

VALENCIENNES

(1793)

BY CORP'L TULLIDGE: see "The Trumpet-Major"

IN MEMORY OF S. C. (PENSIONER). DIED 184-

We trenched, we trumpeted and drummed,
And from our mortars tons of iron hummed
Ath'art the ditch, the month we bombed
The Town o' Valencieen.

'Twas in the June o' Ninety-dree
(The Duke o' Yark our then Commander been)
The German Legion, Guards, and we
Laid siege to Valencieen.

This was the first time in the war
That French and English spilled each other's gore;
--Few dreamt how far would roll the roar
Begun at Valencieen!

'Twas said that we'd no business there
A-topperen the French for disagreeen;
However, that's not my affair -
We were at Valencieen.

Such snocks and slats, since war began
Never knew raw recruit or veteran:
Stone-deaf therence went many a man
Who served at Valencieen.

Into the streets, ath'art the sky,
A hundred thousand balls and bombs were fleen;
And harmless townsfolk fell to die
Each hour at Valencieen!

And, sweaten wi' the bombardiers,
A shell was slent to shards anighst my ears:
--'Twas nigh the end of hopes and fears
For me at Valencieen!

They bore my wovnded frame to camp,
And shut my gapen skull, and washed en clean,
And jined en wi' a zilver clamp
Thik night at Valencieen.

"We've fetched en back to quick from dead;
But never more on earth while rose is red
Will drum rouse Corpel!" Doctor said
O' me at Valencieen.

'Twer true. No voice o' friend or foe
Can reach me now, or any liven been;
And little have I power to know
Since then at Valencieen!

I never hear the zummer hums
O' bees; and don' know when the cuckoo comes;
But night and day I hear the bombs
We threw at Valencieen . . .

As for the Duke o' Yark in war,
There be some volk whose judgment o' en is mean;
But this I say--a was not far
From great at Valencieen.

O' wild wet nights, when all seems sad,
My wovnds come back, as though new wovnds I'd had;
But yet--at times I'm sort o' glad
I fout at Valencieen.

Well: Heaven wi' its jasper halls
Is now the on'y Town I care to be in . . .
Good Lord, if Nick should bomb the walls
As we did Valencieen!

1878-1897.