

A CANADIAN VETERAN.

It was summer time, and softly swept the warm sweet air along.
Laden with the breath of flowers, laden with the wild birds' song;
And it brushed the long, white tresses of an old man's silver hair.
As beside the open casement sat he dreaming in his chair,
And upon his aged heart strings played a low, æolian tune,
Bringing back to his December thoughts and fancies of his June.
But a quick step on the stairway, and a low voice in the hall,
Sent the past into the shadows and the present did recall.
And a tall and stalwart stripling, with a smooth and beardless face,
Eagerly into his presence strode with manly air and grace.
"Grandson," cried he then right quickly, and his voice rang loud and clear,
"I have donned my suit of armour, I am now a volunteer!
I have donned my suit of armour for my country and my Queen,
And I hope to be as valiant as my aged grandsire hath been!"
Then a flush lit up the features, erst so wan and deathly pale,
And the old man's eyes shone proudly on the youth so stout and hale.
"I was dreaming, grandson," said he, "dreaming of the buried days,
When the world lay spread before me draped in clouds of golden haze,
So when first you came unto me, clad in hues of brightest red,
I was sure it was my brother who at Beaver's Dam fell dead.
I was sure that it was Harry—Harry, noble, brave, and true!
I was sure that it was Harry, for he looked so much like you!
Oh, I trust, my darling grandson, that the time will never be,
When our beauteous, young Dominion will have need to call on thee!
But I know that to the summons you will answer without fear,
When the drum-beat calls to battle each Canadian volunteer.
Still within my time-worn bosom leaps the blood with eager glow,
As I think upon the far time, when I went to fight the foe.
Ah, right well do I remember when the hasty summons came,
Calling on each brave Canadian to repel with sword and flame
All the vast hordes of invaders that would fain have swept away
From our land the flag of England, and reduced us 'neath their sway.
'Father,' said I, 'I am going,—brother Harry's going too—
We will fight for home and country, do the best that we can do.'
'I have fought for dear old England, fought and bled for her,' said he,
'On the billow-surgings courses for her wide domain, the sea;
And I proudly bid you follow now the meteor flag of old,
Bear it bravely up before you, or die bravely 'neath its fold!
Thus with firm, unfaltering accents did he bid us fight or die,
But I saw him brush the tear-drops stealthily from either eye.
When our gentle-hearted mother, filled with agony and woe,
Clung in anguish to her darlings, ere she told us we could go.
'Don't forget your God, my children, don't forget to trust in Him,'
Murmured she in broken whispers, while her eyes with tears were dim;
And to each she gave a Bible for a buckler and a shield,
To defend us from temptation in the camp or on the field.
Then I hastened through the forest to bid farewell to one,
Whom I thought the sweetest creature underneath the shining sun.
I had loved her long and truly—loved, but had not dared to tell,
For to me almost angelic seemed my beauteous, little Belle;
But when from her cheeks the colour fled and left her deathly pale,
As she listened, almost panting, to my briefly worded tale,
Welled my passion from my bosom bursting through its wonted bound,
And the love within my being found an utterance in sound.
While in low and eager accents all my hopes did I unfold,
And I kissed her tiny fingers that in mine lay white and cold.
'I have loved you, darling, loved you,' whispered she in sweet reply,
With a flush upon her features and the love-light in her eye.
'Since the days when we were children roaming round in youthful glee,
But I sometimes feared,' she faltered, 'that you had no love for me.
Now, alas, poor boy, you're going, yet I cannot bid you stay,
But remember when you're absent that for you I'll wait and pray.
Though the parting rends my bosom, still will I be proud of you,
Knowing that for home and country you'll be valiant, staunch and true.'
Then her voice broke down in anguish, and I strove to soothe her fears,
But I left her bent in sorrow, left her weeping bitter tears.
With the Union Jack above us, soon we marched to meet the foe,
And at Beaver Dam brave Harry was in death laid cold and low.
As I wept above his body grew a feeling fierce and stern,
Filling all my brain with madness, making it for vengeance burn,
Till I hungered for the conflict, as a tiger for his prey,
And with fiery exultation rushed into each bloody fray.
On I went in reckless humour, braving death in every form,
Foremost in the van of battle, at the front in every storm,
Till at length, when death was halting in the fight at Lundy's Lane,
Fell I bleeding 'mong the dying, 'mong the ghastly hosts of slain.
I had seen our flag in danger, seen the phalanx of the foe,
Heard their boastful shouts and cheering, as they thought to crush us low,
And I sprang with lightning quickness, grasped the flag as to the ground,
Fell the soldier who had held it, while his life blood flew around.
Then I sank in pain and anguish, holding still my precious prize,
While the thickening gloom of nightfall shielded it from hostile eyes.

