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The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809-28

William Wheeler

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The Letters of Private Wheeler, 1809-28 William Wheeler
This book is a record of a soldier's experiences in Wellington's army, including the Battle of Waterloo, during one of the most exciting periods of British military history. The letters are those that Private Wheeler wrote home to his family during his 19 years of service in the Army from 1809 to 1828. From the time of the ill-fated Walcheren expedition, through the horrors of the Peninsular campaign, at the Battle of Waterloo and on foreign service in the Mediterranean after the Napoleonic wars were over, Wheeler served as an infantryman. Besides Waterloo, in which he describes seeing the massacred guardsmen in the farmhouse at Hougemont, Wheeler gives accounts of famous occasions such as the "Forlorn Hope" attack on Badajoz in the Peninsular War; the battle of Nivelle at which he was severely wounded; and the Siege of Flushing. Throughout his letters, Wheeler also gives lively character studies of his comrades and his officers. He tells of the brutal floggings which were then a regular feature of Army discipline. He describes the operations of field surgery without anaesthetic; the shootings for desertion and even drunkenness with the whole regiment looking on.

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