

giving lessons in drill to the families of the gentry, and in several schools in the neighborhood. But he was an old man now, and could not do much in that way. He, however, liked to be useful, and gave lessons in drill to the young men of the society, and helped them in various ways. And some time before he had promised to tell them a story connected with his military life. The evening was come for the Sergeant to redeem his promise, and he thus began:—

I took the Queen's shilling and became a private in the 25th in 1854. I served in garrison duty till 1856, when my regiment was ordered to India. About this time several young men joined us, and among them there was a smart good-looking fellow whose name was Robert Owen. He had the appearance of having moved in a higher rank of life than most of us, and his education was superior. But he never presumed on it. His manner was civil and obliging, and he was prompt in all his military duties, which seemed to come quite natural to him. So that during the month he was with us before we sailed for India, he had become proficient in all the routine of a soldier's life. No doubt he would have been made a corporal if he had shown any desire for promotion, but he did not seem to wish it.

When off duty Owen improved his acquaintance with his comrades by doing anything he could for them. We noticed that he never drank intoxicating drinks, but whenever he found a man the worse for liquor, he took him to his quarters, and cared for him, with the result that we seldom had a case of drunkenness brought before the officers of our company. When the poor fellows were recovered from the effects of their excess, Owen talked to them kindly and seriously, urging them to sign the pledge of total abstinence in a book he carried with him, and when he had succeeded in getting them to do so, he enlisted the sympathies of the more sober men to encourage them by signing too, and looking after their weaker companions. He was very kind to me once when I had been overcome by the drink and made a disturbance, which, had it been seen by any of the officers, would have subjected me to arrest and confinement. Owen took care of me, and when he found me sober and repentant in the morning, he talked to me seriously of the danger of my doing something, when under the influence of drink, which might disgrace me for life. He said that he knew a young gentleman, of good family, whose father had purchased a commission for him, and given him all the advantages that wealth and social position could afford. This young man became a lieutenant in due time, and there was every prospect of his becoming a good and successful officer. He was not in the habit of drinking to excess, but one day he indulged in too much wine, and under its influence committed an offence for which he was dismissed from the service by court-martial. He had no recollection of what he was said to have done, but he felt that he had disgraced the name of his family so much that he took another name and entered the army as a private soldier, determined never to see or write to his family until he had in some measure retrieved his character. At the same time he gave up the use of the drink.

Owen did not tell me the name of the person, but I felt while he was telling me the story that it was his own, and later on this was confirmed. His kindness so won my heart that I resolved never again to permit the dangerous stuff to pass my lips. Forty years have gone since then, and I thank the Lord that he has given me strength to keep my resolution. I would

have cheerfully laid down my life for Owen, so much did I admire and love him.

But Owen's efforts were not restricted to making the men sober. He encouraged them to improve their minds by reading, and where the poor fellows could not read or write, he persuaded them to learn to do so. Here again he utilized the services of the more fortunate to assist their comrades in their efforts to improve. He was continually trying to make the men good soldiers, and the soldiers good men.

Owen's conduct and its results did not escape the notice of the officers, and Captain Barnes, of our company, offered to recommend him for promotion, but he begged him not to do so, fearing that it would interfere with his work and influence with the men. The Captain appreciated his usefulness so much that he agreed to respect his wishes, and remained so friendly to him that he was always ready to assist him in any way he could.

The voyage to India passed pleasantly and profitably, and when we arrived at Calcutta we presented a better bill of health than is usual in such cases, and the men were better prepared for the change of climate.

The great change which has taken place in the habits of our soldiers in India in these days did not exist then, so that the sober and orderly conduct of our regiment was noticed and commented on by the officials both military and civil, though owing to his quiet and unobtrusive manner the chief agent was not always recognized. Still, he became a person of note among the officers and men of other regiments, as well as our own, and was greatly respected by them.