Though the battle raged around me, soon it seemed to sound afar:
Black grew all the air about me, dimly shone each twinkling star;
Gasping out a prayer to Heaven, faintly calling:
'Mother—Belle!'
Folded I the flag around me 'neath whose noble folds I fell;
And I whispered low and hoarsely unto Christ within the sky:
'Take me to thy arms, dear Saviour, I am not afraid to die!
Then no more did I remember till the fight was fought and won,
And upon my tortured body shone the brilliant, morning sun.
Roused I then from out my stupor, when I heard a strange voice cry:
'Here is one who like a hero for his flag did fight and die!
Worthy shroud for such a soldier is the flag of England's King—
Ah! he moves—poor fellow—hurry! bid the men assistance bring!
Tenderly they waited on me while my system strove with Death,
And I lay upon my pallet gasping feebly for my breath.
But at last my system conquered and drove off the spectre pale,
That had worn into a shadow me, who once was stout and hale.
Home I tottered, frail and feeble, for my fighting days were done,
And my parents hardly knew me, then their sole surviving son.
Fondly to her aching bosom did my mother press her child,
Shedding tears for brother Harry, as on me she sadly smiled.
Neither she nor father uttered for a time a single word,
And my mother's gentle sobbing was the only sound I heard.
When the evening sun was setting and the day was nearly done,
Slowly walked I through the forest for to meet the beauteous one,
Who had promised to be faithful and to wait and pray for me,
While I fought for home and country, fought for right and liberty.
'Oh, my darling, I am thankful that you're saved to me!' she cried.
'Had you died within the battle, I, too, gladly would have died!
But I answered low and clearly, though my heart felt like a stone:
As it thumped against my bosom in a moody monotone:
'When we parted I was stalwart, rugged, strong and very hale,
But I've wrecked my strength and vigour, now I'm fragile, wan and pale,
Then I had two arms to shield you, now I've got one empty sleeve,
And the arm that's left is nerveless, but, my darling, do not grieve,
I was never fitted for you—' 'Stop!' she spake in accents strong,
'If you're tired and wish to leave me, then I bid you haste along
To the maiden who has won you, but if still your love is true,
Be you then more frail than ever, I will gladly marry you.'
Though I loved you when we parted, now I love you fonder still,
When I see your cheek so pallid, when I see you weak and ill,
And I'll ever guard you truly, coax the bloom back to your brow,
Stop! don't talk so! I won't hear you! I will be your master now!
Think you a Canadian maiden would desert her soldier brave,
Who, for her and for her country, flinched not from a soldier's grave!
No! poor boy, I'll not desert you, will not give you cause to grieve,
But with pride and reverence ever will regard your empty sleeve!
Truly did she keep her promise all throughout her loving life,
Causing me to bless the moment she became my precious wife.
She is now among the angels and I long to meet her there,
Well I know she went to Heaven, she was good as she was fair.
Do not flinch, my brave, young grandson, when the hours of peril come,
For your country don your armour, answer to the warning drum.
And remember that above you throned within the starry skies,
There is One that ever sees you, watches you with loving eyes;
And if true to His commandments, He will welcome you to Him.
When the spectre Death o'ertakes you on his pale horse gaunt and grim,
Then the old man's cheek grew whiter, and his tongue refused to speak,
While the tears coursed down the furrows of each time-worn, pallid cheek,
But his eyes grew brighter, clearer, to his cheeks came back their hue,
As he beckoned unto something in the far celestial blue,
And his grandson heard him whisper: "Darling Belle, I soon will come.
Soon I know will sound the summons, beat the angel's warning drum."

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RESPECTFUL UNDER DIFFICULTIES. — The American matron in Westminster Abbey moves along corridors and over the bones of the mighty departed in a state of badly-suppressed dismay. Used to walking reverently around the grave of even the humblest mortality, to see herself and brood treading upon the most majestic of tombs is more to her than Paganism. On a second tour of the Abbey we were in the train of such a dame—a fairly-read, intelligent lady, brimful of reverence, one who at home worships her minister, and pays regular respectful Sunday evening visits to the local cemetery. She will never forget her jaunt through Westminster. Her running fire of horror came out in undertones in this wise: "Anne, dear, you are standing right on Ben Johnson." "James, my son, don't straddle over Macaulay in that heathen fashion." "Mr. Jones, you ought to be ashamed to step on poor Charles Dickens." "Mercy on me, here I am walking across Dryden," and the miserable woman sat square down on a bench above the bones of the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and gave up trying to be even half-way respectful in a minister whose every passing stone is a slab covering somebody who once made the world wonder or tremble.

