 16*th*.—Pierre Fabre, for throwing a stone at a sentinel and cutting his face."

"*October* 20*th*.—W. Johnson, for throwing stones at a sentinel."

"*October* 23*rd*.—B. Marie, for knocking down a turnkey and attempting to seize the arms of a sentinel." (See March 23rd, below.)

"*November* 30*th*.—N. Moulle and B. Saluberry, for having daggers concealed on their persons."

The cachot records for March and April, 1813, are even more significant:

"*March* 13*th*.—P. Boissard, for striking a turnkey and threatening to murder him on the first opportunity."

"*March* 23*rd*.—F. Bilat, for striking a prisoner named B. Marie, who died shortly afterwards, and taking away his provisions by force."

"*March* 28*th*.—J. Beauclere, for threatening to stab Mr. Moore, because he could not procure employment for him on the Buildings."

"*April* 6*th*.—F. Le Jeune, for being one of the principal provision buyers in the prison, and for repeatedly writing blood-thirsty and threatening letters."

"*April* 10*th*.—M. Girandi and A. Moine, for being guilty of infamous vices."

For offences against the laws of the land, more grave than those which could be dealt with by the authorities of the various depots, the prisoners, like British subjects, were liable to be tried at the assizes—thus Nicholas Deschamps and Jean Roubillard were tried at Huntingdon Assizes for forging £1 bank-notes (which they had done most skilfully). This was at that time a capital offence, and they were sentenced to death, but were respited during His Majesty's pleasure, and remained in Huntingdon Gaol under sentence of death for nine terrible years, until Buonaparte was sent to Elba in 1814; they were then pardoned, and sent back to France with the rest of the liberated prisoners.

On the 9th September 1808, Charles François Marie Bourchier, who had been convicted at Huntingdon Assizes of having, in an attempt to escape, stabbed Alexander Halliday with a knife, was hanged at the prison in the sight of the whole garrison, who were under arms, and of all the prisoners. This is the only recorded civil execution at Norman Cross; there are several recorded instances of summary military justice, prisoners being shot dead in attempts to escape. It must be borne in mind that the prisoners were still our foes, who would, if they could escape, be at once in the ranks of the enemy's army fighting against us; and to prevent their escape, there was, at Norman Cross, little beyond the muskets and bayonets of the Norman Cross sentries—sixty of them posted round and about the prison.

The cleanliness, sanitary and domestic, of the prison, the inhabitants of which averaged probably about 5,500 men (6,270 being the highest number of prisoners recorded in any official document as confined in Norman Cross on a specified day), was provided for by systematic fatigue parties from the prisoners themselves, one out of each mess of twelve being told off in regular rotation for the duty of sweeping, washing, scraping, and disinfecting the prisons; probably under this system the prison and courts were kept as clean as a man-of-war. Each man on leaving his hammock, doubled it over so that both clews hung on one hook, leaving the floor space clear.

The prisoners lived in the caserns day and night when the weather was too bad for them to live out of doors, but in fair weather they were compelled by the regulations to live outside "in the airing-court" from morning to dusk, except when they were summoned to the casern for their dinner. The

quadrangle is in Foulley's description of his model always called "*pré*," and probably there was more or less grass on the surface.

Within the stockade fence which enclosed each quadrangle, the prisoners, about 1,800 in each square, were left to themselves, no soldiers, no sentries, no *free* men, except the turnkeys, whose lodges were, with the cooking-house, storehouses, &c., in a special court cut off from the airing-court by the same unclimbable stockade fence. In each compound the prisoners formed a self-governing community, but all of them subject to the laws which applied to the whole body—viz. the Prison Regulations.

These communities differed from every other community of human beings (except perhaps the inmates of monasteries) in being deprived of any participation in the two essential factors on which the bare existence of every animal race depends—viz. the provision of the actual necessaries of life, food and, in the case of man, clothing, for the preservation of its own generation; and the reproduction of its kind, to insure a future generation. The necessaries of individual life were provided by the Government.

