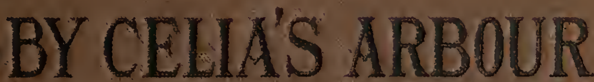

BY THE AUTHORS OF

"READY-MONEY MORTIBOY",

"THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY"

ETC. ETC.

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LOS ANGELES

BY CELIA'S ARBOUR.

A Tale of Portsmouth Town.

[REPRINTED FROM THE "GRAPHIC"]

BY

WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE,

AUTHORS OF
"READY-MONEY MORTIBOY," "THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY," "MY LITTLE GIRL," "WITH HARP AND CROWN," "THIS SON OF VULCAN," "THE CASE OF MR. LUCRAFT," "WHEN THE SHIP COMES HOME," "THE MONKS OF THELEMA,"
ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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BY CELIA'S ARBOUR.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE QUEEN'S BASTION.

TWO boys and a girl, standing together in the north-west corner of the Queen's Bastion on the old town wall.

Leonard, the elder boy, leans on an old-fashioned 32-pounder which points through an embrasure, narrow at the mouth and wide at the end, straight up the harbour.

Should any enemy attempt to cross the lagoon of mud which forms the upper harbour at low tide, that enemy would, as Leonard often explained, be "raked" by the gun. Leonard is a lad between seventeen and eighteen, tall, and well-grown. As yet his figure is too slight, but that will fill out; his shoulders are broad enough for the strength a year or two more will give him; he has short brown hair of quite a common colour, but lustrous, and with a natural curl in it; his eyes are hazel, and they are steadfast; when he fought battles at school those eyes looked like winning; his chin is strong and square; his lips are firm. Only to look upon him as he passed, you would say that you had seen a strong man in his youth. People turned their heads after he had gone by to have another look at such a handsome boy.

He leans his back, now, against the gun, his hands resting lightly upon the carriage on either side, as if to be ready for immediate action; his straw hat lies on the grass beside him. And he is looking in the face of the girl.

She is a mere child of thirteen or fourteen, standing before him and gazing into his face with sad and solemn eyes. She, too, is bareheaded, carrying her summer hat by the ribbons. I suppose no girl of fourteen, when girls are bony, angular, and big-footed, can properly be described as beautiful; but

Celia was always beautiful to me. Her face remains the same to me through the changes of many years—always lovely, always sweet and winsome. Her eyes were light blue, and yet not shallow; she had a pair of mutinous little lips which were generally, but not to-night, laughing; her hair hung over her shoulders in the long and unfettered tresses which so well become young maidens; and in her cheek was the prettiest little dimple ever seen. But now she looked sad, and tears were gathered in her eyes.

As for me, I was lying on the parapet of the wall, looking at the other two. Perhaps it will save trouble if I state at once who I was, and what to look upon. In the year 1853 I was sixteen years of age, about two years older than Celia, nearly two years younger than Leonard. I believe I had already arrived at my present tall stature, which is exactly five feet one inch. I am a hunchback. An accident in infancy rounded my shoulders and arched my back, giving me a projection which causes my coats to hang loosely where other men's fit tight, forcing my neck forward so that my head bends back where other people's heads are held straight upon their necks. It was an unfortunate accident, because I should, but for it, have grown into a strong man; my limbs are stout and my arms are muscular. It cost me nothing as a boy

to climb up ropes and posts, to clamber hand over hand along a rail, to get up into trees, to do anything where I could get hold for a single hand or for a single foot. I was not—through my unlucky back, the distortion of my neck, and the length of my arm—comely to look upon. All the years of my childhood, and some a good deal later, were spent in the miserable effort to bring home to myself the plain fact that I was *disgracié*. The comeliness of youth and manhood could be no more mine than my father's broad lands; for, besides being a hunchback, I was an exile, a Pole, the son of a Polish rebel, and therefore penniless. My name is Ladislas Pulaski.

We were standing, as I said, in the north-west corner of the Queen's Bastion, the spot where the grass was longest and greenest, the wild convolvulus most abundant, and where the noblest of the great elms which stood upon the ramparts—"to catch the enemy's shells," said Leonard—threw out a gracious arm laden with leafy foliage to give a shade. We called the place Celia's Arbour.

If you looked out over the parapet, you saw before you the whole of the most magnificent harbour in the world; and if you looked through the embrasure of the wall, you had a splendid framed picture—water for foreground, old ruined castle in

middle distance, blue hill beyond, and above blue sky.

We were all three silent, because it was Leonard's last evening with us. He was going away, our companion and brother, and we were there to bid him God speed.

It was after eight; suddenly the sun, which a moment before was a great disc of burnished gold, sank below the thin line of land between sky and sea.

