

**LIFE AND TRAVELS OF
JAMES FISHER, AN
AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649343027

Life and travels of James Fisher, an autobiography by James Fisher

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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James F. Fisher

LIFE AND TRAVELS

OF

JAMES FISHER,

*Sergeant-Major Scots Greys, Military Train, Army Service Corps,
British Army.*

An Autobiography.

TORONTO:

THE COPP, CLARK COMPANY, LIMITED.




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JAMES FISHER,

*Sergeant-Major Scots Greys, Military Train, Army Service Corps,
British Army.*

Member of the Army and Navy Veterans.

 WAS born in a small village called Carnbee, in the County of Fife, north of the Frith of Forth, in Scotland, on 26th May, 1836. When I was one year old, my father, with his family, removed to a farm called Gleghornie, near North Berwick Law, in East Lothian, afterwards to Beanston, near Haddington, thereafter to Luggate, further east in the same county. When at the latter place, I remember, I was about five years old and was sent to a parish school called Luggate Burn. When I attained my sixth year, my mother died, which event cast a gloom over the family consisting of three brothers and one sister, of whom I was third oldest. After remaining at

Luggate till I was about nine years of age my father removed to Beilgrange, a distance of a few miles. I remained at the same school, and the schooling then cost the parent something, as the wages then were far below what they are now. It was not as it is now ; one could almost do as he pleased so long as Mr. Dominie received his fees, which seemed to be all that he cared much for.

At the age of ten I was sent to work on the estate of Whittinghame, in East Lothian, belonging to Mr. Balfour. My duties consisted in assisting to clean walks and carriage roads and in planting young trees. While at work one day, Mr. Balfour selected me from a number of boys and gave me employment in his mansion house, a very beautiful structure. I remained there a short time and then I entered the services of Lord Abercromby, at Airthry Castle, in Stirlingshire, as page to her ladyship. I travelled with this family for two years through a considerable part of Scotland, visiting some historic places, such as Edinburgh Castle, Stirling Castle, Bannockburn, Blairgowrie, Perth, and several other ancient places and cities of interest. When sixteen years of age I left his lordship's service, having made up my mind to see some of the world.

Not having much money to start with, and having read of people working their passages to foreign lands on board vessels I thought that Liverpool might be the best place to start from. I therefore left Airthry Castle for Glasgow by train and, having arrived there, took steamer for Liverpool. During the voyage I happened quite accidentally to make the acquaintance of a young man a little my senior, and in course of conversation he impressed on me the wisdom of being very cautious whom I made any friendship with as there was sometimes rather a bad lot on board vessels and it might be too on this one, and if I had any money, as well as outer articles of value, to lock them up in my box. I took this piece of what seemed to me good advice and everything went on very nicely. I did not turn sea-sick but enjoyed my trip.

We arrived at Liverpool all right and my young friend kindly volunteered to assist me with my box, he taking hold of one handle and I the other. Not being very heavy we carried it thus to the nearest hotel, just outside of the Saint Clarence dock, and lodged it in the waiting-room. Seeing the landlady I asked her to be allowed to leave my box till I came back, as I was going across the river for a little, and she said that it would be all right. I then left the hotel

with the young man who accompanied me to the ferry wharf, but then in the confusion I lost sight of him, and not paying much attention I took a ticket for Birkenhead, and then went to the dock where the vessel named "The Indian Ocean" was preparing for a voyage to Melbourne with emigrants. After some conversation with the captain, he agreed to take me on board as assistant steward. I now recrossed to the Liverpool side of the Mersey and made straight to the hotel for my box that I might convey it to the vessel, but to my utter astonishment I could not find my box, and the landlady told me that the young man who had assisted me with it had come and taken it away on a cab, saying to her that it was his. I was perfectly thunderstruck; five hundred miles from home, in a strange land and amongst strange people, and all that I now had in the world was what I stood upright in. I lost all as well as the little money I had, as I took his advice and had it locked up in my box. I gave information to the police and after a few days searching in and around Liverpool, the vessel had sailed for her destination, leaving me behind. This was my first misfortune but it did me a great deal of good for in after life it was always uppermost in my mind.