

For the Volunteer Review.

RANK AND FILE.

Sir,—I am a soldier—a British soldier!—I have seen some service; I entered the army for "honor and glory;" I was young then and had my illusions; I have them still, although I am getting old. Yes, sir, I have spent the golden summer of my days in the service of my country—among the lowly—with the "Rank and File;" I have seen sights in my time; I have shed my blood—perhaps the blood of others in that service. I have studied a page in the book of nature, which few have cared to scan, and I venture, notwithstanding, to address you, for the pen is an awkward instrument in my hand. There may be some among your readers who would like to know the story of those who wear away their lives in defence of a home they seldom or never see. I can tell that story, not so well, perhaps, as it should be told, for I have been "dragged up" in a rough school.

"But, by your gracious favour,
I will a round unvarnished tale deliver."

I do not remember my parents, and have only known one person who did: that person said they were unfortunate; how I did not care to know, for I owe them nothing but an existence, full of care and toil, with few joys and many sorrows. But it is not of myself that I would write, but of those who are more deserving of notice. Those who having passed forever from the scene cannot be pained by a repetition of their follies or their wrongs. Down in the gulf, whither I am fast following, they are at rest. In my knapsack I have a book with their names therein, with notes on the career of each—some are good and pure, and their memory is reflected brightly in my mine, and some bring back a jovial smile of other days, others are strange and dark, and more are wild and terrible. The first whose name occurs to me is one who is best fitted to open this chronicle.

Ernest Trueman was but a youth when I first met him. I had but lately returned from the East, and with my furlough and a few pounds was striving to enjoy a month's holiday. I met him in a green lane, not far from a large English town, his pale, toilworn look so sad to see—upon the young claimed my sympathy, and I addressed him; he shrank from me and would have passed on, but I kept by his side, and at length, though I did not win his confidence, I overcame his fear and dislike. That he was poor I knew at a glance; that he was well and gently reared I soon discovered. We spoke of foreign lands, of which he had read much, and I told him of many countries in which I had travelled, and I soon found that in mind and education he was far above his apparent station. When we drew near the city I asked him to come with me to my lodgings, where we could refresh ourselves after our walk. "No," he replied; "and as he spoke a sad change came over his face; "you are very kind. I have a sister who is ill, and she must be expecting me now, but to-morrow, if you like, I will visit you at this hour." I did not seek to lift the curtain of his sorrow, and we parted.

True to appointment he came the following day, and I was more than ever struck with his weary, hopeless appearance. I had suffered myself, and I longed to cheer and comfort him. This I strove to do, and was gladly rewarded by a faint smile from his pale lips or a passing gleam from his bright but sunken eyes. At length, he said—"I had to tell my sister of our meeting, and she has asked to see you. She cannot live long I know," and the tears sprang to his eyes; "and I fear it will be a bitter revival of memories to her and a sad introduction to you; but if you will come with me I will tell you our story on the way." I consented,

and after we had got into the street he began: "My father was a wealthy gentleman, like his father's before him for many generations, when a law-suit that had dragged its slow length for many years, and which had come down to him with his property, was, one fine day, decided against him. All he possessed was lost—nor did he long survive; and I was left with my young and delicate sister to battle with the world for life as well as I could. I should have told you that before misfortune overtook us my sister was engaged to be married to the son of a near neighbor of ours, who was, and is still, an officer in the army. She loved him deeply, tenderly, as only the pure and good can love. But when our wealth and greatness was gone, he wrote a cold, unfeeling letter, breaking off their engagement, this, with the total wreck of our fortunes, and the death of our beloved father has so shattered my poor dear Emma, that she has been gradually falling ever since; and the time is not far distant when the last thing that was left me in this world to love and protect shall be taken away. God give me strength to bear it." He ceased, and bowing his head low, passed through the door of his sorrowful home. In a small room with a low ceiling and but one window, sat his lovely sister, she seemed almost infantile in her wan and shadowy beauty, and instantly I felt that her brother was right—she was not long for earth. She welcomed me and bade me sit beside her. The evening flew away, night came, and I left the brother and sister alone, with their great love and heavy sorrow; but never since that time has that pale, beautiful vision left my heart. I know, for she told me, that her brother toiled daily to keep her in food and shelter, and that the struggle was hard and bitter for one so young and weak, but there were hopes of him getting more suitable employment, and they might be happy yet.