In 1857 that great convulsion which threatened the very existence of the English dominion in India began to show symptoms of development, and great activity was seen in military circles, but no one could have imagined the terrible times so soon to follow. Our regiment had its share in this activity, and we were moved from place to place as the troubles increased. At last we found ourselves in the thick of it, and took our part in several skirmishes with the mutineers. Then came the battle of Cawnpore, when, with two other regiments, numbering 2,500 men altogether, under the command of General Courtenay, we had to fight a force of rebels six times our number. On that occasion Captain Barnes, of our party, was ordered to dislodge a party of the enemy, who, with a big gun placed in an advantageous position, were doing much mischief to our troops. He immediately started to execute the order, but when we came near, the gun vomited a charge of miscellaneous articles, scraps of iron, and other metals, as well as shot, which killed the Captain and every officer of the company, as well as nearly half the men. Private Owen, seeing the plight we were in, caught up the Captain's sword, and sprang forward, calling upon the men to follow and execute the order. We had a terrible run to support our leader, who reached the gun and struck down the native officer, who was trying to compel one of the gunners to fire again. This man cried out, 'All right, Owen, help me to point the gun in the opposite direction.' Owen was surprised to find that the gunner was an Englishman and well known to him, but seeing the advantage of his suggestion he helped him to do so. We were with them before they were ready to fire, and helped them. By this time the rebels were within a few yards of us, and we let fly. The execution was enormous, they simply fell in an immense heap. We picked off the survivors while the gun was being loaded again, and pointed against an-

other party of rebels who were running towards us, with a similar effect. Thus we continued firing, causing such a diversion that General Courtenay was enabled to carry out his intention, and completely routed the enemy.

After it was over we found that the gunner was chained by the leg to the gun, so that he should not run away, and had been forced by pricks of the bayonet to point and fire the gun against his own countrymen. We soon released him.

Private Owen, as acting captain, reported himself to Col. Allen, who congratulated him on his gallant conduct, and the next day presented him to General Courtenay. The General told Owen that his conduct had contributed materially to our success the day before, and that he had great pleasure in appointing him captain of the company he had led so bravely. This announcement was received with cheers by the officers, who congratulated Owen on his promotion. The appointment was very popular with the soldiers, especially his own company, each of whom felt as if he had received a personal honor. I was made sergeant, and all the other non-commissioned officers were appointed from the company. Several others were transferred to fill up vacancies in the other companies where the non-commissioned officers had fallen.

At a private interview with the General, Owen told him that his was an assumed name, his real name being Olcutts. 'What,' said the General, 'are you the son of my old friend, Col. Olcutts? I heard of your escapade, and heartily congratulate you on having so nobly retrieved your character. You will resume your own name now, of course. Whatever may have shadowed your past, your recent conduct has more than dispersed it. I think you ought to write to your father at once, to cheer him and your family, so that, as they mourned for you in the past, they may rejoice and be proud of you now. I will write a few lines to congratulate your father on having so brave and noble a son.'

Captain Olcutts did not find that being raised from the ranks was any obstacle to his success as an officer. He was loved and respected all the more for it, and the other officers were proud to have so brave and capable a man for their companion and friend. They noticed that he did not take wine, etc., but as he did not preach to them and persuade them to follow his example they did not interfere with him. They were, however, more moderate in their libations, and after a time the silent influence of his example had an effect on their customs, and some of them gave up the daily use of intoxicating drinks.

Nearly all the old soldiers of his company were pledged, and as other men were added to increase the effective force of the company, some of them were also induced to take the pledge. But a few refused. One day one of them, named Jones, who had been found intoxicated several times, was expostulated with by the other men, and being obdurate, they said that if they found him drunk again they would duck him in the pond. He resented this conduct very much, and there was a little disturbance. When Captain Olcutt heard of it he ordered Jones to appear before him at three o'clock the next day.

We never knew what took place at the interview between the Captain and Jones, who looked very grave when it was over. But we noticed a great change in his conduct from that day. He was very steady and attentive to his duties, never indulged in intoxicants, and soon became an orderly, reliable soldier.