The feeding of the prisoners and the troops in the barracks was an enormous tax on the resources of the country, greatly as it must have benefited the agriculturists, and purveyors of provisions of all kinds in the neighbourhood. A paragraph in the *Times* of 14th August 1814, states that "about £300,000 a year was spent by the Government in Stilton, Yaxley, Peterborough, and neighbourhood in the necessary provision of stores," and this was not an exaggerated statement, as a calculation based on the average number of the prisoners and garrison, the dietary, and the price of provisions, shows that bread and meat alone would cost more than half the amount named in the *Times*. [33]

The exact ration appears to have varied:

The contract for victualling commenced on 12th April 1797, when the contractor was called upon to supply beef 1 lb., biscuit 1 lb., beer 2 quarts—as the daily ration of each prisoner.

This must have been a temporary ration on the first opening of the prison. In a later report the following is given as the scheme of victualling for a week:

[33] In a Parliamentary Report for the year 1800 it is stated that the price of wheat was only kept down to £5 a quarter by the system of bounties on imported wheat, the same applying to the prices of other grain. The present proprietor of "The Oundle Brewery" kindly extracted from the Books of the Firm particulars as to the beer supplied to the Regiments quartered at Norman Cross in the year 1799. The total amount was 4,449 barrels of 36 gallons each. This gentleman adds, the beer could not be very good, the price being about 6*d.* a gallon. His father said that *he* had often been told by *his* father, that the great expansion of the business was due to the contract with the Barracks. Buckles Brewery, a Peterborough business, also flourished on a large contract to supply the prisoners with "Small Beer." Mr. George Gaunt, who was formerly in a large business as a butcher, informed me that, taking the figures which I gave him as a basis, and the average weight of a bullock at about 850 lb., he considered that from five to six would be required every day, if beef alone and no other meat were supplied. These figures give some idea of the advantages derived by the neighbouring traders from this great Government Establishment.The following extract from a letter addressed to me by Mr. Samuel Booth shows how many people in one family group alone found employment in connection with the Depot:"I send you a few particulars about my relatives, which may, or may not, be useful to you. "My great-grandmother, Mrs. Allen, who lies in the old graveyard, used to carry green-grocery to sell to the prisoners. "My father's father was Pay-Sergeant at the Barracks. "My grandfather, Samuel Briggs, of Ailsworth, was constable; he was also in the Militia, and was told off to keep guard on Thorpe Road, at the entrance to Peterboro', on the escape of some prisoners, but who went the way to Ramsay. I have a box made by the prisoners, presented to my grandfather, who was also a carpenter, and at times went to work there. The prisoners used to beg pieces of wood and other materials of him. He used to speak of their cleverness in the making of fancy articles, and of their endeavours to escape—one got in the manure cart, and got away."

Days	Beer.	Bread.	Beef.	Butter.	Cheese.	Tease. [70]	Salt.
	quart.	lbs.	lbs.	ounces.	ounces.	pint.	ounces.
Sunday	1	1½	¾	—	—	½	⅓
Monday	1	1½	¾	—	—	—	⅓
Tuesday	1	1½	¾	—	—	½	⅓
Wednesday	1	1½	¾	—	—	—	⅓
Thursday	1	1½	¾	—	—		⅓
Friday	1	1½	¾	—	—	—	⅓
Saturday	1	1½	¾	4	6	½	⅓
Total	7	10½	5¼	4	6	2 pts. or Greens in lieu.	2¾

[70] When Greens are issued in lieu of Pease, one pound stripped of the outer leaves and fit for the copper shall be issued to each prisoner.

Each prisoner shall receive two ounces of Soap per week.

The ration for the greater period appears to have been beef ¾ lb., bread ½ lb., cabbage 1 lb., or a supply of pease; Wednesdays or Fridays, herrings or cod substituted for the meat, and a pound of potatoes.

This change of the diet on Wednesday and Friday, made on account of the religion of the majority of the prisoners, and also as being more in accordance with their national diet, was recommended by the agent of the prison; but there was considerable delay, and some hardship to the prisoners, before the recommendation was granted. The fish when it reached the prison must have been several days old, and was no doubt salted. A new scale later on was fresh beef ½ lb., bread 1 lb., a quart of soup composed of vegetables and pease. The terms of the contracts with those supplying the food were very stringent. The conditions in the first contract at Norman Cross have already been given at p. 43 in chap. ii.

When in November 1797 it was agreed by the French and British Governments that each Government should feed its own countrymen in the enemy's prisons, and the French took over the feeding of the prisoners in Britain, they made only a slight change in the ration to suit it more to French cookery. The daily allowance per head being, beer 1 qt., beef 8 oz., bread 26 oz., cheese 2 oz. or good salt butter ⅓ oz., pease ½ pt., fresh vegetables 1½ lb. The French also allowed each prisoner ½ lb. of white soap and ¾ lb. of tobacco in leaf, per month.

