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"SOLDIERING IN CANADA"

Title of an Interesting Book by Col. Denison

A Record of Events of Exceeding Interest to Every Canadian.

Remarkable Personal Experiences of the Writer—One of the Ablest Military Experts of the Day.

"SOLDIERING IN CANADA" — By Lieut.-Col. George T. Denison: Morning & Co., publishers.

We cannot help liking Col. Denison's book. In the most artless way, time after time, it indicates what a capital fellow the author is, and always has been. His narrative is charming. He tells of his own achievements and experiences with a disinterested candor that is refreshing and delightful. In him there is no egotism, no self-complacency, but there is an abundance of many frankness that unconsciously made us consider that we were old friends of the colonel's, to whom he was writing the story during an arm-in-arm walk in the garden. He has cultivated the knack of speaking of himself in a manner that is entirely agreeable to the reader, and yet, when the occasion demands, Col. Denison, the author, does not hesitate to back up Col. Denison, the soldier. Whenever this happens, though, it is apparent that justice only is done, which would not be so if he refrained from utilizing his happy facility of using the first personal pronoun as a critic would use the third personal, the colonel's unaffected simplicity is certainly likable. While reading the book one cannot but feel that his candor has done good service to the narrative, for many incidents are told that a more restrained and less truthful writer would have withheld for fear of being considered a person of much vanity. In the most natural way imaginable the colonel raises himself in your esteem so that when the book is closed he rests firmly upon a pinnacle to which few biographers ever find it possible to attain.

The colonel acknowledges that the book consists almost wholly of his own experiences, and the knowledge that has found its way to a very receptive mind during a long period of public life. The law of necessity has certainly had something to do in the control of his life, and that of the Denison family. From the time of Waterloo, probably further back than that, they have been fighters. They were men of the strong loyal stamp, who fought for sovereign and country because they believed it to be their duty as patriots and gentlemen, losing much time and little money thereby, and having, as their motto, always, "Fear God, Honor the King." The distinguishing qualities of the family again came to the surface when the American war of the revolution was fought, that devoted band of United Empire Loyalists from the Eastern States to the wilds of the then little known Canada. Since that time the colonel's ancestors have at hand when rumors of enemies to their country were afoot, and better still, the guns were in their hands and ready to be used whenever the enemy was within striking distance. It would seem as though all the military enthusiasm of the family, all its ardor and ability to command, and all its unswerving, patient loyalty had lived again in the person of the author, who had lived in the time of Louis XIV., would have been the most dashing of cavaliers, and the most captivating of courtiers.

The colonel's military ardor was inherent. It was clearly a part of his mental make-up. When he was a wee bit of a chap, living near New Fort, Toronto, he was captivated by certain sounds that he had not heard before. He did not understand their origin, but the effect upon the child was apparent, and would have been just the same if he had known then, as he knew afterwards, that they were the bugles of the British regulars who were stationed at the fort. Of course this particular feature of his individuality was developed by the love of country which grew with the youth and was strengthened by his subsequent relations and training. It would be impossible to understand without reading the colonel's book what an enthusiasm he is in all things that pertain to military matters. It has been the absorbing passion of his life. His account of the first occasion upon which he saw the corps with which he was afterwards connected afforded an excellent illustration of the future colonel's powers of observation, and the impressionable quality of his mind. He noticed things that the ordinary person would have overlooked, and the whole affair made such an impression upon the youthful spectator that it affected him in his whole subsequent career.