Then the evening gun from the Duke of York's Bastion proclaimed the death of another day with a loud report, which made the branches in the trees above us to shake and tremble. And from the barracks in the town; from the Harbour Admiral's flagship; from the Port Admiral's flagship; from the flagship of the Admiral in command of the Mediterranean Fleet, then in harbour; from the tower of the old church, there came such a firing of muskets, such a beating of drums, playing of fifes, ringing of bells, and sounding of trumpets, that you would have thought the sun was setting once for all, and receiving his farewell salute from a world he was leaving for ever to roll about in darkness.

The evening gun and the *tintamarre* that followed roused us all three, and we involuntarily turned to look across the parapet. Beyond that was the

moat, and beyond the moat was a ravelin, and beyond the ravelin the sea-wall; beyond the wall a smooth and placid lake, for it was high tide, four miles long and a couple of miles wide, in which the splendour of the west was reflected so that it looked like a furnace of molten metal. At low tide it would have been a great flat level of black mud, unlovely even with an evening sky upon it, intersected with creeks and streams which, I suppose, were kept full of water by the drainage of the mud-banks.

At the end of the harbour stood the old ruined castle, on the very margin and verge of the water. The walls were reflected in the calm bosom of the lagoon; the water-gate opened out upon the wavelets of the lapping tide; behind rose the great donjon, square, grey, and massive; in the tourney-yard stood the old church, and we needed no telling to make us think of the walls behind, four feet broad, rugged and worn by the tooth of Time, thickly blossoming with gilly-flowers, clutched and held on all sides by the tight embrace of the ivy. There had been rain in the afternoon, so that the air was clear and transparent, and you could see every stone in the grand old keep, every dentation of the wall.

Behind the castle lay the low curved line of a long hill, green and grassy, which made a back-

ground to the harbour and the old fortress. It stretched for six miles, this hill, and might have been monotonous but for the chalk quarries which studded its side with frequent intervals of white. Farther on, to the west, there lay a village, buried in a great clump of trees, so that you could see nothing but the tower of a church and the occasional smoke of a chimney. The village was so far off, that it seemed like some outlying fort, an advance work of civilisation, an outpost such as those which the Roman conquerors have left in the desert. When your eye left the village among the trees and travelled southwards, you could see very little of land on the other side by reason of the ships which intervened—ships of every age, of every class, of every colour, of every build; frigates, three-deckers, brigs, schooners, cutters, launches, gunboats, paddle-wheel steamers, screw steamers, hulks so old as to be almost shapeless—they were lying ranged in line, or they were moored separately; some in the full flood of the waning sunset, some in shadow, one behind the other, making deep blacknesses in the golden water. There was not much life at this late hour in the harbour. Here and there a boat pulled by two or three lads from the town; here and there a great ship's gig, moving heavily through the water, pulled by a crew of sailors, rowing with their slow and measured stroke, and the little middy

sitting in the stern; or perhaps a wherry coming down from Fareham Creek. But mostly the harbour was silent, the bustle even at the lower end having ceased with the sunset.

"What do you see up the harbour, Leonard?" asked the girl, for all of us were gazing silently at the glorious sight.

"I am looking for my future, Cis, and I cannot make it out."

"Tell us what you think, Leonard."

"Five minutes ago it looked splendid. But the glory is going off the water. See, Cis, the castle has disappeared—there is nothing to be made out there but a low black mass of shade; and the ships are so many black logs lying on grey water that in ten minutes will be black too. Nothing but blackness. Is that my future?"

"I can read you a better fortune out of the sunset than that," I interposed.

"Do, Laddy," said Celia. "Don't let poor Leonard go away with a bad omen."

"If you look above you, Leonard," I went on, "you will see that all the splendours of the earth have gone up into the heavens. Look at the brightness there. Was there ever a more glorious sunset? There is a streak of colour for you!—the one above the belt of salmon—blue, with just a suspicion on the far edge of green. Leonard, if

you believed in visions, and wished for the best possible, you could have nothing better than that before you. If your dreams were to get money and rubbish like that"—it will be remembered that I who enunciated this sentiment, and Celia who clapped her hands, and Leonard who nodded gravely, were all three very young—"such rubbish, it would lead you to disappointment, just as the golden water is turning black. But up above the colours are brighter, and they are lasting; they never fade."

"They are fading now, Laddy."

"Nonsense. Sunsets never fade. They are for ever moving westwards round the world. Don't you know that there is always sunset going on somewhere? Gold in evening clouds for us to see, and a golden sunrise for some others. So, Leonard, when your dreams of the future were finished you looked up, and you saw the sky brighter than the harbour. That means that the future will be brighter than you ever dreamed."

Leonard laughed.

"You agree with Laddy, Cis? Of course you do. As if you two ever disagreed yet!"

"I must go home, Leonard; it is nearly nine. And, oh! you are going away to-night, and when —when shall we see you again?"

