

## CHAPTER X

### The Eighth Baronet



'Carlino', the eldest of the most blooming shrubs in the Forest of Walton, grew up like his father, in a devoted family atmosphere; we learn, from a fragment in John's diary, that his childhood was on the whole uneventful – he was inoculated for smallpox, 'swallow'd a shilling at School which remain'd in his Stomach from Tuesday to Friday', and fell into the water at Eton but was

... providentially sav'd by Miss Harding near whose boarding House the Accident happen'd. She with some difficulty & hazard reach'd out a Hoop to him which was in the Water & with which he had been playing, which he caught hold of after he had sunk twice.

In 1788 Charles went up to Christ Church and during his first summer vacation he went on a summer tour of the northern counties and Scotland. His letters show that he was not so urbanely good-humoured as his father, and he found it hard to suppress his irritation at his travelling companion, Cartwright's,<sup>1</sup> heavy portmanteau, which caused worry and expense at every stage. He admitted that his mother had often accused him of entertaining the opinion 'that the world and all its Elements was made for me'.

Cartwright carried many letters of introduction, which were all taken up, to the young traveller's annoyance; Charles preferred to spend time viewing old monuments and houses along the route, rather than paying social calls.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Cartwright of Aynho, whom Charles referred to as his 'Governor'.

Objects of interest were not confined to antiquity;<sup>1</sup> quite as interesting to the curious were the novel marvels of industry; the 'dark Satanic mills' were not as yet considered a menace except by the prophetic Blake, and travellers included in their itinerary brick kilns, mines, pencil and plate glass, fustian and velvet factories. Cartwright had not omitted to bring a letter of introduction to Arkwright in the hopes of being shown his engine, but the famous inventor was no respecter of persons, and caused great annoyance with his snubbing reply that

He knew none of us, & had not time to talk.

However the party were later shown round some 'large & curious' cotton mills, which were turned by a steam engine, and quite made up for the loss of a sight of Arkwright's. They were greatly impressed by the Duke of Bridgewater's works at Worsley, also by the eleven miles of underground canal leading to the principal mines. The water was

... arched over entirely with Brick about 8 feet wide or more... They tell you there is more brick in this work than in all the Town of Manchester... In a long narrow boat lighed on each side with candles, with a man who pulls on the boat by means of Iron rings fixed in the Arch... we proceeded to the principal [mine] where we disembarked to survey it. It is like a Cellar with Arches not high enough to stand upright in, which Arches the Men form by working their way through and prop them with Timber; when they find no more coal they remove the Props and let the Earth fall in after them. The Miners get down Ladders from the surface. The Mine is above 200 feet from the top... The Air in parts of the Mine is very bad, our candles burnt very dim.

Even more spectacular was the 'subterraneous' expedition into the salt rocks of Nantwich, which John considered a much more terrible Journey':

To go down 70 yards perpendicular sounds dreadful: and the first

<sup>1</sup>... the curious and the *cognoscenti* designed for themselves summer tours and took their fill - sometimes admiring, sometimes critical of the grandeur of their times.' J. H. Plumb: *Men and Places*, p. 71.

sight of our conveyance a little staggered us. There are two Buckets at the ends of a Rope; while one is winding up the other goes down. The Wheel at the top is turned by a horse, the Bucket comes up full of water from a pit made for the purpose, into the other you put one foot and the man who goes with you one of his, with yr hands you grasp the rope.

Having safely survived this ordeal, the party crossed to Liverpool by a dangerous ferry, and although the town was still 'in its infancy', the travellers were impressed by the amount of industry and trade 'spreading on every side', with foreigners pouring in and the bells ringing every day for foreign vessels. During their stay they saw Kemble in *Hamlet*, but were disappointingly uncommunicative on the subject, though Charles remarked that the theatre itself was 'scarcely inferior to Drury Lane'.

After duly visiting some of the seats of the northern gentry, including Chatsworth, the travellers went on to the Lake District and were appreciative of the 'beautiful scenes' they saw there. Charles's reaction to the mountain panorama does at times seem stereotyped and prosaic - he shows no signs of sharing Wordsworth's 'strong and holy passion'<sup>1</sup> for Nature. He was more occupied with the question of whether to wear an overcoat when ascending Skiddaw. He was sufficiently impressed, at any rate, to doubt whether he would find anything in Scotland to rival the Lakes, but later he discovered that the road from Dumbarton to the foot of Loch Lomond was equally 'romantick'. But here again he became absorbed with prosaic details - the exact length and breadth of the Loch for example - and figures dominate his landscape. The majority of his observations concern people and their customs, and he was fascinated to observe that at Gretna Green 'the language changes so suddenly that we could scarcely understand anybody, as suddenly the dress changes. No women in shoes and stockings, not even the waitresses at the Inns (for waiters there are none)'. Charles admired the Scots for their hardy religious faith:

<sup>1</sup> William Wordsworth: *The Prelude*, Bk. X, ll. 383-84 (Text of 1805).