The presence (at the fort) of a British regiment in good condition, says the author, "and splendidly maintained and drilled, made it impossible for a military corps, self-supported, to compete either in numbers, equipment or drill, and naturally comparisons were drawn much to the disadvantage of the latter. The men used to be laughed at and ridiculed to such an extent that it was found much more pleasant to keep out of sight as much as possible and avoid attracting any attention. At this time Bloor street, Toronto, was not opened westwards through the woods, and the upper part of Spadina avenue was cleared, so that a glade or clearance about two or three acres in extent was situated there, surrounded by woods. It was at that time, about 1848 or 1849, a very secluded spot, and it was there, on a summer's evening, I first saw a number of men of the corps with which I was to be connected near

all my life, being drilled by my father. The men had gathered by by-paths to avoid notice. It must have been the strong impressions of my childhood, created by these secluded drillings and the evident desire to avoid the public eye that had an influence upon me all my life." Young Denison became a cornet in his father's troop in 1854. He was gazetted lieutenant in 1855. He was a major when he was 22 and lieutenant-colonel when he was 27. From a physical view-point, the most trying experience that he met with during the time of his command, was in 1855 when the famous North Shore trip was necessitated by the uprising in the Northwest. Many Londoners have not yet forgotten the hardships of that trying time, and it will be interesting for them, as for others, to read the opinion of a man whose position among the world's foremost military authorities is more fully recognized in militant Europe than in his own country. Of it he says: "A great deal has been said about the passage of the Alps in 1800, and there is no doubt it was a brilliant strategical operation, but as far as the hardships and difficulties and exposure to the men were concerned, I am satisfied that our trip was much the worst."

On that occasion the colonel evidenced his remarkable abilities as a leader, his buoyant enthusiasm and his marvelous capacity for hard work. These qualities have been shown at different times all through his career. The preparation of his "History of Cavalry" bore testimony to his power of organizing huge undertakings to a successful conclusion. The colonel says of it: "I was accustomed to get up all through the springs and summers of 1876 and 1878 before daylight, and at work by daylight. Often I have heard the town bells ringing at 6 a.m., after having put in two hours' good work. I used to take a cup of coffee when I first got up, and had breakfast at 7. Commenced work again at 8 and worked till noon, when I had lunch and walked a little over three miles to my office. I generally managed to get in two hours' work again in the evening. I averaged eight hours work a day for two years, and during two months in St. Petersburg, at the end, it was nearer 15 than 16 hours. I had to go hurriedly through over 700 volumes, picking out what I wanted and classifying it all. I worked at that for about a year, making notes, before I began to write at all. Then I had to write chapter after chapter, go over them carefully, and then make a clean copy, to send installments from time to time to New York to be translated. It can readily be imagined how hard I had to work and at what high pressure."

Every one knows that with this book the colonel won first prize in the world by Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia. In fact, it has only been in Europe and Asia that there has been a proper appreciation of his work. We are glad that his own people have not yet learned that a man of such distinction lives among them. Not so with the peoples of the old land, however. Toronto, fair and prosperous city that it is, must needs be known over the water as the city where Col. Denison, the cavalry expert, lives. The author himself was surprised by the extent of his book's popularity. He heard of them everywhere. In the most unexpected places he was reminded that he was the author of some books of unusual excellence. He tells of this in a manner that you will appreciate as much as we did, so we will give you the incidents as described in his own words:

"When I arrived in St. Petersburg I was at the General Staff offices several times to see Capt. Schenckine, and he introduced me from time to time to a number of cavalry generals and colonels, who seemed interested in meeting me, and who immediately began discussing my 'Modern Cavalry,' which had appeared in English eight years before, and in German six years before. I was astonished to find them so well up in it. I saw that they must have read it, and naturally thought to myself what close attention these people must be paying to military matters, if they are reading foreign books so carefully. Day after day I was astonished at this.

"When Mr. Clark began to look over it to translate parts of it to me, he said: 'Colonel, this author is constantly referring to your book.' I said: that cannot be, for it is not mentioned in the list of authors. He turned to the list and said: 'Why, yes, there it is,' pointing out a Russian title and name, which I could not read, and he said: 'That is it, that is your name.' I said: 'How strange he did not put that in English, like the others.' He said: 'He has evidently used the Russian translation.' I said: 'It has never been translated into Russian.' 'Yes, it has,' said Mr. Clark, by order of the Grand Duke, the Emperor. The next day to see Capt. Schenckine, and I asked him if he had ever heard that my 'Modern Cavalry' had been translated into Russian. 'Certainly it has,' he replied, 'Surely you knew that.' 'I never did,' said I. Then he told me the circumstances.