The diet of hospital patients was on a very liberal scale: 1 pt. of tea morning and evening, 16 oz. of white bread, 16 oz. of beef or mutton, 1 pt. of broth, 16 oz. of greens or good sound potatoes, and 2 qts. of malt beer, and, in the case of patients requiring it, beef, fish, fowls, veal, lamb, and eggs might be substituted.

The diet was investigated by a commissioner sent round to the various prisons, who reported that, "although the amount of meat would seem scarcely enough to an Englishman, the French, by their skill in cookery, made such an excellent soup or broth out of it as to afford ample support for men living without labour, such as our labouring poor rarely have at any time, but certainly not during the present scarcity." The same commissioner in July 1797 recommended that an alteration should be made in the contracts, so as to insure early delivery, "as the lateness prevents the cookery of the meat as the French desire, which is by boiling it down for four or five hours with a strong and excellent broth, after which the meat is good for but little, and but little regarded by the prisoners." [34]

[34] Knowing how dogs as a rule refuse to eat meat impregnated with herbs and condiments, we probably have here the explanation of little George Borrow's impression of the food of the prisoners, which forty years later made him write of it, "Rations of Carrion meat and bread from which I have seen the very hounds occasionally turn away." Every one who knows the habit of dogs, knows that many of them would turn away from the meat which had been boiled for four or five hours with a broth impregnated with herbs.

The food was prepared by cooks chosen from the prisoners themselves, and paid by the Government. To insure the good quality and proper quantity of the goods supplied, and to eliminate the possibility of the storekeepers being bribed by the contractors to pass inferior goods, the prisoners of each block were ordered by Clause 8 of the Prison Rules to appoint delegates to attend when the food and other goods were delivered, and to see that they were up to the standard specified in the contract.

There were in the various prisons occasional complaints, and if they were justified the contractors were punished. In one instance the defaulting contractor at Plymouth was fined £300 and imprisoned for six months in the County Gaol. Beer at one time was supplied to the prisoners by the Government, and when this allowance ceased, it could, under certain regulations, be obtained on payment. This beer was of a *very light and cheap quality*, as attested by the books of the Oundle Brewery, but half a gallon a day, given in the first ration of which we have found a note, is so large an allowance, even for those bibulous days, that it suggests an error in the memorandum. Tea and coffee in those days were the luxuries of the well-to-do only, and were not for prisoners or for our own poorer countrymen and women. There was no tea or coffee.

There can be no doubt that every possible precaution was taken to insure that the food supplied by the Government was good, and sufficient to maintain an average man in good health, and in the market held in the enclosed space at the east gate, to which the prisoners had access, those who had money could buy additional food and luxuries. But although beyond doubt the allowance of food was sufficient for an average man, there must have been in those twenty years thousands of men with hearty appetites who finished their ration hungry and dissatisfied—and the sequel will show that there were others who actually died of starvation, owing to their own vices.

Each prisoner was allowed a straw palliasse, a bolster, and a blanket or coverlet, the straw being changed as often as was necessary.

The British Government never withdrew its contention that it was the duty of each nation to provide clothing for its subjects in captivity in the country of its enemy, and maintained that this had been the practice of France and England in all previous wars, even in that in which they were engaged up to the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, only ten years before the outbreak in 1793 of the war under discussion; but as an act of humanity, when the French obstinately declined to discharge this duty, the Government clothed a certain number of the naked in a yellow suit, a grey or yellow cap, a yellow jacket, a red waistcoat, yellow trousers, a neckerchief, two shirts, two pairs of stockings, and one pair of shoes.

In M. Foulley's model the greater number of the prisoners are represented as clad in this uniform, the conspicuous colours of which were selected to facilitate the detection of an escaped prisoner. In the first year of the occupation of Norman Cross an order was issued to the storekeeper to supply such prisoners as were destitute of clothing with the articles enumerated above.