People will walk many miles to the Kirk as they call it with a pair of shoes & stockings in their hands.

With all the fine views to be seen, Charles came to the conclusion that Scotland was well worth visiting. He did not fail to observe that little of Birnam Wood remained — 'I suppose it was mostly transported to Dunsinane' — and the tour finished with a visit to Edinburgh — 'seeing what's seeable'.

Charles's wife Marianne later wrote that he was '(alas! for him) a spoiled child', who obtained too much sway over all about him, and was too much admired by parents, friends, schoolfellows and masters. He possessed 'a natural force of expression which gave interest to his conversation' and the letters he wrote when serving with the militia reveal a lively likeable person, gifted with a sense of humour.

Like his father, Charles appeared to enjoy life on active service as a pleasant change from more mundane occupations:

If we were more comfortably lodged and fed, I should not dislike the sort of life, as the expectation is constantly alive & very few moments unemployed. My only annoyance is a host of Bugs and all other kinds of biters & stingers which I cannot conquer though my straw is quite clean and my blanket a new one.

As in John's time, England was threatened with invasion and the militia was called upon for home defence, but Pitt the younger had perhaps an even more difficult task than his father in rallying the nation. Now the enemy across the Channel was a new force, born of revolution, and many English radicals looked with envy at power based on the triple cry of liberty, equality, and fraternity. As yet the French imperialistic spirit had not too obviously manifested itself, and it was not surprising that votaries of liberty in England should look at revolutionary France with lukewarm hostility. Early in the war, which had broken out in 1793, Sedition Acts had been passed to curb radical clubs, but there was still unrest and discontent, which in 1797 had a particularly alarming manifestation. As always England had

been slow to prepare for war, relying on her navy for protection. It was a serious matter, therefore, when the Channel fleet lying at Spithead mutinied in April 1797. The sailors demanded better pay and conditions, but the strike was well-organized and orderly and the fleet put to sea as soon as the demands were granted. No sooner had this crisis been averted, however, than the North Sea fleet mutinied at the Nore. The mutineers were incited by Richard Parker, a daring malcontent whose aims were none too clearly defined. It was a haphazard affair, and many people strongly suspected the insidious influence of France out to make trouble for its own sake. To help restore order the militia was called in, and in June 1797 Charles wrote three letters to his mother describing his part in the event. Ships under the control of the mutineers lay off the Nore threatening to blockade the Thames, but on 15 June some of them managed to break away and escape to Sheerness. Charles wrote from Tilbury Fort:

On Friday night the very heavy fire at the Nore kept us on the watch being apprehensive that something disloyal might force its way up, but it was occasioned by the Ships that escaped from the mutineers to the number of 3 or 4. The Leopard anchored under us at 4 on Saturday morning, having run through the fire of ten Ships, and fought their own mutineers on deck at the same time, eighteen of their worst we have in safe custody on the other side the water one of whom stabbed a Midshipman with a handspike . . . She is now I believe perfectly right, she gave the fort three cheers on coming to anchor . . . Seven ships have hoisted a blue flag & only wait for their pardon. The Sandwich is said to be one, & the delegates in irons. I . . . trust they (the delegates) will never be pardoned. The river quite crowded to day & yesterday with the trade up the river.

The mutiny was now virtually over, but the task of 'dividing the ungodly from the rest' remained, and in this the militia was able to lend its assistance. Charles was delighted when all his men volunteered for the duty, and his next letter was

written on board the *Standard*. He found the wardroom of a man of war a 'rather confused place to write in':

'There is little Motion of the Ship, but when I get to my Cot I think it never will cease swinging. The first Lieut. has insisted on my occupying his Cabin . . . it is rather a prison, but being the centre of news, not unpleasant at this time.

Now that all danger was past, the Captain's wife, Mrs Parr, came on board with two little girls:

She is very tolerable & I hope by frequent dandling of the little ones to gain her favour & the fins of the turbot.

On the whole Charles felt that he was far better off than his fellow officers who remained 'in dirt & confusion at that vile place Gravesend'. He believed that he had the upper hand of them — always providing that he escaped the yard-arm. The congregated men-of-war made a lively scene, and Charles said he would have liked to row his mother about in his eight-oared barge.

Charles sent a detachment of men to assist at the 'weeding out' of a hundred defaulters on board the *Lion* and the *Lis*. He was proud of his men; their steadiness and good conduct exceeded his hopes. His 'mongrels', as he fondly called them, assisted the marines, lining the decks as the malcontents were sorted out:

. . . they were 3 hours under arms in one instance without a whisper, or a head turned round.

