

THE LAND WE LIVE IN.

Ned Webb, one of the jolliest of our Rangers. "How did you leave old dame Partlet? (the Commandant's sou-briquet). You were no favorite in that quarter, methinks, and it struck me forcibly, that the fussy old colonel kept you from accompanying us to the front for the purpose of venting his fits of *pip* on your devoted head."

"I can hardly credit him with carrying his spite so far," I replied, "but he really has sent me now to the front in disgrace, as being the most rampant example of insubordination and disobedience in the service."

"How is that, what did you do?" was now asked by all present.

"Well! the act of insubordination for which I am sent to the front, a position which I infer to be nearer the enemy than his stagnant head-quarters, was my having *too zealously* obeyed the old gentleman's orders at Mrs. Bell's last ball. I was sauntering past the card-tables where the old colonel was, as usual, playing whist, when espying me, he called me to him, and looking at me with those small grey eyes of his, he addressed me in his usual orderly-room tone of voice: "I say, you! why don't you wear less noisy spurs? I wish you would take that Miss Screamer away from the piano, make her dance, eat ice-cream, anything rather than that dreadful 'soldier's tear.'"

"Yes, sir," I replied, and I immediately went to the piano where the young lady was expatiating in very loud tones and extravagant notes on the lachrymose propensity of a certain typical soldier."

With all the impressment and importance of an accredited A. D. C., I communicated my message in the following words; and if there was any discrepancy, it must be attributed to the effect of the charms of the lady herself upon the susceptibility of an unsophisticated youth of eighteen. Waiting until the last tremulous notes of the "tear-r-r" had reverberated from the distant card-tables, I leaned over towards the fair cantatrice's left ringlet and in the dulcet tones of an incipient troubadour, "Presented the compliments of Colonel M. to Miss Screamer with the request that she would favor him with an encore of a song which reminded him forcibly of his past military triumphs in bower and ball-room."

With much grace and unbounded alacrity, the young lady recommenced the song, the "Soldier's Tear," which she poured forth in a deluge which permeated ball-room, card-room, corridors and spoon-corners, with its excruciating desolation and grief until the whole congregation of dancers and

card-players, wall-flowers and spoons crowded round the *cause* of such overwhelming grief and begged her to spare their lacerated feelings by closing the piano and "like a good girl help us with the lancers just forming."

At the beginning of the second couplet of the "Soldier's" tear, I had sauntered towards the *primary* cause of the foregoing crash *musicale* and was innocently taking a philopœna with a young lady with whom I was to dance the next valse when I heard the angry wheezy voice of the Commandant exclaim, "Good gracious! it's the fault of that caterwauling girl; this is the third time she has made me revoke." Throwing his cards on the table and upsetting his chair against the legs of a passing servant, he caught sight of me, his late *emissaire de certomnie*.

"You, sir! You! Did I not order you to remove,—to—to speak to that lady, and—"

"Yes! colonel you desired me to convey your compliments and thanks to Miss Screamer and to request—"

"Compliments! Thanks. Damn you, sir, I did no such thing; I—I told you— Consider yourself under arrest, sir." Bowing low to the irascible old Commandant, I turned to my fair Philopœna and we were soon whirling in the mazes of a delicious valse.

"Saucy as ever, that Jack Weir o. ours!" exclaimed my self-elected, censor, Mentor and warm friend, William Stewart Stuart. "What would your father say, Jack, if he knew how you badgered his old brother officer of the dirty half-hundred? (50th Regt.) and how did you get released from arrest?"

"In the very way I desired," I replied; "I was sent away from headquarters to the front as the best chance of getting my throat cut; this morning as I was trying to masticate some bullock's liver and sawdust which mine host King had placed before me, and to swallow some of his slop-bucket coffee, an orderly brought me the following welcome *billet-doux* from old Partlet:—"

"Cornet Weir will hold himself in readiness to march to Stanstead with dispatches. Cornet Weir of No. 2 troop is hereby transferred to No. 1 troop commanded by Captain Webster, who will be duly informed of his new subalterns insubordinate and disrespectful conduct towards his superior officers."

Signed,

Colonel Commandant.

"Well! old fellow!" said Hill, "I'm glad you have come to us; we expect to have some warm work before the spring and we want all our scapegraces. You had better now go and report yourself to your captain who will no doubt put you in "shorts and

pinnas' to please old 'Dame Partlet.'"

The reveillée had been sounded an hour or more and I was sleeping soundly on the bare floor of the hall or ball-room of the hotel, with my horse's saddle for a pillow, when a kick in the ribs caused me to open my eyes and I beheld standing over me, booted and spurred and garnished as if ready for parade my ever watchful guardian William Stuart. The dear old fellow (he was ten years my senior) looked so paternal and concerned at the scantiness of my surroundings in my extensive dormitory, that I burst into a fit of laughter which became uncontrollable and I had to spring to my feet and dance a mad hornpipe before I could recover my equanimity.

"Excuse me, old fellow!" I said, "but you were looking at me just now with such an expression of pity on your beatific countenance that I took you for my guardian angel, only *she* don't wear spurs."

"Jack!" said my kind friehd, trying to look severe, "when will you be serious? I have been busy the whole morning seeking lodgings and have found you comfortable quarters with the family of Doctor Colby, with stabling for your horse. Crispo and Hackett are already installed there and are delighted to have you for a messmate. Now, go and eat your breakfast and be ready in time for mounted parade!"

After a brief toilet, which consisted in a shake, a stretch and a yawn. I descended to the breakfast table, at which the carousers of the previous evening were discussing a breakfast, the *menu*, of which after my late experience of King's hotel seemed marvellous: beef-steak, boiled and fried ham, eggs, lake trout, white and brown bread, real coffee and genuine cream and most delicious corn-cake, but the crowning dish, the irresistible *pièce de résistance* was the landlady herself, a lady whose grandsons are now ranked among the best boys of Sherbrooke. I was ushered by a charming Scotch lassie whose name I afterwards ascertained to be Nancy, and who afterwards became grandmother to one or two of Sherbrooke's most distinguished sons, to a seat next to the handsome, dignified landlady to whom I bowed low, at the same time that I congratulated her on such an orderly family at her board. "Oh, yes!" she replied, "they are always very good at my table but noisy enough when they are in the room they call their *mess-room*," (emphasizing the word *mess*). "I suppose you are Comet Weir, of whom I have heard the gentlemen speak?" "Yes! Cornet Weir, that boy Jack of ours," came from several voices, "and