"A curious incident occurred during this trip. We were traveling in a railway carriage in the northern part of Germany, when at a station two young officers came into the carriage where my wife and daughters were with me. After a little while I wished to make some casual inquiry about where we stopped for meals or something of that sort, so I asked the young gentlemen if they could speak English. One said he could a little. I received the information he was able to give me, and the conversation closed. After a while the gentleman said, 'I see you are an Englishman, sir. When did you leave England?' I replied, 'On Thursday last, and then said, 'Although I am of pure English descent, I am, properly speaking, a Canadian. I was born at Toronto, in Canada.' He sat quietly for some time, and then said, 'Have you read Denison's 'History of Cavalry'?' I was so astonished I could hardly believe my ears. I said, 'What?' He repeated, 'Have you read the History of Cavalry, by Col. Denison, a Canadian officer?' My daughters began to laugh, and I said, 'Yes, I have read it,' and then I added, 'To tell the truth, I wrote it.' He evidently doubted me, and took out his card case and handed me his card, and it showed he was a cavalry officer named Witten Elias. I handed him mine, and he saw I was a Canadian. I said to him, 'How do you do my book?' 'You see,' he said,

"I am an officer of cavalry," I replied, "But how do you know my book?" "I am only two years from the academy, and it was one of our textbooks," he said. I asked what edition, and he replied, "Col. Brix's translation." He then went on to say, "It is the foundation of our present system of cavalry tactics." I was much pleased to hear this in a great military nation such as Germany.

The train of life bore to the colonel other acquaintances, also, of whom there linger in his mind no such pleasant memories. Even in this respect, however, he was singularly fortunate. In dealing with those whom Providence had decreed should not live in the completest harmony with him, Col. Denison has shown that he is as resourceful in words as in action. In those where there is the excitement of movement and the glimmer of flashing steel. In "Soldiering in Canada" he shows that he has not yet forgotten the great military nation that he is a great military nation.

Before bringing this review to an end, there is one thing about the book that appealed to us very much, and that is, you feel that you are entirely in his set, and just when you assure yourself of your hold upon his companionship, along comes one of his friends, and he says: "Ah! there's the Duke of York, or there's the Grand Duke Nicholas. Come over and I'll introduce you. He is greatly interested in my book, the 'History of Cavalry.' With him you talk to Jefferson Davis, take a walk down a corridor in Hatfield House with Lord Salisbury, or attend a review at Aldershot in company with a few crowned heads and a score of other royalties. It is very nice, indeed. But in the bright radiance of his associates, no shade is thrown upon the author. He stands among them all, with the light of his own mind, and the truth worth apparent in every action. It shows not the less clearly in his latest work, a historical record of events that is of exceeding interest to every Canadian.

MASK of the LYRE AND Stage and Platform

THE PLAY.

When the arc-lights on avenue and square
Shed their white glamor and the gas-jets glow
Adown the street, far-reaching row on row,
And one scarce knows if in the upper
Is cloud or star-shine or the moon-light fair,
Forth to the play the merry pleasers go
To see the mimes enact, in mimic show,
Life with its passionate joy and dull despair.

And yet you need not pass the play-house doors;
To gaze on Comedy: behold it where
You urbane capers with absurd grimace
And if you mark the human flood that pours
Its billows by you, ere you are aware
You will meet grimly Tragedy face to face!

—Clinton Scollard.

Mr. John Griffiths can hardly be said to be fortunate in his choice of such a play as "Spartacus" as a vehicle for the expression of his dramatic abilities. Fashions and ideas in the theater, as in all other lines of life, have changed mightily since Edwin Forrest, with his Herculean frame and stentorian voice, strutted the boards of Park Theater, New York, and called on the Roman slaves to rise and sweep their masters from the earth. "Spartacus" and similar plays of the heavy school have in them little or none of the elements that appeal essentially to modern audiences. Analytically considered, there is little to it but "loud alarms without" and vociferous exercise of the vocal chords. It contains none of the solid foundation of thoughtful creation that would keep alive for all ages the plays of Shakespeare and of a few of the other old dramatists.