Two hundred of the worst offenders were imprisoned at Chatham or Maidstone or on board gunboats, and soon Parker was court-martialled and sentenced to death:

I felt nothing at hearing his sentence pronounced for so hardened a villain I never saw. He received it with perfect indifference said he was sure of a good reception in heaven as his conscience was perfectly clear, hoped his death might atone for the crimes of the rest, who he was sure, if pardoned, would return to their duty with alacrity. I hope not one of his associates may meet with mercy for

those that I have seen appear to be the most desperate wretches that can be imagined, their language & conduct the most blasphemous & brutal.

Like many other Englishmen, Charles found that his faith in the senior service had been severely shaken. Captain Parr of the *Standard* was pleasant and civil enough — 'a great disciplinarian, & well officered' — and as for his first lieutenant:

I really think he was the cause of the dispersion of the Nore fleet as this was the first that came in after all pardon was stopped & it was by his spirited conduct that he set such an example.

But Charles confessed that he had not quite the same respect for the sea service as a whole:

. . . there appears so much jealousy & hatred between different ships, etc, no one allows any credit to any body but himself. I'd Northern & Capt'n Knight of the *Montague* have made a bad figure in their evidence, I believe their conduct is universally blamed. The absence of officers from their ships is I am sure the whole & sole cause of the traitors having ever succeeded. The service must be quite remodelled if it ever comes round again, even now they all grumble at not being able to leave their ships.

Thus the mutiny was quelled and England survived a grave crisis; the Navy, with Nelson's help, was soon to reassure her critics. Meanwhile France did all she could, by insidious means, to exacerbate England's difficulties. Wherever there was unrest, the agents of revolutionary France were on hand to encourage the rebels, and in Ireland there was a situation more than ripe for such treatment. Under the leadership of Theobald Wolfe Tone, the Society of United Irishmen, angered by Lord Fitzwilliam's failure to press for Catholic emancipation on his appointment as Viceroy in 1795, turned revolutionary and looked to France for support and help. The French failed to land troops at Bantry Bay in 1796, but the situation was still tense and a further invasion attempt was expected. The Presbyterian Orange Society was also a

dangerous threat; the country seethed with political and religious hatred, and it was thought that even a small force of French troops would be enough to start a major conflagration. To counter the menace troops had to be sent to Ireland, and militia regiments were asked to volunteer for the task. Charles did not altogether approve of

... the acceptance of volunteering & making what Mr Sheridan calls a deliberative army; & much less of the precedent of sending out the Militia.

Nevertheless it gave him 'unspeakable Pleasure' to be able to report that:

Perfectly unknown to, and unsuspected by the officers, or even non-commissioned officers,

the privates in the Warwickshire regiment had volunteered for service in Ireland:

... it will give us great satisfaction, thus to be enrolled the first in loyalty & public spirit, & to know the perfect disposition of our men.

They were to be conveyed from Chelmsford camp where they had been for a year following the mutiny in 'waggons and all sorts of carriages' to Blisworth in Northamptonshire where:

... a curious embarkation takes place in the very centre of England. The Grand junction Canal conveys us to Liverpool where we are expected in a very few days.

Charles asked his father to send a coachman to Towcester to collect his mare and whisky, and to bring in exchange drafts for fifty pounds which he promised to lodge in the paymaster's hands; he stipulated that the mare, a favourite mount, should immediately be turned out, to prevent Jack, his brother, or anybody else, being tempted to hack her.

The journey by barge was apparently most enjoyable, and Charles reported that everybody was in 'high glee'; the only

difficulty was that as they passed near their home towns, the troops were tempted to take unofficial leave:

We lost 2 thirds at least, they are coming up, however, fast.

There was some speculation as to whether 'my Lord Hertford', who was in command, would trust

... his noble person to a coal barge ... if he shirks at all he will create great discontent.

From the outset Charles appears to have had scant respect for his commander; he scathingly described his visit to troops at the Nore:

We were yesterday visited by our great Marquis in a post-chaise & four two lacquis & a valet. About 3 minutes was enough for the wailike Peer, & he scampered back to London as fast as he could.

The Buckinghamshire Regiment had volunteered at the same time as the Warwickshires, and also arrived at Runcorn prior to embarkation. Their colonel was favourably compared with Hertford for looking after his men 'wonderfully', but as the barges approached Liverpool, sinister rumours were heard that the Bucks had

... manifested symptoms of doubt, & indeed I never thought them hearty in the cause, & believe the proposal [to volunteer] came from their Officers.

The Warwickshires could not afford to be smug, however, since the Buckinghamshires in the end proved faithful to a man, whilst Charles was soon recounting a tale of French infiltrations in his own regiment. Just before embarkation:

A Jacobin Serjeant, no doubt employed for the purpose, refused, & persuaded nearly 100 supplementary.

In the end over two hundred 'refusers' had to be left behind, in charge of a captain and two subalterns — 'the lot fell on poor Verney' — but unlike the Anglesey regiment which refused altogether, the rest were

... perfectly disposed, & zealous to a degree, had it not been for the officers, the Serjeant would certainly have been destroyed. Our strength must be between 13 & 1400.