There is every reason to believe that the provisions for the maintenance of the prisoners were carried out with the utmost care and fidelity in Norman Cross and all other prisons, but the complaints of the prisoners gave rise to such prolonged controversy and serious disagreement between the Governments of France and England, that a review of the discussion finds an appropriate place here. The complaints were not confined to one side only, but there is ample documentary evidence that the accusations of the French were greatly exaggerated or absolutely without foundation. Their hatred of the enemy made the captives suspicious, and illness from natural causes was attributed to cruelty and ill-treatment. [35]

[35] In the light of modern science, we can well understand the origin of the accusation by the British that the wells had been purposely poisoned in order to kill the English prisoners. Enteric fever had not then been differentiated from typhus, the mode of its spread was unknown, and probably defective sanitation had led to poisoning of the well, as it has done and still is doing in many a British town and village.

The British Government, according to Mr. Dundas, Secretary of State, on 6th October 1797, attributed many of the complaints to passion, prejudice, and animosity (quotation by M. Niou in his letter to Mr. Dundas, 15th February 1799), [36] and it is certain that the French Government would not object to the fact that the statements made by the French generals, commissaries, and others, whether the effect was intended or not, undoubtedly increased the anger of their nation against the English, and thus infused greater fighting energy into their troops. The words used by Buonaparte, in his address to his Army on the eve of Waterloo, to stimulate his troops, have already been quoted. As to his reference to the hulks, we must bear in mind that, except under the pressure of the earlier period of the war, when the prison accommodation was insufficient, and again later on occasions when the prisoners had accumulated to a larger number than could be accommodated on land, even though Dartmoor, Perth, and other smaller prisons had been built, the hulks were the place of imprisonment for the *criminal* prisoners of war only, and that a century since there was no place of confinement for criminals in which the conditions could entail anything but misery.

Of the worst miseries endured by the prisoners at Norman Cross and other depots, the real sources were the vices of the unfortunate men themselves, especially gambling and usury, [37] and to the obstinacy of the French Government in their determination to provide no clothing and their neglect to fulfil their promises. The evidence that this accusation of neglect by the French is well founded, is furnished by M. Charretie, the agent or commissary appointed by the French Directory to look after the prisoners in England, who on the 19th November 1797, in a letter to the Minister of Marine at Paris, after describing the pitiable condition of many of the prisoners, who were half-naked for the want of clothes, proceeds:

> "Consolation, Citizen Minister, might be felt by the unfortunate prisoners, if their want and misery had not reached their height, and if assistance could reach them in time to give foundation to their hopes, but, Citizen Minister, after all that I have said to them, after all that I have had the honour of writing to you, concerning their horrible situation and that in which I am myself placed, without resources, at the mercy of a crowd of creditors, scarcely able to find the means of providing for my own subsistence, what would you have me say more when I see you are deceived with respect to the Measures you take in regard to them?
>
> "Five thousand livres have long since been announced to me by your office —you now make mention of sixty thousand livres, but I have no intelligence of the arrival of the first farthing of either of these sums. If promises remain unexecuted with respect to such sacred and necessary objects in a service which I can no longer continue, when shall I see those realised which relate to the providing of Funds for the clothing of Prisoners," . . . "and if of about 9,000 confined at Norman Cross near 3,000, sick for want of clothing and an increase of diet, are already on the eve of perishing, what will be the case some time hence? And upon whom will the responsibility fall for so many thousand victims? My correspondence will justify me in the eyes of my country. However expeditious you may be, Citizen Minister, all you can hope for is to save the remainder, whom strength of constitution may have kept longer alive—what then would be the case if the English Government should order the measure of driving them all [this must refer to the officers on parole—T. J. W.] into horrible prisons, and of reducing the allowance to half rations, to be put into execution." [38]

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[36] Correspondence with the French Government relative to Prisoners of War Supplement, 1801, to Appendix No. 59. Report of the Transport Board to the House of Commons, 1798.

[37] This will be dealt with in the following chapter.

[38] Report of the Transport Board to the House of Commons, 1798, Appendix No. 59—Most valuable information on the merits

The Republic had taken no notice of the propositions of Britain made on the 6th October 1797, "that the prisoners should be furnished in the countries where they were detained with clothing, subsistence, and medicines at the expense of the Government to which they belonged." The British Government threatened, in order to compel a reply, that they must put the prisoners on a reduced allowance on 1st December 1797.