"Our little systems have their day," they have their day and cease to be. The heavy drama, in which Davenport and before a past generation, has had its day and should not be dragged, with irreverent hands, from the grave to which it has been consigned. Mr. Griffiths does not seem well to look to it that he does not forfeit the favorable position he has won with the play-going public. Those who remember not alone his own scholarly conception of the character of Mephisto or his pleasing rendition of the brave and romantic Huguenot captain in "An Enemy to the King," but the adequate, not to say admirable, support with which he surrounded himself in these productions, cannot fail to perceive that his present company is one that falls greatly below the excellence of his former ones. Mr. Griffiths must bring with him more worthy support and a play more suited to modern tastes if he would hope to retain for himself the deservedly high place he has won in the dramatic world.

Madame Modjeska's farewell tour will be largely confined to a much-talked-of production of "King John." Della Fox is herself again. She is the leading lady in a new production, called, "The Rogers Brothers in Central Park."

Mabel Amber, who played the title role here in "Trilby," in 1905, has been engaged as leading woman with Joseph Haworth.

E. H. Sothorn was slightly injured by a sword cut in the duel scene of "Hamlet" at the Garden theater last Thursday. He missed no performance, however.

Chas. H. Hoyt, who a few months ago was thought to be a complete mental wreck, is now said to be again in perfect health, and is at work upon a new play to be called "A Bunch of Blue Ribbons."

Winsome Lulu Glaser, since 1895 Francis Wilson's leading lady, is to go on tour under the management of

Frank Martineau. She will appear in a new comic opera by Edgar Smith and Louis DeLange, with music by W. H. Nieldinger. It is called "Sweet Annie Page."

Mary Sanders, whose engagement here as Little Nell in "The Old Curiosity Shop" was cancelled because of the Grand Opera House fire, was nearly killed by the breaking of the tank used in "Lost River" last week.

Louis James and Miss Kathryn Kilder will present Wagenhal and Kemper's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" this season. Although but rarely played it is perhaps the most familiar of Shakespeare's comedies.

Actor Charles Cogan's casket was swept away in the Galveston storm. The force of the wind and waves wrecked the vault. It was the intention of his wife to have the body cremated, that being his dying request.

A monster benefit was given at Keith's Theater, New York, for the benefit of the Galveston storm sufferers. The receipts were \$2,500. Prominent actors and actresses rushed to the theater to lend their services when the benefit was announced, there being more than 100 performers on the programme.

Helen Byron, who was leading lady of the Cummings Stock Company, in Toronto, three years ago, is now playing Johnston Bennett's part in "A Female Drummer" with indifferent success, as Miss Byron's art and personality are hardly such as to lend themselves to such masculine characters. She is now studying the manuscript of a new play in which she may star later in the season.

There promises to be a regular deluge of Nell Gwynne play shortly. Ada Rehan intends appearing as Nell Gwynne in "Sweet Nell of Old Drury." Margaret Anglin was first to have it, but Miss Rehan needed a play and her managers got it. Aubrey Boucault and Henrietta Crossman are playing "Miss Rehan" in Toronto this week, while Anthony Hope's "Simon Dale" is being produced in England.

Among the pleasant things recorded in theatricals recently was the revival of Annie Pixley's famous play, written for it by Bret Harte, "Miss Nellie McHenry" is playing the title role, and Joseph Brennan is the Yuba Bill. In this production are the most striking portions of Annie Pixley's production, while in other parts modern improvements have been applied to the production with success.

Gertrude Cogan, daughter of the late Charles Cogan, produced "Becky Sharp" at Saratoga, last week. Harrison Grey Fiske, husband of Mrs. Fiske, who is also starring in the play, was in the theater, and had his stenographers taking notes of the Cogan production. The management compelled Mr. Fiske and his assistants to quit the theater. Miss Cogan escaped a process server by going down a hotel freight elevator, but she was later served with a temporary injunction.

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