On Monday 2 July Charles wrote from Dublin after

... a very bad passage of three days, which you may suppose turned my inside out, in a transport which had certainly been all round the world for the express purpose of collecting vermin.

The men were billeted at 'all the great men's houses', but not unnaturally this was none too popular among the local residents. Charles described how he

... took 30 to a Ld Glencurrie's or some such word who requested to pay them off his house, I told his Lordship my orders were to billet them there, & there they should be. I since hear he is not on the right side of the question.

Charles himself was not too happy at the idea of fitting the Ranelagh up as a barracks. It was, he reflected:

... a melancholy idea that the resort of all the beauty & pleasure of this place, when it had any, *dum fortuna fuit*, should be the lodging of the lousiest produce of Birmingham.

The young officer was impressed with the fine bay of Dublin and the 'airy brick streets' of the town, but as to the inhabitants, they

... seem to me to consist of 2 orders only, soldiers & Beggars; as every loyal man is of the former class, and everyone of a different description has either fled to the rebels or is afraid to show himself, tho' I understand if they dared rise there are supposed to be many thousands ready in the city, but the conduct of the Yeomanry is sufficient to keep everything in awe, you may see a man of 3 or 4000 a year cleaning his horse for guard, & another marching to an outpost with his Haversack & canteen.

He did not dare approach 'great people' about the

... real state of the country... a man here being considered only according to the number of his epaulettes, & feeling rather dwindled from a gentleman in England to a Captain in Ireland.

But he did not have to look far to observe the extreme poverty which was basically the cause of many of the Irish troubles:

I never saw such misery as appears in the lower orders; it has been observed by some one, that till he saw the Beggars in Dublin he never knew where the Beggars of London sent their old clothes.

With some perspicacity Charles summed up the situation:

Whatever may be the views of the Leaders; whether religious animosity, a wish to subvert the form of government, or mere opposition to persons in power actuates them, yet the mass of their followers are certainly led by one view only, a wish to change their miserable situation at any rate – and while the lower orders are so cruelly oppressed, & there is nobody between the prince & the beggar, this country can never be blessed with happiness or content.

The previous spring, the rebels had captured Wexford and Enniscorthy, but on 21 June 1798 their forces were routed by troops under the command of General Lake, who had supplemented his regulars with contingents of Irish yeomanry. The local militia – the men of three or four thousand a year – were not likely to show much mercy towards those who threatened their own property:

Rebels that escaped from Wexford dispersed in two bodies of about 2,000 each. They have made no sort of stand anywhere against the military, & the fear of the soldiery possesses every one so much that many hundreds of innocent peasants have been murdered... merely because they ran away.

Military force could subdue the immediate manifestations of violence, but Charles felt that it could not provide a lasting solution:

The north is at present very quiet, Gen. Lake is gone southwards where the Rebels are kept in awe by a large force; in Wicklow & the neighbourhood of Dublin they are still in force, and commit petty depredations, rob the Mails, etc... It seems probable that from the little hope they can have of resistance, they will be induced to submit, but to me it appears quite impossible that the Sword can do more than subdue the spirit of dissatisfaction [*sic*] for a time.

Reports were coming in of the destruction of about thirty-five thousand rebels in 'this most unhappy business'; meanwhile a proclamation had been issued giving the survivors

... fourteen days to come in, after that I suppose measures will be taken to eradicate if possible the whole deluded race — a horrible necessity, but every one here seems convinced of and that humanity must be out of the question.

An officer who had returned to Dublin from Wicklow reported scenes of misery; the rebels continued their 'predatory' war, and the soldiery their 'cruelty and plunder':

... he saw a man, who had procured a pardon at Wexford and a pass home to his cottage, dyeing in the midst of his family; a party of Yeomen had dragged him out of the house, & notwithstanding he offered his pass, lodged two bullets in his body.

Lord Cornwallis, viceroy and commander-in-chief, was in agreement with Pitt's policy of conciliation, but many Irishmen were in no mood for compromise:

... the Orangemen Protestants, etc of whom the Yeomanry is principally composed, are raving mad at Lord Cornwallis's conciliatory measures.

Some of the rebels who had surrendered on the proclamation had been taken again in arms 'with their pardon in their pockets', and this helped to fan the spirit of revenge:

The Yeomen and violent party people on the right side, & violent everybody is, are enraged with Ld Cornwallis for his delay, and contend that while an invisible force of darkness is dealing destruction round the country, Government rests on its arms, and will temporize with treason, till massacre is completed. Eleven Irish dragoons (5th) were brought in as united Irishmen yesterday, some of them will be shot or hanged, & I fear we must witness many a scene of execution which for one I should willingly be excused.

A melancholy Picture, but we have some satisfaction on the other hand of being certain that we are acting for the best under the orders of wise and well meaning men, and perhaps by assisting to

crush this unnatural rebellion here, are warding off the same horrors from our own country — a country whose happiness, every minute I spend out of it makes me more & more assured, if we will but exert ourselves in its support, and whose decided enemies, I more & more clearly discern, in its pretended Jacobin friends & admirers. Our men undergo their fatigue with patience, & execute their duty with alacrity.

