

DOCTOR.—Hear, hear, hear!

LAIRD.—Carry on, Crahtree, and never mind that roaring gowk!

MAJOR.—There is no necessity for my enlarging upon the humiliating theme. The idiotical absurdity of the thing must be self-evident to every reflecting mind. What discipline, let me ask, can be communicated to a *drove* of civilians in the space of an annual half hour? Why, it would take double that time to convince Hodge and Pat that it was unsoldierlike to smoke in the *ranks*, or to demonstrate, to their comprehension, that the feet of a soldier should not form a conjunction like the blades of a pair of scissors!

DOCTOR.—Hear, hear, hear!

LAIRD.—For ony sake, haud your tongue, man, if you should be paid for sae doing! There is some truth, Culpepper, in your observations; but what remedy would ye propose for the evil?

MAJOR.—Why, I have not given the matter sufficient consideration to enable me to return a satisfactory answer to your enquiry. My respected friend, General A——, of Toronto Township, once proposed the organization of *skeleton companies*, and my judgment freely admitted the reasonableness and practicability of his scheme.

LAIRD.—And what was the General's plan?

MAJOR.—That gallant and experienced officer has promised to favour me with a full detail of his theory, and I shall probably have the pleasure of submitting it to you, at an early sederunt. In the meantime, permit me to dismiss the question by remarking that *Training Days*, at present are the most indefensible of all conceivable absurdities! The men lose a precious day's work for no purpose, and, besides, are tempted to dissipate their reason and their hard-earned money in the bar-room. As for the officers——

LAIRD.—Gang on; I'm no' thin-skinned!

MAJOR.—As for the officers, they can be likened and compared to nothing else than overgrown, lubberly, mush-brained children, *playing* at Colonels and Captains for the amusement of boys and the scorn and contempt of sensible women!

LAIRD.—No anither word! What ye hae said is bitter as aloes; but then, there is a glimmering o' truth aboot it! No long ago, I shaved my beard at your bidding, and noo I'll strip aff my warlike coat, if you'll only lend me a pea-jacket or a dressing-gown!

DOCTOR.—*Vade in pace!*

LAIRD.—Nane o' your Welsh, ye pedantic reprobate! [*Exit.*]

MAJOR.—Coming from war to literature, have you read *Aubrey*, the new fiction by the author of *Castle Avon* and *Ravenscliffe*?

DOCTOR.—I have not. Does it sustain the clever writer's reputation?

MAJOR.—Most thoroughly! It is a story of surpassing power, replete with nerve and sinew. Though fagged and jaded when I took up the volume, I could not relinquish it till I had come to anchor at *finis*!

DOCTOR.—That is the description of criticism which I like best! Commend me to the tale which says to the winking eye, "keep open!"

MAJOR.—Though dealing with the characters and situations of every-day life, there is nothing common-place about *Aubrey*. It is just the kind of novel which Kit Marlow might have written, if living in the days of Queen Victoria instead of those of good Queen Bess.

DOCTOR.—Pray lend me, or loan me (as Jonathan would say) the production you praise so highly, and accept, by way of excambion, this very readable duodecimo.

MAJOR.—What name does it answer to?

DOCTOR.—*Twenty Years in the Philippines*.

MAJOR.—And the author?

DOCTOR.—Paul P. De La Gironiere, Chevalier of the Order of the Legion of Honour.

MAJOR.—Many thanks for putting the book in my way! I have long wished to be indoctrinated minutely touching these same Philippines.

DOCTOR.—In the Chevalier's volume you will find abundance of "sustentation." Though the style of honest Paul is a trifle too *French* for my taste, he presents his reader with a mass of information, statistical as well as descriptive, touching those interesting possessions of Spain, which could not be gleaned from any other source.

MAJOR.—What may be the number of these same Philippines?

DOCTOR.—I shall answer your question by reading you an extract from the work:—

The Philippines are a large group of islands in the North Pacific Ocean, and were discovered by Magellan in 1521; they were afterwards taken possession of by the Spaniards, in the reign of Philip II, from whom they take their name. The islands are said to be eleven hundred in number, but some hundreds of them are very small, and all are nominally subject to the Spanish government at Manila.

In order to give the reader an idea of their riches, and the vast resources they can furnish to Spain, I shall here give some details of the division of the country into provinces, with the