A week went by, and one evening, when she seemed better and more hopeful than I had ever seen her, a sudden change came upon her, and there she lay in her brother's arms, breathing away the last faint whispers of her young and sorrowful heart. She made him promise that should he ever meet him who so basely deserted her, that he would not injure him—nay, that he would do him good, if possible, so would she love and pray for him in heaven. We buried her far away in the field, beneath the shade of an old, ivied church; and when we returned to his solitary home, he took my hand and said: "I have now no friends, no home; you know my sister, you will be my friend, you are a soldier, I will be a soldier, too, take me with you away to other lands, or I shall die!"

Years passed away. The pale, heart-weary boy had grown into a tall and handsome man. He was grave but not morose; reserved, but not proud; and every one loved him for his kindness and his truth. Shortly after we had joined our regiment, our Captain exchanged, and a new officer commanded us. I soon saw that Ernest knew him, and guessed who he was. Suddenly, in the midst of peace, mutiny and rebellion burst around us, and we were left a lonely detachment, far away in the midst of merciless foes. I need not say how we fought or how we suffered; that story was told long ago. At last, all hope of relief having disappeared, only two alternatives were left us, either to fight our way as best we could to the nearest post in possession of our friends, or to perish where we were. The former was decided upon. Our arrangements having been completed, we went stealthily forth under the cover of night. All went well for a few hours, until our absence was discovered, when a hot pursuit commenced. Never shall I forget the horrors of that dismal march. Our numbers at last became so thinned that further resistance was impossible, and it was decided that we should separate, and each secure his safety as best he might. All our officers were killed except the Captain, and he, wounded in several places, was no longer able to cope with the difficulties of his position. He called the men about him,

and told them they were at liberty to go; but not one of that devoted band would desert him. At length our enemies, secure in overwhelming numbers, rushed down upon us one day as we were seeking a short repose by the side of a river. Valiantly we stood shoulder to shoulder, defending our lives; a bleeding, but unconquered handful, we were driven headlong into the river. To me the rest was a dream of delirium and horrors, until I awoke weeks after in the hospital among friends. Then I learnt the sad sequel to the history of my friend Ernest. Upon the day which had seen the close of our eventful march, and the last poor remnant had disappeared, Ernest Trueman bore down and across the stream the almost senseless body of his Captain, escaping unhurt the storm of bullets sent after them, until the nature of the ground enabled him to land with comparative safety. For many long nights after he carried his wounded officer through gloom and suffering, and during the sultry hours of day watched and tended on him like a brother. At last when his efforts were about to be successful he saw the approach of an English force, and choosing a quiet spot he awaited their coming. The swelling sound of the music which heralded their approach was drawing nearer, when suddenly he was surrounded by his dark and hideous foes. There standing over the body of him who had betrayed her whom he had loved more than all else on earth, he fought madly, desperately, and just as he fell mortally wounded friends were around. He was rescued; he had saved the life of his Captain, but with his own he paid the ransom—thus did Ernest Trueman redeem his promise to his dying sister.

ROYAL VICEROYS.

In a well-penned article, THE VOLUNTEER REVIEW, a few weeks since, advocated the establishment of a line of hereditary vice-roys for our new Confederation, to commence simultaneously therewith, in Her Majesty's second son, Prince Alfred. Loyal in its tone, reasonable in its arguments, and just in its conclusions, that article touched a sympathetic chord in our nature, and drew forth our warmest approval. To have in this country a princely line of regal representatives, ultimately to become British American Kings, is, we contend, in the highest degree desirable. Of its present feasibility, however, there is a question; at all events, before pressing the matter, we could afford to wait till time has somewhat matured colonial union, and rendered certain the value of the position proposed for the Sailor Prince and his posterity; nor would we now advert to it, had not our attention been directed to some remarks thereon in the last issue but two of the 'Cobourg Sun.' These remarks are credited to the 'Recorder,' and are truly of the disreputable type; in republican tendency fully equal to the wish of even the most extreme and virulent democrat; a libel on monarchy; an insult to the institutions of Great Britain.

What does the writer of such language mean? Dares he to insinuate that Queen Victoria does not "administer the law in accordance with the wishes of the people?" That she "rules regardless of justice and liberty?" He will scarcely venture to charge us with such a disposition; then why horson? In what respect would the advisers of a Prince-Viceroy differ from a Noble-Viceroy? What greater power would be in the hands of such a representative of the Sovereign than is possessed by the present one? Is the society of the mother country worse than that of the model republic? Would a comparison between St. James and the White House prove unfavorable to the former? Has Great Britain been worse under the chances of a limited monarchy, than the United States under the uncertainties of popular selection? Let public opinion answer, and with its verdict we can well rest satisfied.—[Colborne Express