

PRIVATE O'FLANAGAN'S BUTTON.

To the Editor of "Our Society:"

The central park of—shall the timorous writer say for fear of libel cases?—Gerolstein presents a proud and pompous spectacle. Gerolstein has just made a declaration of complete and unalterable neutrality, and of course is reviewing its army to show what a warm affection it has for peace.

Next to universal industrial exhibitions, this is the best recognized way of evincing pacific intentions and producing bloody battles. The Cavalry is curvetting, the Infantry is tramping, the Artillery is rumbling—all past the grand stand, illuminated by His Serene Excellency the Hereditary Graf, and the equally Serene Excellency the Hereditary Graffin.

His Serene Excellency is not exhilarated. He is rather used to this kind of thing, being entitled to wear sixty-seven different uniforms belonging to all the armies, navies, and police forces of Europe, Asia, America, and the Sublime Porte. But even an Hereditary Graf must say something now and then if he doesn't want his silence to be interpreted in the "Recorder" next day, and cause the funds to fall to something below zero.

So having a keen eye for the detail of military costume, as a man with so varied a wardrobe should, His Serenity fixes his eagle eye on the Graffin's own Bombadiers which are marching past at the moment, and he indifferently remarks to his commander-in-chief:—

"Why has the sixth private in the third company lost his seventh button?"

A blush suffuses the manly cheeks of all the staff. And in a tone of suppressed fury, with gestures denoting subdued apoplexy, the commander-in-chief addresses his aide-de-camp:—

"A. D. C., clap spurs to your steed, and go ask the General of Brigade why that dastardly private six of the 3rd company lost his 7th button."

In a trice the Martial Mercury has overturned four literary mongers, and has swept down upon the General. In a trice, too, that warrior has used unladylike language and roared:—

"Orderly, go ask the Colonel commanding why that dunder-headed rascal, private six of the 3rd company, has lost his 7th button, and give him a week's shot drill. With march and musical clattering of sabre-taches and clinking of spurs, the orderly is down upon the Colonel, and in his turn the Colonel is wrath, and proclaims the fact emphatically, as Colonels will under provocation:—

"Fly and ask the Major why that villainous rogue, the sixth private of the third company, has lost his unspeakable seventh button. And let him have a fortnight's imprisonment."

There is more clattering and clinking down the column, and the Major is heard to bellow:—

"Orderly, rush to the Captain of the third, and demand why that abominably criminal private six has swallowed his despicable seventh button? Give him a month's hard labor."

The Captain can't answer, but he calls the Sergeant, and orders two months in irons haphazard. The Sergeant calls the Corporal, and adds bread and water, and the Corporal finally accosts Private O'Flanagan:—

"Private O'Flanagan, you've disgraced the army of an historic people and defiled the tombs of your ancestors, if you ever had any. You're to have a week's shot drill, a fortnight's imprisonment, a month's hard labor, two months in irons, and two on bread and water; and after that I'll have you drummed out. Where's your 7th button, you ridiculous wretch, and how did you lose it?"

"Is it lost ye say? and bedad I had only forgotten to button it." And straightway Private O'Flanagan's button reappears.

Then again there is a stir, a clatter, a clinking down the resplendent column. The Sergeant reports the Captain; the Captain enlightens the Major; the Major sends word to the Colonel; the Colonel communicates with the General; the General sends a

message to the Commander-in-Chief; and in a simoon of dust, with a dozen aides-de-camp galloping at his ringing heels, that illustrious warrior sweeps breathlessly down upon his sovereign:—

"Your serene excellency, the 6th private, third company who lost his seventh button."

"Eh! what!" exclaims the potentate who, has seen so many buttons during the last 4 hours that he quite forgets that seventh one of Private O'Flanagan. "Oh! I remember; well, have him shot!"

"But Excellency, he had only forgotten to button his 7th button."

"Oh well then—let me see—make him a Marshall—"

And they say that the army of Gerolstein is mismanaged.

F. L.

Halifax, N. S., Feb. 10th, 1891.

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