

# Leeds Mercury

Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1865

## MISERABLE CAMP-FOLLOWERS

There is around every barrack and camp an outlying circle of misery and sin, a haunting spectre which holds up its withered hands in mockery of all the tinsel. It has never been otherwise; for wherever large bodies of men congregate, these elements of wretched creatures will be found, whose life is a long sin and unceasing misery. It is the old story, a poor girl is attracted by a soldier when the troops come to her town. When he marches away, she leaves all-friends, fortune, and good name to follow him; little recking of the pains that lie before her. Soon the trifle of money is spent, and then the clothes go piece by piece. When money and clothes are gone, what shall she do? She cannot dash through the ring of scorn already surrounding her, to go home and drink the bitterest dregs of her cup in the rebuke of her own kindred. The man she has followed lovingly and unwisely, bad not means to support her; yet she cannot starve.

Gradually the outcast sinks lower and lower, till she probably ends her days by the side of a barrack wall, or on the leeseide of a bush at the Curragh. Of the soldiers who should share the blame of this, men are ready enough to remember how they ace in a manner cut off from all domestic joys or pleasures and have as a class very little forethought. Their daily bread is always found them; whether in sickness or in health they need never know what a sharp thorn hunger is. And so, being thoughtless, the soldier does not prevent women from following him from town to town, and from barracks to camp. But if guilty so far, he is not wilfully hard-hearted. I have known many a soldier go to the captain of his troop, and getting a couple of months' pay in advance, spend it on sending a poor girl back to her friends. I know also that for one or two months after a regiment has come to a fresh station there are weekly subscriptions made up among the men of each troop for the same purpose.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.  
A WEEKLY JOURNAL.  
CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

Therefore, I am sure that if a way could be shown for lessening the misery among those unhappy victims, every soldier in the army would give what he could afford. If each man would give a week's pay to commence with, and a day's pay yearly afterwards, those who had homes to go to, and relations willing to receive them, could be sent home whenever they were willing to return, while the others would at least be provided with a roof to put their heads under.  
***Dicken's "All the Year Round."***



**The Curragh Wren**



**Curragh Camp - 1855**