"I am going away to-night, Cis. I have said

good-bye to the Captain, God bless him, and I am going to London by the ten o'clock train to seek my fortune."

"But you will write to us, Leonard, won't you? You will tell us what you are doing, and where you are, and all about yourself?"

He shook his head.

"No, Cis, not even that. Listen. I have talked it all over with the Captain. I am going to make my fortune—somehow. I don't know how, nor does he, the dear old man. But I am going to try. Perhaps I shall fail, perhaps I shall succeed. I *must* succeed." His face grew stern and a little hard. "Because everything depends upon it, whether I shall be a gentleman, or what a gutter child ought to expect."

"Don't, Leonard."

"Forgive me, Laddy, but everybody knows that you are a gentleman by birth and descent, and very few know that I am too. Give me five years. In five years' time, if I live, and unless it is absolutely impossible for me to get home, I promise to meet you both again. It will be June the 21st in the year 1858. We will meet at this time—sunset—and on this same spot, by Celia's Arbour."

"In five years. It is half a lifetime. What will have happened to us all in five years? But not a single letter? Oh, Leonard, promise to write one

letter, only one, during all the years, to say that you are well. Not leave us all the time without a single word."

He shook his head.

"Not one, Cis, my child. I am not going to write you a single letter. One thing only I have promised the Captain. If I am in danger, sickness, or any trouble, I am to write to him. But if you get no news of me set it down to good news."

"Then, if you will not write there is nothing to look forward to but the end of the five years. Laddy, don't you feel as if you were a convict beginning a five years' sentence? I do, and perhaps you will forget all about us, Leonard, when you are away over there, in the great world."

"Forget you, Cissy?" He took her hands, and drew the girl to himself. "Forget you? Why, there is nothing else in all the world for me to remember except you, and Laddy, and the Captain. If I could forget the seventeen years of my life, the town, and the port, the ships, and the sailors, the old walls, and the bastions—if I could rid my memory of all that is in it now, why—then, perhaps I could forget little Cissy. Other men belong to families. I have none. Other men have brothers and sisters. I have none. Laddy is my brother, and you are my sister. Never think, Cis, that I can forget you for one moment."

"No, Leonard. We will try to feel always that you are thinking about us. The Captain says nothing is better for people than always to remember what others would like them to say, and think, and do. Stay, Leonard." She had made a little bouquet of daisies, and the sweet wild convolvulus which spread itself over all the slopes of the walls. Out of this she picked two or three blossoms, tied them up with a tendril, and laid them in a paper. "That is my French exercise for to-morrow. Never mind. There, Leonard, carry that away with you, to remember me by."

"I will take it, Cis, but I want nothing to remember you by."

"And now, Leonard, make your promise over again. Say after me, 'In five years' time——' "

"In five years' time——"

" 'In rags or in velvet'—be very particular about that, Leonard, you are neither to be too proud to come nor too ashamed, in rags or in velvet."

"In rags or in velvet."

" 'In poverty or in riches.' "

"In poverty or in riches."

" 'In honour or'——no, there can be no dishonour—'in honour or before the honour has been reached, I will return.' "

"I will return," echoed Leonard.

"And we will meet you here, Laddy and I."

He held her hands while she dictated the words of this solemn promise, looking up at him with earnest and pleading face.

Then the church clock struck nine, and from the Port Admiral's flagship boomed a solitary gun, which rolled in short, sharp echoes along the walls, and then slowly thundered up the shores of the harbour. Then there was a pause. And then the bells began their customary evening hymn. They struck the notes slowly, and as if with effort. But the hymn-tune was soft and sad, and a carillon is always sweet. That finished, there came the curfew bell, which has been rung every night in the old town since the time of the great Norman king. The day was quite done now, and the twilight of the summer night was upon us. Gleams of grey lay in the west reflected in the untroubled sheet of the harbour, the cloudless sky looked almost as blue as in the day, and the stars were faint and pale. Venus alone shone brightly; the trees, in the warm, calm night, looked as if they were sleeping, all but one—a great elm which stood at the end of the wall, where it joined the dockyard. It was shaped in the black profile of the evening something like the face of a man, so that it stood like a giant sentry looking every night across the harbour.

"I must go," said Celia. "Good-bye, Leonard

Good-bye, dear Leonard. Forgive me if I have teased you. We shall look forward—Oh! how eagerly we shall look forward to the end of the five years. Good-bye."

He took her in his arms, and kissed her again and again. She cried and sobbed. Then he let her go, and without a word she fled from us both, flying down the grassy slope across the green. In the twilight we could catch the glimmer of her white dress as she ran home, until she reached her father's garden gate, and was lost.

"Walk with me to the station, Laddy," said Leonard.