The regiment remained at Dublin throughout July; most of the regulars had been sent away, and garrison duty devolved on the Warwickshires and the Buckinghamshires. With only five officers and '5 lazy useless Field Officers' this promised to be hard work, but a week later the garrison was

... a little reinforced in point of Officers so that we are now up only one night out of three, & by going to bed till dinner time when relieved, it does not make any difference.

At first Charles found it hard to adjust to his new situation:

The events of the last ten days appear to me quite a dream, & I can hardly believe myself when I see an English Militiaman bustling about in a Garrison Town. We are looked up to as the finest Regiment in Ireland. I hope our conduct may gain us credit for discipline, but am terribly afraid of the cheap Irish whiskey, and we are not noted for sobriety.

The 'recusants' who had remained at Liverpool could not be persuaded to change their minds; the Jacobin sergeant had evidently done his work graphically and well:

I can't imagine what will become of poor Verney and his deluded people. Nothing could convince them that they were not going to be trepanned for soldiers, & that directly they left the country all allowances to wives, etc would be stopped, notwithstanding an express order to the contrary and an additional allowance of 8 pence a week to every wife & child — there were however only 2 of the old Regt the rest all supplementary & I believe I must give them credit for a good share of cowardice, & in that case am not sorry they are behind.

Charles's neighbour from Compton Verney rejoined the

regiment a few days later; his place at Liverpool was taken by one Lewis who was very happy to return:

... having lapped himself in his gouty fannels immediately on his arrival, & having a rebel Pike before his eyes both day & Night.

Life had its lighter moments:

We begin to get a little settled here... I have found a very good acquaintance in Ld Chas Fitzroy, who accosted me in the street from my likeness to Mary, I hope she wont be much offended with him. I have an open invitation whenever he dines at home, but the great men here are in such a perpetual round of dinners, that one never gets a sight of them. I have never seen Ld Hertford... except on parade, since our arrival. We had all the beauty & fashion on parade last night, there is hardly a plain woman of the higher class, & they seem to me to beat our London Beauties both in dress and appearance... I don't think I am in much danger of Irish society, but if ever I meet with it I have a sufficient distish for all of the country that I ever met with, to guard against any I may hereafter encounter.

Charles thanked his sister Sophy

... for her dissertation on Irish beauty, she is not as yet in any danger from an hibernian Sister in Law as I have not exchanged a word with a female Paddy, the Gaoler's wife excepted, who brings me food when on the Prison Guard.

Apart from the perpetual rain, which Charles found unpleasant, particularly 'as one is obliged to be so much on ones legs', life was comfortable enough:

We have a room given up to us at one of the great clubs to mess in; every thing is very good but exorbitantly dear.

With Skipwith, his Newbold Pacey neighbour, he found lodgings at two-and-a-half guineas a week, and had enough leisure and solitude to write home at weekly intervals:

I should like a little peep at you now & then if I could see so far. You may tell Betty that the Rebels never kill any soldiers, & indeed all the flummery & nonsense in the dispatches to Government, etc is nothing more than praising a well armed force for killing a mob ... Verney says he had rather be pointed at as Mr Verney who

keeps a good pack of Beagles, than as Capn Verney who lost his leg in the Irish rebellion.

However reassuring Charles might choose to be when writing to his sisters Betty, Sophy and Mary, it was not easy to forget that he was in a garrison town. The names of the inhabitants were posted on the door of every house and no one appeared after nine o'clock out of uniform. State trials had begun and executions were expected; Charles not surprisingly felt 'a little achy & jaded' having been on duty at one tedious trial which lasted for twenty-three hours. Two shearers were tried and convicted; one of them spoke so well that he drew 'iron tears down yeomen's cheeks' but this was not enough to save him from the scaffold:

... the next trial is I believe a Mr Oliver Bond, a prodigious favorite with the Jacobins here, but I think we are sufficiently prepared against any disturbance they may attempt.

Bond was respited, and it was thought that he and others would be reprieved on condition that they implicated other revolutionaries in England and Ireland. Great secrecy surrounded the trials and pardons, and criticism was voiced by the reactionaries who disliked any show of mercy.

Soon the rigours of service life began to tell on Charles; he caught a chill, and an upset stomach was followed by violent pains and shootings in the head:

I have been purged, vomited & sweated, & exhausted all the Phials in the Apothecaries shop. This day I have felt much relief from being bled, having amused half a dozen leeches on my forehead yesterday without much effect. I am obliged to keep perfectly quiet being unequal to the least exertion, but hope a few days will set me right & enable me to resume my duty which at present falls hard on my brother Captains.

