ARTICLE.

To John Greble Leech,

Omaha, Neb., Xmas, 1882.

No. 4, Vol.11.

SUBJECT.

"The Count and I".

"The Count & I"

To

John Preble Leech

Omaha, Neb., Christmas, 1882.

I love these clear and starry skies,
The snow that crisp and creaking lies;
It takes me back to days of old
When hands and feet oft ach'd with cold;
But eyes were bright and hearts were warm,
And rosy cheeks grew fresh in storm.
The skates would course the winding creek,
And shouts of joy the silence break;
The sleds from top of hill would glide,
And sleighs chase out the evening tide.
Now shouts of laughter free and full
Relieve the weary upward pull.
The rising moon, the jingling bells,
The happy boys, the pretty girls,
The neighbors house, the gathering throng,
The round-round games and gladsome song,

The trembling lips and timid wiles,
As beating hearts young love beguiles,
The pawns and forfeits 'hind the door
With bolder catches on open floor;
One might go on for days and nights
And have one's fill of happy sights,—
Yes, visions sweet and full of joys
When Count and I were lively boys!

You know 'twas Maine with colder clime,—
Where rocks and hills rise up sublime,
Where virgin forests still exist,
And Moosehead adds the summer mist,
For ample game in winter days
Or other sports with warmer rays,—
Yes, Maine, my state, my native land
Whose snow-bound coasts one still command
To look for past and future mead,
For boyhood joys and sunset need.

The Count, your sire, from southward came;

To Penn his country owes its name.
To Friends and peace the land was given,
For iron ore the hills are riven;
And coal thence flows to all the world
Where stars and stripes are ere unfurled.
In youth we met, the Count and I,
Where Hudson's homely breathings sigh.
Near Roe's hotel we learned the drill,
And messed and marched, for both, our fill.
Joined hand to hand in many a "hop"
Or breathless toiled to mountain top;
Or coming o'er the lesson sweet,
With dread, examiners to meet.
The play and work to mem'ry bright,
Tho' years do make their ceaseless flight,
Return to mental chambers clear,
Called up by greetings of the year.
For now indeed the time has come
Which brings to mind his only son.

For Christmas festive times agree
That Count and I had choicest glee!
When he and I were but nineteen,
And he'd not yet his Fairie seen.

x ^ ^ ^

Oh, how they've sped those years gone by!
From school to Arsenal facing Troy,
Where gentle wife completes the joy;
To Maine for months and then return,
With bonnie boy the eastern born.
Then comes the first of parting grief!
Yet soon to coral fields relief
As, by way of compensation,
Put in orders, new relation,
To teach the youth on Hudson's shore.
What could the waiting heart ask more!

Meanwhile my friend had sallied forth,
To try his luck 'mid civil worth
In crowds and work his sight I missed

But heard one day that he'd been blest
By this; a lovely dark eyed maid
Had from her choicest home convey'd
Herself, the rich and precious life,
To my good friend, a charming wife.
But ho! the Count and I, still young,
As still we teach and trade among
The Hudson and the folks of Penn,
And mingling age with youth and men
A boding sound comes thrilling through
The Southern land and Northern, too,
A sound the like you never heard,
Of surging sea, of multitude,
From Georgia's reef to Maine's north bound,
From Northern lake to Southmost sound,
From coast to coast the world half o'er
The air is full of - raging, - roar!
But Oh! my son, how stop the car
Of war all grim the engine fire.

Enough, that now my friend the Count
On stalwart steed was quick to mount;
And he a thousand men before,
Did lead them bravely out to war.
His comrade too with equal men,
Joined hand to hand his friend again.
On many a field in deadliest strife,
Where blood goes out and human life,
The Count himself brave, true and bold
Did well his part to save the Fold.
We held the Father's gift in gage
And kept the children's heritage.
The war is past, and peace is come,
And happy triumph turns us home.
The wife, the bairns with welcome greet,
With dewy eyes, returning feet,—
And for a time my friend and I
Would all the merry elfs defy,
So great our joys, so nice our friends!
Pure blessings God upon us sends.

But still the war had left its scars,
Disfigured forms; the market mars.
While one goes halting thro. the years,
Your Mother's heart is filled with fears.
My wounds without, but his within,
No help avails from kith or kin.
The fell destroyer sets his seal,
No care or cure brings back his weal.
He too, my friend, like many other,
Father, comrade, son and brother,
Gave up thus soon his noble life.
His country has the sacrifice!

Hear then my son this simple story
Of your father's youth and glory:
And go you forth both proud and brave
Prepared to fill the hopes he crav'd.
Now that you see all strife doth cease,
Be loyal to the Prince of Peace!
As Christmas brings you many a thought,

Headquarters Department of the Platte

COMMANDING GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Omaha Barracks, Neb., ... 187 .

Of those who have your battles fought,
Make of your life the most you can,—
Be filial, strong,— a manly man!
For God will bless and knit the land
By his own, his loving hand,
When all our youth His law shall love
And keep best gifts we bought with blood.

Headquarters Department of the Platte

COMMANDING GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Omaha Barracks, Neb., 187 .