

## CAPTAIN DALLIMORE'S WHISKERS.

(From Truth.)

How many men enter the army solely on account of the uniform? How many of those who are supposed to be enamoured of the adventures and perils of a soldier's life are enamoured only of the tinsel and trappings of a soldier's coat? It would be interesting to know, but owing to an unaccountable reticence on the part of those so influenced it is impossible to discover.

Still, occasionally there occur cases where, though no confession is made, a shrewd guess may be hazarded that æsthetic considerations had much to do in inducing the gallant warrior to choose a military career. Captain Dallimore was one of these. Captain Dalton Dallimore was not a very adventurous, nor a very courageous, nor a very ambitious man, but he was unquestionably a very conceited one. His conceit, however, referred only to his appearance. He never imagined that he was cleverer, braver, or more high-minded than his fellows; in fact, his private opinion was that in these qualities he was rather below than above them. But when it came to good looks—well, every time he glanced in his glass, and that was pretty often, he felt with a thrill of pleasure, that there he had the advantage of most people.

And he was not a bad-looking fellow. He had a rather long face, passably good features, and fairish hair, and he wore a moustache, large mutton-chop whiskers, and a *plume-ner*. He was very tall and very slight, and his clothes—which is not always the case even with military men—were obviously made for himself.

His appearance was better than his manner; that was affected and insipid to a degree. He could be induced to manifest nothing but the most languid interest in anybody or anything about him. No matter what was the subject which was occupying the attention of the rest of the company, his attention was concentrated to himself. While the others were jesting, chaffing, or disputing, he was engaged examining the fit of his jacket or the cut of his overalls, or else softly stroking his moustache, and passing his fingers affectionately through his whiskers.

These latter hirsute appendages were the cause of much mockery and heartburning in his regiment. His brother officers strongly disapproved of them. They could understand and sympathise with his devotion to his moustache; they all wore moustaches themselves, which they carefully nurtured and tenderly cherished; but he was the only man in the regiment who sported whiskers, and the others regarded his indulgence in them as an unwarrantable licence, not to say breach of discipline.

"Dolly, my boy," one would say, "why don't you shave and look like a Christian?"

"Prefers to look like a goat," another would growl.

"You see," a third would put in, "he's not very energetic, and the whiskers save him a good deal of work; with them he has only to wash half of his face."

"If I were the Colonel," a fourth would declare, "he should either shave or leave the regiment."

But Captain Dallimore would only laugh languidly at all such coaxing, bullying, and remonstrance. He loved his whiskers, and was determined not to lose them. Besides, he suspected that envy had something to do with his fellow-officers' disapproval.

Captain Dalton Dallimore never regretted his choice of a profession. The Lancer uniform exactly suited his taste and figure. His duties he found light, and, on the whole, agreeable, while the effect of his lace, spurs, and charger upon the ladies was all that could be desired. The only drawback he ever found was the fact that his regiment was so frequently stationed in remote villages, where he had little company, and little opportunity of receiving what he felt was his due of feminine admiration and attention.

His delight, therefore, can be imagined when his regiment received orders to leave the obscurity of Braxby for the publicity and gaiety of the Irish metropolis. He had been in Dublin before, and knew what he had to expect there—not an occasional dinner at Lord Broadacre's or Squire Cherry's, or a dance every six months at the Town Hall, but a succession of banquets, receptions, and balls, and the admiration and devotion of scores of the prettiest women in Europe.

The gallant Captain was not doomed to disappointment. Dublin proved everything that he had expected. All that was wealthy, beautiful, and fashionable in the city received the Lancers with open arms. Cards of invitation from the Castle, Merrion-square, and Old Trinity, came in scores to every officer's quarters. From Colonel to Lieutenant, they were all in demand everywhere, but none of them seemed to be quite in so great demand as Captain Dalton Dallimore.

It was about a month after the regiment's arrival in Dublin that Captain Dallimore was, alone of all the Lancers, present at a dinner given by Mr. Justice McMurthier in his fine house in Fitzwilliam square. Judge McMurthier was famous for his dinners, and though Captain Dalton Dallimore knew that there would be no ladies there—the host was a bachelor—and that he would be acquainted with few of the guests, he gladly accepted the invitation. And he did not regret it. A better dinner he had never eaten, and the wines were simply incomparable. The only thing, besides his appearance, in which Captain Dallimore took an absorbing interest, was his stomach.

The company, like the dinner, was the best Dublin could supply. It consisted of some members of the Viceregal household, two peers resident in the neighbourhood of the capital, three judges, and several of the most distinguished lawyers, doctors, and capitalists in Ireland. Captain Dalton Dallimore, however, knew very few of them, and the two between whom he sat at dinner did not seem to take much interest in him or his conversation. When, then, Judge McMurthier led the way into the drawing-room, the gallant captain sat down in a corner, there to digest his dinner in silence.