Charles's illness lasted for over a fortnight and even then he continued to suffer from 'an unaccountable inside' which he attributed to the perpetual dampness of the weather; in fact he expressed the peevish opinion that



... the only reason this Island can have been placed here, is to keep off the Atlantic Storms from England, if it was not for that it had better go down with all its contents, that is, when the British Militia have left it.

Charles's opinion of Ireland was now noticeably jaundiced:

These people are far behind the rest of Mankind in everything. There is nobody worth hearing at all in the House of Commons.

Since the Irish Parliament was composed largely of members for rotten boroughs, and corruptly controlled by a ruling minority, it was not surprising that Charles did not find himself entertained by high flights of oratory; he was startled to see a great many ladies in the gallery, which suggested that parliamentary sessions were social rather than rhetorical occasions.

Charles might be able to report that the 'unnatural rebellion' against his own constitution had been put down, and that conciliatory and lenient measures would, he hoped, prevent any chance of it breaking out again, but in the State of Ireland things were still far from settled. There had been talk of the militia returning to England, but Charles realized that this was unlikely:

I believe our motions depend a good deal on Buckingham who has as yet regulated everything tho' junior to our great man, he is a kind of God with Government, and if he chooses to remain in the Park all the winter where he has settled himself & sons with their wives, no doubt we shall attend his pleasure.

The Warwickshire colonel was as ineffectual as ever; as Charles wrote to his family:

It does not surprise me that I should never have had a call or a message from the most noble the Marquis of Hertford etc, etc since my confinement.

But even the omnipotent Buckingham could not control the activities of the French, and on 25 August, Charles had picked up rumours of an enemy landing in Mayo or Sligo,

with reports of numbers varying from five to fifteen hundred. In fact there were about nine hundred French under General Humbert, who arrived too late to give much help to the rebels, though they were initially successful in surprising General Lake at Castlebar. Owing to the 'ill behaviour' of the Kilkenny militia they defeated him and took seven cannon, together with prisoners, including the Bishop of Killala:

Lord Cornwallis is now [29 August] at Athlone and round the town on the most beautiful hills in the world are encamped about 8000 men. Our Detachment of 800 of Bucks & Warwicks at present form the left flank. We pitched last night after a fatiguing march of 20 English miles... I hope if these *Parlez vous* stay for us, the little English will have some share, there never was so fine a Battalion as we make. It is a fine new lively Scene, & the country beautiful... I am now lying under the shade of our canvass enjoying the finest day & the finest view in the world & sleep so well with my blanket & great coat, that I begin to think a bed a very superfluous invention.

Charles suspected that his family would know more about events in Ireland than he did himself, even though he was 'within 500 Yards of the Lord Lieutenant'.<sup>1</sup> He seemed to have been kept in the dark about the plan for counter-attacking the French; he only knew that General Lake, who said: '... in my hearing that he is the most miserable being alive', had withdrawn to join Cornwallis, who was 'much hurt by the first disaster of the army'. The French success was attributed to the fact that they had practised sharp shooting in loose order, while the Irish militia had reserved no fire and were charged while reloading. Cornwallis was at any rate determined not to attack until he was 'absolutely certain of every man'.

On 31 August, Charles's letter was headed 'Camp near Ballinamore' in the county of Roscommon:

<sup>1</sup> In a fragment of Charles's diary which is preserved, Lord Cornwallis was reported as putting up during this campaign 'at the nearest cottage to the camp, he had his chair with him, being subject to the Gout, but in no other respect indulged in any Luxuries above his inferior officers'.

... a dreary uninhabited country. I have only seen two or three houses these two days, we provide for 2 or 3 days at a time, and live like Princes with our knife & tin cup. I feel no inconvenience except much passion at the insects when I lay down. Am now regaling myself on a capital hard egg some biscuit & buttermilk, which one of my corporals has been kind enough to walk 3 miles for — it is by no means an unpleasant life, in fine weather. If the Enemy waits at Castlebar we are about 3 easy marches from them & I can't conceive they will attempt resistance, as to the Rebels, the more they have the more confusion they will be in...

On 3 September, Charles thought that the French, if they were still at Castlebar, could not be more than two easy marches from the English force, which

... was now a formidable army of upwards of ten thousand in three brigades, we are the left of the first.

Of the French forces he knew little; like everybody else he feared that the contingent which had arrived was the vanguard of a large army. In fact General Humbert's army was now only about 800 strong, and on 8 September it surrendered with the honours of war.

On 11 August Charles had written:

I don't think either Men or Officers of the English militia are at all popular here & much love is not lost between the two Countries ... I believe the words Catholic and Protestant have much more to do with it than people in general imagine.

But in spite of this deep-rooted enmity, after the failure of the rebellion Union became inevitable. Betrayed by the French who had promised so much but in fact sent only three small expeditions while Bonaparte satisfied his ambition by conquest in the East, the rebels suffered another blow in the capture of Tone aboard the *Hoché*, one of the ships of a squadron overpowered at Lough Swilly. Tone committed suicide to escape a public hanging, and with him died the hopes of the Irish patriots. Back in Dublin the following January Charles wrote:

We hear of nothing but the union. The unpopularity of the measure in this place is hardly to be conceived ... I do not know how great a majority bribery can produce.