M. Charretie's letter *may* have assisted the French Government to sanction the proposal of the British Minister. What it *certainly did*, by the statement it contained as to the proportion of sick among, and the general condition of, the Norman Cross prisoners, was to enrage the French against the English. The British Government at once took steps to prove the statement false. On the 15th December 1797, Mr. James Perrot, the agent for prisoners of war at Norman Cross, Dr. Higgins, the physician, Mr. James Magennis, surgeon, and Messieurs Chatelin and Savary, the French assistant surgeons, deposed on oath that at no time since the opening of the prison in April had there been more than 5,170 in the prison at one time, that up to that day fifty-nine only had died in the hospital, and that on the 19th November (the date of this letter in which M. Charretie said that out of about 9,000 prisoners near 3,000 were sick) there were only 194 in hospital, in which number were included twenty-four nurses; the doctors in addition certified that, "The prisoners are visited every morning by the chief surgeons or their assistants, and that, whether their disorders are slight or violent, they are admitted into the hospital," and the French assistant surgeons (themselves prisoners of war) added, "While there, they are treated with humanity and attention, and provided with everything necessary for the re-establishment of their health." [39]

In evidence before a commission held on the 2nd April 1798, M. Charretie explained that he had received the information inserted in his letter to the Minister of Marine from prisoners confined at Norman Cross; that he had intended communicating with the Transport Board, but that soon after writing to the Minister he had reason to alter his opinion; that he had informed the French Government that he thought he had been too hasty, especially as the Transport Board provided him with lists giving him the number of prisoners in each prison, but, as fresh prisoners were arriving, he thought the number might have increased from 5,000 to 9,000. This is a fair sample of the French complaints, and of how little foundation was found for most of them when they were investigated.

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of the dispute between the two Governments has been obtained from the Report and its Appendix, and from an imperfect copy of a Supplement to the Appendix, issued from Downing Street, 6th Jan. 1801. This supplement is not to be found either in the Library of the House of Commons or in the British Museum, and the Fragment which contained thirty-nine out of fifty-three letters indexed in the table of contents, in the course of its travels through my hands and my agents' and the typewriters', has been lost. This loss is irreparable, but I am able to publish in the text or in the Appendix five of the fifty-three letters which were printed in this supplement to the report. Appendix D.

[39] AFFIDAVITS OF PERROT, THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH SURGEON*Copy of an Affidavit made by Mr. James Perrot, Agent for Prisoners of War at Norman Cross. Dated Peterboro', 15th December* 1797.These are to certify, that James Perrot, Agent for Prisoners of War at Norman Cross, voluntarily maketh Oath, that to the best of his knowledge and belief, the Certificate and Affidavits given by Dr. Higgins, Physician, Mr. James Magennis, Surgeon, and Messiours Chatelin and Savary, the French Assistant Surgeons to the Hospital at Norman Cross Prisons, are strictly true, and corresponding with the accounts, daily brought to him; and that the number of Patients in the said Hospital on the 19th day of November last, were one hundred and ninety-four, including twenty-four nurses, and the whole number of Prisoners, including the Sick, were on that day confined in the said Prisons, 5028, and from the first the establishment never exceeded 5178, and that to the present date only 59 have died in the said Hospital; and further to the best of his knowledge, neither contagious or epidemic disorders have ever prevailed in the said Hospital or Prisons.(Signed) J. Perrot, Agent.Given under my hand at Peterboro' this 15th day of December 1797.(Signed) H. Freeman.Copy of an Affidavit made by Dr. Higgins, Physician, and Dr. Magennis, Surgeon.We the undersigned do voluntarily certify upon Oath that the number of Sick in the Hospital under our care at Norman Cross, on the 19th November last, was 194, including 24 nurses; that the daily number from the 7th August was always less; and that at no one period since the commencement of the establishment did the actual number exceed 260. That the prisons are systematically visited and searched every morning by the surgeon or his assistants, and that every prisoner having feverish symptoms, however slight, is immediately removed to the hospital.No epidemic or contagious Fever.(Signed) James Higgins, M.D., Physician,James Magennis, Surgeon.*Translation of a certificate by the French Surgeons, M. Savary of the* Hardy, *and M. Chatelaine, Surgeon-Major of the* Ville de l'Orient.The 24 men were employed as nurses. Whenever the prisoners are sent to the Hospital, they are admitted, whether their disorders are slight or violent, and while there, they are treated with humanity and attention, and provided with everything necessary for the re-establishment of their health. No epidemic or contagious distemper.(*Ref. Parly. Paper*, 1797–8, vol. 50. pp. 131–3.)