MISS KILLEEN'S LODGER.

"Well, upon my word," exclaimed my aunt, Miss Winifred Killeen, laying down a letter beside her untasted cup of tea, and slowly taking off her spectacles and placing them beside it, "I never, Mollie!"
"Yis, ma'am," came Mollie's reply from the immediate vicinity of the parlour door, where she was ostensibly engaged in dusting the moth-eaten wainscot, but in reality waiting to hear the contents of the letter, the arrival of which caused no small excitement and wonder in her secret breast.
"Come here, Mollie, and read that," said my aunt solemnly, resuming her spectacles, and pointing to the letter; "read—for I'm bothered!"
Mollie turned up the cleanest corner of her apron, and with it took the letter between her forefinger and thumb, held it at arm's length and ran her eye over the contents, then drew it nearer and read it more carefully, looked at it in every possible position, and then laid it down carefully.
"Well, upon my conscience," she exclaimed, "I never!"
"Just what I said myself, Mollie," Miss Killeen observed, shaking her head. "I never—"
"A Killeen of Castle Killeen let lodgings indeed!" cried Mollie, tossing her head scornfully. "A pretty pass things is comin' to!"
"It's very sad, Mollie," my aunt observed, stirring her tea—"very sad!"
"It's worse, Miss Winifred," Mollie cried, her arms akimbo. "I tell ye it's downright shameful an' outrageous! If I was you, I'd send that whipper-snapper his answer double quick!" and in a contemptuous manner she snapped her fingers over her shoulder at the unseen offender.
"Of course he must not come here," said my aunt, taking up the letter again. "Three pounds a week, I think he says," she added, with something approaching a sigh.
"Yis, ma'am, three pound, not includin' turf an' candle-light. But what's three pound a week to a Killeen of Castle Killeen?" Mollie cried, with an echo of my aunt's sigh in her voice. "Keep lodgers indeed!"
"It would never do, I'm afraid, Mollie," my aunt said more sadly than before. "I must write at once and decline the gentleman's offer. Bless my soul, there's no address!"—and my aunt examined the letter at every corner over and under her spectacles. "It's very strange!"
"Milla murther, what's that?" Mollie cried, as a long bang with the heavy iron knocker of the front door echoed drearily through the house.
"What can be the matter?" said my aunt, scarcely less startled.
"I think it's a double knock at the hall-door, aunt," I ventured to remark without looking up from my tea-cup, which I had been studying most attentively all through the foregoing dialogue, never once having been addressed on the subject of the letter, though I had been giving it my best consideration, and had come to a conclusion very different from my elders.
"Who could possibly be knocking at the hall-door, child?" said my aunt, staring at me in wonder. "However, Mollie, you had better go round and see."

The hall-door of Killeen Castle had not been opened for a quarter of a century; and, as all the heavy bolts and locks were covered with rust, it would have been no easy matter to open it; so my aunt desired Mollie to go round and see if any one could be absurd enough to seek admittance that way. And here I may take the opportunity of introducing my aunt more fully and stating a few facts of our family history.

We—my aunt, Miss Winifred Killeen, myself, Una Fitzgerald and Mollie Brady, my aunt's foster sister, nurse, and general servant—had lived together as long as I could remember in the most habitable wing of Castle Killeen, a huge tumble-down old house, beautifully situated on the shores of Lough Corrib. I had never known my father or mother, nor could I call to mind when I had come to live with my aunt. All my life I remembered her as a stately upright, rather severe-looking old lady, with very white hair arranged in prim little barrel-curls all round her thin pale face, and kept in mathematical order by two tortoiseshell side-combs. She always wore a white net cap with a very high caul and three rows of very full, elaborately Italian-ironed borders, the "getting up" of which was Mollie's special delight, with a band of black ribbon velvet across the top of her head, covering her ears, and fastened under the chin with a little brooch containing a likeness. Winter and summer her dress was black—on Sundays an antique brocade silk with a long waist-pointed stomacher and three deep flounces on week days a plain black stuff, a white muslin kerchief round her neck, and a pair of black-lace mittens on her slender white hands. During the seventeen years I had lived with my aunt I could never remember any alteration in her appearance, manner, or dress; and I suppose she saw no change in me, for at seventeen she treated me as much like a child as she did at seven. It seems almost incredible, and it would be laughable if there were not so much real shame and suffering in the memory of it, that a great gaunt girl of seventeen, full of strange, half-formed ideas of the world, gathered from books and from stolen interviews with the few people who lived within walking distance of us, hungry for knowledge, eager for freedom, should be sent to bed every evening at eight o'clock, and lectured severely if she soiled her pinafore.

