

# **RAMBLING RECOLLECTIONS**

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Rambling recollections by Pearse Morrison

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**PEARSE MORRISON**

**RAMBLING  
RECOLLECTIONS**





*Yours sincerely,  
Pearse Morrison*

*Morrison*  
With the Author's kind regards  
Pearse Morrison  
7/3/08.

# RAMBLING RECOLLECTIONS

BY

PEARSE MORRISON

MEMBER OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF LONDON



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## PREFACE

I HAVE reached my anecdotage after many years of hard work and varied experience, and my friends listen very kindly to my stories of the changes that have come to London since I entered it in 1859. They do more than listen: they suggest that it would be no bad idea to set my recollections down in book form and seek to interest a wider circle. I have done so; and present them to you in all modesty, without claiming for them any of the special interest that attaches to the life of soldier or statesman, or any of the gifts that belong of right to the life story of a man of letters. My little record is of changing times, of disappearing landmarks, of men and women who were much esteemed by your fathers when they went to the play, of colleagues who have worked by my side on the City Corporation, of which I have been a member since 1878. I have set it all down in simple fashion, as one man speaks to another. If such a plain tale can please you I shall indeed be pleased; and, if it cannot, I must be content with the pleasure I have derived from recalling old times, old associations, and old friends.

PEARSE MORRISON.



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# RAMBLING RECOLLECTIONS

## CHAPTER I

### VERY EARLY DAYS



ON the wall of my study hangs an old wooden model of a flint-lock musket, of pattern that must have been obsolete these forty years or more. I preserve it carefully, for it is associated with my very earliest recollection—the Chartist meeting on Kennington Common on 10th April 1848. I was a very little boy then, living on the Terrace at Kennington, and my mother gave me the wooden model which my father's foreman had made some time previously. As though it were five or six years ago instead of fifty or sixty, I can remember walking up and down the balcony of our house on the Terrace, quite prepared to protect the household from the attack of the thousands who had flocked out of London to hear Feargus O'Connor.

Naturally enough, I did not know what the crowd wanted. I was too young to have heard of the Charter which was signed by nearly six million people, and demanded Manhood Suffrage, Annual Parliaments, Vote by Ballot, Abolition of the Proper Qualification (*sic*) for Members of Parliament, Payment of Members, and Division of the Country into equal Electoral Districts. The crowd came, I saw O'Connor's six-horsed car, and heard the noise of the speeches and protests while I marched up and down. No attack was made upon the Terrace; perhaps my determined appearance—I was four years old—and my wooden musket saved the situation. In any case, I thought so then.

I have had an interesting letter from my old friend and brother deputy Mr E. E. Ashby, who lives on the Terrace at Kennington. "I remember what a scare there was," he writes. "There were cannon at the bridge ends, and the position was inspected by the Duke of Wellington himself early in the morning before the meeting. People living in the main road between London Bridge, West Bridge, and the Common were so frightened that they