

the privileges of a stripe are not always conferred for merit. The sergeant-major of a regiment, who has most opportunity of judging of the intercourse between officers and privates, should be a man of justice and clear-sightedness, and the general conduct of the men under him will depend a great deal on his tact. When it does happen that a non-com is degraded, or "reduced to the ranks," the whole regiment is assembled. The prisoner's offence and sentence are read, he, meanwhile, standing bareheaded between his guards. The sergeant-major then rips off his stripes, and with them go all the privileges of which he has made a bad use.

I wonder why soldiers are as a rule considered outside the pale of church influence. They are an utterly neglected part of congregations, at least in the city where this barrack is situated. If they were clerks or laborers, or followed any other profession than that of soldiering, they would probably be known to, and visited by some of the clergy, but the wearing of the Queen's uniform seems to constitute a barrier, and "it is no one's business to look after soldiers." I know of one good, respectable fellow who attended a certain church regularly every Sunday for quite 10 years, and had never been spoken to directly by the man he heard preach once a week. If, for no other reason, it is for the interest of the country that her enlisted young men should be kept out of mischief as much as possible. I know of only one man, a newcomer to the city, who has noticed this neglect, and set himself to supply the need. He manages to be in the barrack at least two or three times a month, and the soldiers have already come to regard him as their friend. They appreciate his thoughtfulness and sympathy by attending his church, and giving him their confidence unrestrainedly, and that is a convincing answer to those who declare that soldiers will not have clergymen visit them in barracks, and regard all friendly interest as interference and intrusion.

The character and general conduct of our Canadian regulars is, I imagine, on an average with that of their English brothers-in-arms. Like Kipling's soldiers—

They ain't no thin red heroes,
But they ain't no blackguards too.

Of course, there are thoroughly black sheep among them, but not in greater numbers in the military fold than in any other, and the temptations are probably more incessant and difficult of resistance. No one could expect them to turn into "plaster-saints," but they are on the whole, a healthy, jolly, and fairly honest lot, and if called upon, I have no doubt, would show themselves worthy of the high calling of soldiers of the Empire. There are some exceedingly fine fellows in all our regiments, who, without being at all priggish, set the men a good example of an upright, manly life, and raise the tone of the troop while they are in it. I remember one man especially who took each young recruit under his protection in an unobtrusive way, and tried his best to make all "the boys keep straight." I cannot say that he always succeeded, but he was a great favorite in spite of his churchgoing and abstaining from drink, and he knew a secret worth a good deal among soldiers—he never preached. The truth is, a man can be what he likes even in a barrack. He has only to be a good soldier, make the other men respect him, and be goodhumored under any amount of chaff and practical joking. If he can at any time turn the laugh against his tormentors his cause is won; only a man who either makes himself ridiculous or sets himself above his comrades in any way, will not be tolerated. Bullying of recruits is almost a thing of the past. I have heard of cases, but I think they are of rare occurrence. It certainly is sad to see many a young man enlist, apparently innocent and strong, and in a few months to notice the unmistakable impres-

sion made on face and form by constant indulgence in strong drink, but I believe their own weakness and not the barrack life alone is responsible for their deterioration.

Drinking and hard swearing have always been the soldiers' chief faults, but, as long as the sergeants use bad language on the parade ground, the latter evil can scarcely be checked in the private. The Army Temperance Association branches will, no doubt, help the soldier to be sober and self-respecting, and to find a more profitable way of spending his evenings than in a bar. This solution of the problem, however, seems still far in the future.

There are many firm and true friendships in barrack life. I recollect various pairs of chums who were almost inseparable, and whose love for each other was a touching, and, sometimes, the only redeeming feature in their characters. And still, a military funeral—that most pathetic of all sights—even of a popular comrade, produces little or no effect on the average soldier. In all ordinary cases, a man's name is buried in his grave as soon as the quickstep beats and the three volleys are fired. Such constant change of individuals is always going on in our short-service regiments; and the routine, day after day, fills up so much of life that one man's place is not long felt to be a blank, and, even though he may have been a frank and loyal friend, he is gone—he may not be quite forgotten, but another soon fills the void.

If our soldiers are to be worthy to defend this great Dominion, and under her "a stumbling-block to her foes," they must be carefully trained, and their number effectively increased. Our hardy northern race, with its inherited military traditions, ought to offer all the material for a fine force, and the present head of the embryo Canadian army seems determined to make it so, as far as in him lies.

THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE AT MAGERSFONTEIN.

HYTS off, and a cheer for the Highland Brigade,
That march'd to its fate like a corps on parade,
With plaid flung back, and the blue steel gleaming,
And shrill in the starlight the war-pipe screaming!
Would ye know how the records of heroes are made?
Come listen this tale of the Highland Brigade.

The General gazed with a troubled eye
On the scowling ramparts, grim and high;
"The way will be rough, and the fighting hot,
I needs must call on the doughty Scot."
And forth at the word, all undismay'd,
With a skirl o' the pipes went the Highland Brigade.

Proud children of Albyn! 'twas ever the same,
Too well have ye paid for your matchless fame!
Must Death in his starkest shape be defied?
Or a well nigh hopeless task be tried?
Whereon can the army's trust be stayed
If not on the might of the Highland Brigade?

But this was a deed of derring-do,
Too hopeless even for such as you!
For the mountain belch'd forth shot and shell,
And smol'd and flam'd like the mouth of Hell
And caught in the murderous ambuscade,
With their chief 't' the mudst, fell the Highland Brigade!

Weep not, sad hearts on the Scottish shore,
That wait for the lads who will come no more;
Man dies but once—and your dear ones fell
On the battlefield they grac'd so well;
True to the annals of name and clan,
As their sires have fall'n since the world began,
With their hand on the steel, and their face to the foe,
And the God of the Battle to see them go!
And long will their memory's dues be paid
A cheer, and a tear, for the Highland Brigade!

Montreal.

ROBERT REID.