The Protestants were in favour of union because they knew that in a reformed Irish Parliament the Catholics would inevitably gain the ascendancy:

... but I should think there will be very strong Opposition within the house, & without we are threatened with Mobs, etc, etc, it would be rather an glorious cause to get a broken head in ... Our great Lord is in a great fright & thinks we shall be thumped about — our great Lady too fine for Dublin, & stays at home.

Charles himself was doubtful about the union:

... it appears to be foolish to irritate this most turbulent nation any more than is absolutely necessary ... with that force of venal Irishman he [the Minister] will be too strong for anyone to attempt resistance to any measures, & there will be an end to the remnant of independence in the English Parliament.

On Wednesday night, the 23rd, Charles described the excitement caused by the passing of the union by a majority of only one:

This is regarded as a complete victory by the Antiumionists, & of course the measure at present will drop. The Speaker being against the Union & of course having no vote, makes the numbers in reality even. The Joy of this place is unspeakable, a general Illumination is now blazing, and patrols going about to prevent any rioting, but the people seem perfectly quiet & peaceable ... Mr Barrington very illiberally attacked the English Militia, saying that they came over with no other intent but to force down the measure, which I am sure not one of them had ever heard of. People who were anxious for it, predict all sorts of evil from the turn it has taken. I cannot think it policy to force a measure contrary to the general sense, which I think may now be pretty well ascertained, as certainly the constituents of none of those members who voted against it, were for it. But many of the constituents of those who voted for it, were against it. I believe no stone was left unturned, and no itching Palm unfelt, but it is strange that [the] Ministry should be so deceived

in their calculations; for they clearly expected a very large majority . . . Our Peer is much disappointed & perhaps thinks his Irish Redundancy of wealth not quite so safe in his pocket as if the Union took place . . . It surely is a great joke to talk about Irish independence. I am extremely happy as an English individual, that we are to have no unnecessary quantity of Paddies imported for the present. This failure will save the E. Parliament some trouble.

Amidst the chaos and excitement of Irish debates, Charles began to think sadly of home; his family had spent part of the summer months at Weymouth for the good of Sophy's health, but they were now back at Walton:

. . . while your whole county should be in mourning for the absence of their beaux & sollicitous about the fate of their gallant soldiers, you do nothing but dance & riot in every quarter of your dissipated country, & our sisters gallop about every field, & jigget down the middle of every drawing room, without one spark of affection or remembrance of their exiled brethren . . . I am only afraid, that if ever we return among you, we shall be totally forgotten, or treated as Irish Louts unfit for the polished society of Warwickshire lasses.

Charles felt sceptical about the hopes of a lasting peace for Ireland:

An undisturbed country Life, neutrality in Politics, family comforts, society without riot, & all that English men of that rank that is between Poverty & Magnificence can enjoy, are blessings for ever unknown to this Island, where every man's mind is starting from his Eye, his Eye from his head, most mens Judgement hasty & therefore wrong and every mans hand ready to support what he conceives his own important Opinion.

He had, however, a great admiration for Cornwallis:

It is curious to observe the calmness of the Ld Lieut amidst all the hubbub & confusion. I had the honor of dining at the Castle a day or two ago, & never saw a more cheerful good natured man — it was more like the hospitable table of a country Gentleman than the State of a Viceroy. I believe it is essentially necessary that he

should continue here, as he damps the spirit of party & faction & keeps down the animosity & ambition of the two great families.

The tact and good humour of Cornwallis, together with Pitt's support in the English Parliament and many other factors, helped to carry the day for union, which became law in May 1800. By that time Charles was back in England. An outline of his life, written by his wife in 1823, just after he died — 'For my children when old enough' — describes how he left the regiment soon after its return to England in 1799:

. . . on some disgust . . . at the management of the Col. the late Ld Hertford. A good deal of fatigue in Ireland, some of it voluntary in the gaieties & late hours of Dublin, impaired his health, which had never been stout . . . He had several severe illnesses the year after his return from Ireland, & was unhappy as well as ill. Our attachment commenced that year & there were obstacles which harassed him.

It seems that Charles had always been prone to headaches; his father wrote in 1793 at the time of the election:

We din'd yesterday about fourscore in a Hot Room at the Warwick Arms which Charles did not bear so well as I did for it made his head ach.