I was very much afraid of my aunt Winifred,

though I loved her dearly, and still more afraid of Mollie Brady, whom I loved indifferently; but, as I grew older, I began to see that there was nothing very terrible about those two poor old ladies, except their never-ceasing hand-to-hand conflict with grim poverty and their constant struggle after shabby gentility. They were very proud—proud of the ancient descent and departed glory of the Killeens—proud of the Castle which did not contain one really habitable room—proud of their independence—proud, I almost think, of their many misfortunes. The ruined old Castle, a small garden which Mollie cultivated in a most astonishing way, and an annuity of twenty pounds a year were my aunt's sole property and income.

I do not think Mollie ever took kindly to me; and, when I remember that I was one more to feed and clothe, I cannot wonder at her regarding me as an intruder, a most unwelcome and unwished-for guest in the house of my poor aunt. But she, good kind soul, never gave me cause to feel so. Nor perhaps did poor Mollie—at least not intentionally; but children have a strange way of feeling things, which they cannot always explain or understand, and I instinctively felt that Mollie regarded me with no friendly eye.

I was about thirteen years old when I first realized this, and for some months, or perhaps years, afterwards I literally lived upon the bread of affliction and the water of affliction, and was as perfectly miserable as any girl of my age perhaps ever was. But at that time I found a friend who was a most sympathetic listener to all of my griefs—a poor, miserable, friendless old dog named Rover, who lived upon sufferance in the nearest village—if such a vagrant could be said to live anywhere. However he was just a degree more miserable than myself, and we became friends, spending hours and hours wandering through the fields and lanes in search of wild strawberries and blackberries, according to the season, which Rover seemed to relish as much as I did when we found them plentiful.

Some years later came the knowledge that my relative and myself were poor—lamentably, miserably, terribly poor—and with it the desire to do something, if not to help my aunt, at least to be no longer a burden to her. I was young and strong, and full of that most blessed of all youth's treasures—hope. Moreover I was not proud, despite all the oft-told tales of the dignity and importance of the Killeens, of their ancient lineage and bygone splendour. In my heart I did not think it would be any disgrace for me to work at anything, provided I were paid for my labour. Perhaps I felt that I was not a Killeen, but a Fitzgerald; and, for all I knew of my father's friends, they might be princes, or ploughmen, or paupers. But the question which troubled me most was how I should broach the matter to my aunt; and then came the puzzling query, "What could I do?" I looked at my hands; they were small and soft, and good for very little, I feared. I could tally my aunt's cap-borders, I thought; but I could not wash a great tubful of clothes or handle a spade as Mollie did. I could tie up flowers prettily, or draw pictures with pencil, pen, or charcoal, or even sing, and in some instinctive way repeat any tune I heard from aunt's tuneless old harpsichord; but, if my very life depended on it, I could not milk a cow or make a print of butter.

Several times I resolved to do something desperate, and once ventured to ask Mollie to let me help her to cook our simple dinner; but her answer was a sharp "Get away, child, and don't bother me. What do you know of cooking?" "Heaven help me," I said to myself, "I knew nothing of anything, and there is no one in the wide world to teach me, or to care whether I learn or not;" and at such times my only resource was to cry myself to sleep, or else pour all my sorrows and troubles into the sympathetic ears of my poor vagrant friend Rover, who was the only living creature in the world, I thought, as useless, as miserable, and as much in the way as myself.

Such were my feelings when the letter which caused my aunt so much astonishment arrived; and, when Mollie had left the room to see whether there was any one at the hall door, I said, not without much hesitation—

"I wish, aunt Winifred, you would have that lodger."

"My dear, what can a child like you know of such things?" my aunt replied, looking at me severely. "Little girls should not speak till they're spoken to, Una."

"But, aunt, I'm not a—"

"Shure enough ma'am, it's a gentleman that's at the hall door," Mollie cried, rushing breathlessly into the parlour—"a fine, free-spoken gentleman, with a little reticule in his hand, an' he sez he wrote a letter, ma'am."

"The lodger?" my aunt exclaimed, holding up her hands in dismay. "Whatever shall I do, Mollie?"

"Ask him to come in," I suggested, for I was very curious to see a person who from choice would come and live in our dreary, dismal old house; and, besides, I fancied that the advent of a stranger would of necessity, in some shape or other, make a change in my condition.

"No, no," said my aunt nervously. "Tell him I don't take lodgers, Mollie. Say Miss Killeen presents her best respects, and hopes Mr. Philip Kent will excuse her."

"Indeed, madam, he will do no such thing," interposed the gentleman in question, presenting himself at our parlour door, and then entering uninvited, with outstretched hand and smiling face. "The Reverend Father Killeen sent me;