The mortality at Norman Cross was exceptionally high during its first occupation, but the majority of the earliest prisoners were those who had been removed from the prisons, the overcrowded and consequent unhealthy condition of which gave rise to the hurried building of Norman Cross; they were therefore specially liable to disease, and unfit to withstand its ravages. The arrangement for maintaining the prisoners, from the outbreak of the war in 1793 to November 1797, was that which had been in force in previous wars between the two nations—viz. that each nation should provide the captives detained in its prisons with food sufficient to maintain life and health, while it clothed its own countrymen in the enemy's prisons.

To put an end to the complaints and the recriminations continually renewed on both sides, relative to the treatment of the prisoners, our Government had in October 1797 proposed the fresh arrangement "that the Prisoners should be furnished, in the Country where they were detained, with clothing, subsistence, and medicines at the expense of the Government to which they belonged." The French Government took no notice of this communication, not even acknowledging its receipt, and to enforce its attention to this and other matters connected with the exchange of prisoners (especially of Sir Sidney Smith), the British Government threatened to confine all the officers out on parole, and to reduce the prison ration, which was at that time equal to that of a British soldier, to half—viz. 1 lb. bread, ½ lb. beef, ¼ lb. pease, and ½ lb. cabbage.

This threat, aided possibly by M. Charretie's letter—the piteous appeal of a servant of the Republic thwarted in the execution of his duties by the neglect of the Directory to fulfil its promises and to discharge its responsibilities—had effect. The new arrangement was adopted, each nation undertaking to provide food, medicine, and other necessaries for its own countrymen. While this arrangement lasted, neither combatant could use the weapon, which Britain had threatened to employ, the reduction of the ration of those of the enemy who were captive in its prisons. M. Gallois, who succeeded M. Charretie as commissary, brought over M. Nettement, to whom the special task of providing the means of subsistence for the prisoners was entrusted, the expense being borne by France.

The contention that the complaints made by the French as to the food, etc., supplied under the old system, were mostly unfounded, is supported by the fact that M. Nettement, except in one instance, employed the same sub-agents, and, in general, the same contractors, who had been serving the British, and that only slight modifications in the dietary were made to adapt it more to French methods of cooking. The new arrangement lasted only two years; it was terminated abruptly by an Arrêté of the French Consuls, dated 29th November 1799 (le Frimaire l'an 8 de la République une et Indivisible). A copy of this edict was sent by M. Niou (the Commissary in England at that date) to Mr. Dundas, Secretary of State for War, with a letter in which he stated that among other reasons why the Consuls did not in any manner feel called upon to continue to observe the arrangement, was the fact "that it was not founded on any authentic stipulation; that the Cartel of Exchange, signed nearly ten months afterwards, took not the least notice of it," etc.

In consequence of this correspondence on the 15th December 1799, the Duke of Portland, acting in the absence of Mr. Secretary Dundas, communicated to the Admiralty the King's wishes as to future arrangements. After protesting against the "departure (on the part of the French Government) from the agreement entered into between the two countries, and which tended so materially to mitigate the calamities of war," he directed, as to the British prisoners in France, that Captain Cotes, the British agent in Paris, should ascertain exactly the daily allowance made to each man by the French Government, and that he should, at the expense of the British Government, make up any deficiency existing between that allowance and the ration supplied by the British Government during the years 1798 and 1799. At the same time the Minister directed the Transport Commissioners to supply the French prisoners in Britain, from the date when the French agent ceased to supply them, with the same rations of provisions as were granted before the arrangement of December 1797, and he adds:

> "As no mention is made of Clothing or other necessaries in Captain Cotes' letter, I think it right to add that the Commissioners of Transports and for taking care of Prisoners of War are on no account to furnish any to the French Prisoners, as this charge has at all times been supported by the French Government."

From this time to the termination of the war the arrangement as to the feeding of the prisoners remained the same, but a terrible source of misery to the French prisoners at Norman Cross, and to other French prisoners of war in England, was the firm refusal of the French Government to agree to the clause in Lord Portland's letter, referring to the clothing of the prisoners.

In another Edict, dated March 1800, signed by Buonaparte as First Consul, Article 1, is "The Ministers of War and of the Marine shall ensure by every possible means, subsistence and clothing to the Russian, Austrian and English Prisoners of War"—"they shall take care that they are treated with all Attention and Indulgence consistent with public safety." [40]

[40] These extracts are from the lost supplement of date 1801 to the *Parliamentary Report*, 1798.

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