His illness in Ireland was the prelude to a life of ill-health, of asthma and gout, necessitating frequent journeys to Bath and seaside towns. His wife Marianne wrote:

In 1801 & 2 he continued to fail more & more in health till Nov. 1802 he was ordered by Sir H. Halford to a foreign climate, & set out with Capt. Philip Wodehouse in the Resistance frigate to go to Naples . . . but before he reached Gibraltar he was so very seriously ill that he was landed there without a hope of life. General Barnet & the D. of Kent (the Governor) shewed him much attention, the former was truly fraternal. In the Spring of 1803 he was able to remove to Lisbon but was shortly almost as ill as ever, & spent the Summer in extreme suffering at Cintra, where Mr Charles Mordaunt joined him & was a great comfort: in Oct: they sailed in a Lisbon packet for England, were taken by a French privateer &

carried into Vigo; the history of their adventures at that place was very *amusing* & I only lament I never got it written down. From Vigo they went on mules to Oporto, a wonderful exertion in his state of health, from thence they got a passage home in a wretched merchant vessel & after a tedious & stormy voyage they got landed with difficulty at Weymouth. He was shortly after able to travel towards London & spent his first Sunday at Slisbury where he had the joy of attending the Cathedral Service. . . Shortly after he put himself under the care of Dr Bree at Birmingham, & his progress was wonderful & rapid.

Charles was elected for the county in 1804 on the death of Sir George Shuckburgh, and made his first speech in Parliament in April 1805 in opposition to a tax on iron:

. . . it was very much admired both for matter & manner & many members visited his father the next day to compliment him on the occasion.

According to Marianne he was an able and elegant public speaker who might have spoken more frequently in Parliament 'but for a degree of sensitive shyness'. In public life he was 'never perhaps sufficiently attached to its duties', but his wife saw him as a character of the liveliest impulses, who enjoyed reading and seizing on ideas, but took less delight in reflection:

. . . he seized the beauties of nature with the accuracy & rapidity which his drawings shew, & the enjoyment of nature, from that in the commonest walk in the farm to that of Alpine sublimity, was the greatest enjoyment he had, excepting that of domestic affection.

Mariannel was the daughter of William Holbech, of Farnborough, near Banbury. She had, among others, a much-loved brother, Henry, and a sister, Emma, considerably younger than herself, who died tragically in childhood, much

<sup>1</sup> She was christened Mary Ann after twin sisters Mary and Ann who had died previously in infancy, and only later adopted the spelling Marianne. Oppé, in his catalogue of English drawings at Windsor Castle, where there are four examples of her work, praises her 'well-chosen subjects, assured and easy drawing and delicate washes [which] are excellent examples of the amateur skill of the period, and they show the advantage of a restricted medium'.

lamented by Marianne — '7 years old and my little pupil'. Her pleasures were from the earliest years both intellectual and artistic:

. . . at 11 until 14 a kind simple minded governess. . . at 15 the first vivid pleasure in Shakespeare (Hen 5) & the beginnings of painstaking independent self-education, great enjoyment in the sense of opening & improving faculties, many pleasant readings. . . . After 17 at times dissipated by society. . . but not engrossed by it, & generally valuing liberty of mind & time above every pleasure.

In her diary, Marianne wrote that when still in her teens she enjoyed 'much friendship at Walton', and when she was twenty-two the attachment began which was to end in marriage. The improvement in Charles's health made him able to think of marriage in 1806, but plans that year were frustrated by the death first of his only brother John and then of his father.

Charles and Marianne were married at Farnborough in January 1807; 'our mutual attachment', Marianne wrote after her husband's death, 'was no common one'. Their happiness was marred by the ill-health of both, but adversity bred great affection. Charles's sense of humour must have helped him to surmount some of his difficulties, while Marianne's deep piety and years of probation under 'the Divine Teacher' taught her to submit to the trials she had to undergo:

. . . without them what would my after life have been? with them how mitigated every trial, how enhanced every joy.

She prayed frequently for strength to face her own failing eyesight, her mother's state of nerves. Her exquisite water colours bear witness to her talent in the artistic field, and her list of pious and literary reading shows how seriously she applied herself to the improvement of her mind. She revealed that she even had a 'dab' at chemistry and mineralogy. Her own experience taught her the fallacy of the current belief that women were far better without too much intellectual excitement:

I once doubted whether a much refined & cultivated education in women conduced to happiness, often it seemed to me that in *their* world, they were better received, more generally acceptable & as equal to their common duties, without it, but under experience of the great & lengthened trials of life, I am quite enlightened on the subject & perceive that every power of the mind can be called in at different moments & will conduce to good & happiness in proportion to its sound & solid cultivation.

Sensitive and deeply introspective, Marianne poured her thoughts out on to paper – her anxieties about her children, her prayers for patience, her remembrances of childhood, her good resolutions for old age – ‘I should like to remember not to fidget away the precious time of the young’ – and her sorrow following Charles’s death. He had been grievously ill for four years and on 30 May 1823 after a particularly bad asthmatic attack she knew that the end was near. He seemed resigned, almost happy; at length:

... he leaned heavily back on my right arm & all was over.

Marianne found room in her heart only for gratitude that his sufferings were finished:

... by the blessings of God may I so continue!