

HALB4-1940

CRAUFORD OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

(Contributed by the Rev. H. F. FULFORD WILLIAMS)

It is unnecessary to insist upon the close associations that link the cemetery of St. George's Church in Lisbon with the British soldiers who fought and died during the Peninsular War, for they are matter of common knowledge. Nevertheless it may be unknown to many folk that in its precincts were laid the remains of the only daughter of Major-General Robert Crauford, of the Light Division, that famous force whose exploits are among the most cherished traditions of the British and Portuguese armies. Daring to a point of such rashness that even Wellington on occasion censured him for his conduct, his operations on the Coa and Agueda in 1810 were brilliantly successful and his force — he was then only a Brigadier — was increased to a division by the addition of two picked regiments of Portuguese *Caçadores*. He fell, mortally wounded, as he stood on the glacis of Ciudad Rodrigo directing the attack of the stormers of the Light Division, to die four days later and be buried in the breach of the fortress that was so stoutly won. The monument in St. Paul's jointly commemorates both Crauford and Mackinnon, also killed at the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, but for a full appreciation of his qualities one must turn to the pages of Napier. One of the quickest and most brilliant, if not the very first, of Wellington's generals, he had a fiery temper, which rendered him a difficult man to deal with, but to the day of his death Crauford possessed the confidence and affection of his men to an extraordinary degree.

In the Register of Baptisms of St. George's appears an entry:

«William Robert, son of Robert and Mary Frances Crauford, Lt. Col. British Army. Baptised 3 January 1805. Born 25th December 1804.»

As from 1801 to 1805 he sat in Parliament for East Retford, this entry makes it appear probable that Crauford knew and visited Portugal before Napoleon began his campaigns in the Iberian peninsula. His daughter's tombstone carries the following inscription :

Sacred to the Memory of

LOUISA MARY FRANCES

Wife of the Revd. Robert Farquharson
of Langstone, in the County of Dorset,
and only daughter of the late Major-
General ROBERT CRAUFORD, of the Light
Division of the British Army, who fell
at the assault of Ciudad Rodrigo in
January 1812.

She died at Lisbon, 12th October 1833.
Aged 30 years.