He had been sitting by himself some time when suddenly it occurred to him that one of the guests was a gentleman he had met before, a distinguished lawyer, Serjeant O'Sherry. The learned

Serjeant had dined on the previous night at the mess, and his conversation had been most clever and entertaining. Captain Dallimore resolved to renew the acquaintance.

He made his way over to the Serjeant, and holding out his hand affably said: "I think we have met before, Serjeant O'Sherry."

The Serjeant rose quickly to his feet, and, bowing very low, said: "I have had that honour, sir."

Captain Dallimore was surprised and pleased at [the lawyer's very deferential manner.

After a slight pause, Serjeant O'Sherry spoke again:—"I was not aware, sir," he said, "that you were one of the company, or I should have paid my respects sooner."

"Oh, I suppose," answered Captain Dallimore, more surprised than ever, "you were like myself. I did not at first recognise you."

"Ah, that," replied the Serjeant smiling, "is not strange. That you should forget so humble a person as myself is not wonderful, but that I should forget you is."

"Really, I don't see it," said the Lancer. "We only met once before."

"Yes; but one in my position rarely forgets meeting one in yours."

"In mine?" repeated Captain Dallimore, "I really don't understand you. My position is in no way remarkable."

"Well, really Mr. Kilpatrick—"

"Kilpatrick!" repeated Captain Dallimore.

"Yes, sir," said the Serjeant, looking very much surprised. "I understood I was speaking to Mr. Kilpatrick, the Scotch gentleman who is Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant."

"Well, really," said Captain Dallimore, laughing, "I assure you I'm no such exalted person. I'm plain Captain Dallimore, of the 87th Lancers."

"You don't mean it," cried the lawyer. "It's wonderful; marvellous! I never saw such a striking resemblance! As like as two peas! Same eyes, nose, chin, complexion, moustache, whiskers—especially whiskers! Marvellous! amazing!"

"Did you take me for Mr. Kilpatrick?" asked Captain Dallimore, greatly amused.

"Take you for him?" said Serjeant O'Sherry, vehemently. "Why, his own mother would take you for him! I never saw anything like it before! I remember meeting you, now. It was last night, at mess. Strange that the resemblance didn't strike me then! Perhaps it was the uniform made the difference."

"Upon my word, you make me laugh," said Captain Dallimore.

"Well, let me tell you, Captain," said the Serjeant, lowering his voice in an impressive way, "it's no laughing matter. I wouldn't be in your shoes for something."

"Why?" asked Captain Dallimore, opening his eyes in amazement.

"Why! Don't you know?"

"Not I! I'm rather pleased than otherwise to find I'm like so distinguished a man."

"Are you? Well, I suppose you're a soldier and don't care, but I'm only a civilian, and for my part I wouldn't take ten thousand a year and run the risk you do."

"Run the risk I do?—really, Serjeant, I do not comprehend."

"Don't comprehend! Why, don't you know that there are dozens of men about Dublin looking out for a chance of putting a bullet into Kilpatrick? Now what would happen if they made the same mistake as I did, and took you for him?"

"By George," exclaimed Captain Dallimore, thoroughly startled. "I never thought of that."

"Perhaps you'll soon have reason to do so," said the Serjeant gravely. "It's all right for Kilpatrick himself; he never goes out unguarded—he takes good care of that—but with you it's different. You might get a bullet through you any day."

"Upon my word," said Captain Dallimore seriously, "that's quite true. Am I really very like him?"

"Very like him! It's no name for it. You're just himself over again. Of course you're a soldier, and a brave man, and so laugh at danger; but if I were in your shoes, I'd pretty soon make a change in my appearance."

"How could I do that?"

"How! Why as easily as possible. Shave off your moustache."

Captain Dallimore thought a moment, and then shook his head. The sacrifice was too great.

"Well, yes," said the Serjeant, in reply to the motion, "I forgot you're a military man, and so wouldn't like to part with your moustache. Well, let us see. Why not shave off your whiskers? That would be nearly as good."

Captain Dallimore writhed under the suggestion, but nevertheless he considered it.

"That wouldn't be quite so bad," he said at length. "But do you think it would be enough?"

"Well, it's hard to say," answered the lawyer, "but I'm inclined to think it would. You see, you wear your whiskers exactly as Kilpatrick does. They no doubt do much to produce so striking a resemblance. If you took them off I dare say it would be scarcely noticeable."

Captain Dallimore and Serjeant O'Sherry continued talking earnestly until the time for departure arrived. Then they left together, when the lawyer showed how deep and sincere his concern was for the risk Captain Dallimore ran by insisting on accompanying the officer home the whole way to the Royal Barracks.

"Even my presence," he said, will add something to your safety, and so I feel it my duty to go with you."

All night long Captain Dallimore tossed about unable to sleep. He was tortured by the prospect of a dreadful alternative. It seemed as if he must either shave off his beloved whiskers or go about for the rest of the regiment's stay in Ireland with his life in his hands. He thought the matter over and over again, in hopes of discovering some third course, but none appeared. The position seemed to be—Your whiskers or your life!