

**SKETCHES OF A  
SOLDIER'S  
LIFE IN INDIA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649490721

Sketches of a Soldier's Life in India by Thomas Quinney

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**THOMAS QUINNEY**

**SKETCHES OF A  
SOLDIER'S  
LIFE IN INDIA**



---

**SKETCHES**

OF

**A SOLDIER'S LIFE IN INDIA.**

BY

**STAFF-SERGEANT THOMAS QUINNEY,**

HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE.

---

**GLASGOW:**

**DAVID ROBERTSON, BOOKSELLER TO HER MAJESTY.  
EDINBURGH: OLIVER & BOYD.**

**MDCCLXIII.**

ac

THE  
VICISSITUDES OF A SOLDIER'S LIFE IN INDIA  
FORM THE SUBJECT OF THE ACCOMPANYING PAGES,  
DEDICATED TO  
MY COMPANIONS IN ARMS,  
AS A HUMBLE TRIBUTE FOR THE MANY HAPPY DAYS  
I SPENT AMONG THEM,  
FERVENTLY TRUSTING  
THAT THEY MAY BE READ WITH INTEREST  
BY THOSE OF MATURE YEARS,  
AND  
PROVE A SOURCE OF AMUSEMENT, NOT WITHOUT PROFIT,  
TO THE YOUNG AND ASPIRING SOLDIER,  
BY THEIR HUMBLE SERVANT  
THE AUTHOR.

512854

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

SKETCHES  
OF  
A SOLDIER'S LIFE IN INDIA.

---

BEFORE proceeding to relate the following incidents of a soldier's life in India, it may not be considered superfluous to offer a few remarks relative to my parentage, &c.

My father, John Quinney, is a native of the county of Essex, England. He was a soldier in the Essex or Burgoyne's Light Dragoons, and proceeded with his regiment to Scotland about the year 1796. He was quartered for some time at Haddington, where he married my mother, a native of North Berwick, in the county of Haddington. He subsequently accompanied his regiment to Ireland at the time of the Rebellion, and at the close of that eventful period his regiment was disbanded. At the earnest entreaties of my mother he returned to Scotland, and took up his abode at North Berwick. I may here add that he never afterwards left Scotland, with the exception of about five years that he served in the Royal Navy, into which he was pressed at a time when men were much wanted. In the vicinity of the above mentioned little town I was born in the year 1807.



The name Quinney may strike the reader as being rather uncommon; indeed, with the exception of those in immediate connection with me by relationship, I am not aware of any person of the name in existence. However, I have succeeded in tracing it as far back as Shakespeare's time, when I find it used as the name of an individual who married the bard's second daughter Judith; and it is supposed that we are all the offspring of this marriage, the truth of which would appear to be partially borne out by the fact that the name Judith is still retained in the family. The scenes of my boyhood were such as are common with others similarly situated, yet I possessed some peculiarities of character. I was noted, for example, amongst my companions, as being a most expert climber of trees. There were none too lofty for me to ascend. The highest in the neighbourhood had me frequently perched among their topmost branches. Diminutive trees were beneath my notice. I was also particularly partial to very aged people, and nothing gave me more pleasure than to assist them in any little way that lay in my power, and to listen to their tales about the days of yore, the strange dresses they wore in their youth, &c. My ardour to assist the aged sometimes led me to commit strange blunders. For instance,—seeing one day an old woman struggling hard at a well to raise a tub of water to her head, I ran to her aid, and gave the tub an unguarded hoist which brought it upon her head bottom upmost. It is needless to say that the poor creature was drenched to the skin.

Being somewhat of a contemplative disposition, my attention was much engaged in endeavouring to select

a trade or calling by which I might be enabled to pass comfortably through the world, and secure a competency for old age. This was not an easy matter, as I had acquired a distaste for manual labour, and felt a strong desire to see the world—thinking, in spite of the oft-repeated proverb, “A rolling stone gathers no moss,” that visiting places less densely peopled than my own country, would probably afford additional facilities for acquiring the bent of my inclinations. I had frequently noticed that many who had laboured hard for a long series of years were in anything but an enviable position, having too frequently no other dependence, when the infirmities of age obliged them to relinquish their accustomed labour, than a small pittance from the parish. Not but that I am disposed to come to the conclusion that much of the poverty and consequent misery of the working classes arises, in a great measure, from acts of imprudence. With many the great end and aim is present enjoyment, the future being considered so unimportant as to be worth comparatively little reflection. This is a circumstance which has not failed to arrest the notice and occupy the attention of some of our most eminent philanthropists. They see and they deplore that while health and strength remain, the working classes, with a few exceptions, recklessly spend their earnings, making no provision whatever for the future. And, again, in the higher walks of life, we find old age clinging with a death-like grasp to wealth, as though the period usually allotted to human life had just commenced, instead of drawing towards its close. But without further digression I proceed with my narrative.

I had by this time come to the determination of

entering the army, calculating that, by this step, I should both be in a position to gratify my taste for sight-seeing, and also to secure a provision for my declining years.

Matters of a nature it is unnecessary here to mention, prevented me following the bent of my inclination so early as I could have wished; but fortune at length opened up a favourable opportunity, of which I eagerly availed myself. Leaving the place which gave me birth, I wended my way to Edinburgh, on the 28th September, 1826. Having rested and refreshed myself that night, I proceeded the following morning to the High Street, where I found soldiers from the various regiments recruiting. I felt rather diffident in making known my intentions, but I at last threw aside my reserve, and agreed to join the Honourable East India Company's service. I was at once marched off to the sergeant, who put me through a summary examination, and then placed in my hand the lucky shilling. We next adjourned to a public house, where I was introduced to a number of young men similarly situated, and who I was given to understand were to be my future companions in arms. Many of these young men belonged to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and consequently possessed a degree of low cunning to which I was a stranger. They soon discovered that I was not without money, which they made me launch out pretty freely, in the shape, as they were pleased to term it, of paying my footing.

On the following morning I was taken before the surgeon, and thence to the magistrate, where I was sworn in to serve His Majesty and the Honourable East India Company. By this time I had just seen enough of my new companions to teach me the