We walked away from the quiet walls where there was no one but ourselves, out from the shadow of the big elms, and the breath of dewy grass, and the peacefulness of the broad waters, down into the busy streets. Our way lay through the narrowest and the noisiest. Shops were open, especially places which sold things to eat and to drink. Hundreds of men—chiefly young men—were loafing about, pipes in their mouths, among the women, who were buying in a street market, consisting almost entirely of costers' carts and barrows, and where the principal articles exposed for sale appeared to be hot cooked things of pungent and appetising odour, served and dressed with fried onions. Every night, all the year round,

that market went on; every night that incense of fried onions arose to the much-enduring skies, every night the crowd jostled, pushed, and enjoyed their jokes around these barrows, lit by candles stuck in bottles, protected by oiled paper.

"Look at them," said Leonard, indicating a little knot of young fellows laughing together at each other's *gros mots*. "Look at them. If it had not been for the Captain I might have been like them."

"So might I, for that matter."

"What a life! No ambition! No hope to get beyond the pipe and beer! If I fail it will be better than never to have tried. Laddy, I mean to make a spoon or spoil a horn, as the Scotch say."

"How, Leonard?"

"I do not know quite. Somehow, Laddy. Here we are at the station. You will be good to the old man, won't you? Of course you will, Laddy, a great deal better than I could ever be, because you are so much more considerate. Keep up his spirits, make him spin yarns. And you will look sharp after the little girl, Laddy. She is your great charge. I give her into your keeping. Why, when I come back she will be nineteen, and I shall be four-and-twenty. Think of that. Laddy, before I go I am going to tell you a great secret.

Keep it entirely to yourself. Let no one hear a word of it, not even the Captain."

"Not even Cis?"

"Why, that would spoil all. Listen. If I come back in five years' time, a gentleman, a real gentleman by position as I am by birth, I mean to—to ask little Celia to marry me."

I laughed.

"How do you know you will care for her then?"

"I know that very well," he replied. "I shall never care in the same way for any other girl. That is quite certain. But oh, what a slender chance it is! I am to make myself a gentleman in five years. Celia has got to get through these five years without falling in love with anybody else. Of course all the fellows in the place will be after her. And I have got to please her when I do come back. Wish me luck, Laddy, and good-bye, and God bless you all three."

He squeezed my hand, and rushed into a carriage as the engine whistled, the bell rang, and the train moved away. Then I realised that Leonard was really gone, and that we should not see him again for five long years.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTAIN.

I WALKED home sadly enough, thinking how dull life for the next five years was going to be. It was half-past ten when I arrived, but the Captain was sitting up beyond his usual hour, waiting to hear the last news of Leonard. He was at the open window overlooking his garden; before him stood his glass of grog, empty, and his evening pipe was finished.

"You saw him off, Laddy?" he asked with a little eagerness, as if Leonard might possibly be lurking in the hall. "You are quite sure he got safely into the train"—five-and-twenty years ago people were not so familiar with railway-trains, and they were generally regarded even by old sailors as things uncertain about going off, as well as untrustworthy when you were in them. "Poor lad!

At Winchester by this time, very nearly. Thirty miles from salt water."

The Captain at this time was about sixty years of age. He was a man of short and sturdy build, with a broad and rosy face like an apple, and perfectly white hair. His whiskers, equally white, were cut to the old-fashioned regulation "mutton-chop," very much like what has now come into fashion again. They advanced into the middle of the cheek, and were then squared off in a line which met the large stiff collar below at an angle of forty-five. Round the collar, the Captain wore a white cravat, which put on many folds as the weather grew cold. He never appeared except in some sort of uniform, and paraded his profession habitually, as was the custom among sailors of his standing, by a blue frock with anchor buttons. In winter, he wore loose blue trousers, which, when the warmer days returned, he exchanged for white ducks. Upstairs he kept a uniform of surpassing splendour, with epaulettes, sword-belt, sword, gold lace, and an innumerable number of buttons. But this was reserved for ceremonies, as when a ship was launched, or when the Port Admiral invited the Captain to dinner, or when the Queen visited the Yard. On all other occasions, the blue frock with brass buttons formed the Captain's only wear.

He had great white beetling eyebrows which

would have lent him a ferocious aspect but for the twinkling blue eyes beneath them. There were crows'-feet lying thick about those eyes which gave them a curiously humorous look, not belied by the mobile lips below.

You might see, by the light of the single pair of candles, that it was a plainly-furnished room, having in it little besides a small square table, a horsehair sofa, a wooden arm-chair, a bookshelf with a hundred volumes or so, most of them boys' school-books, and a piano which was mine, given me by Mr. Tyrrell. The walls were decorated with pictures of naval engagements and ships, cut out of illustrated papers, or picked up at second-hand shops, mounted and framed by the Captain himself. Above the mantelshelf was a print of the Battle of Navarino, showing the *Asia* engaged with two Egyptian and Turkish men-of-war, one on each side of her, the rest of the action being invisible by reason of the smoke. The Captain would contemplate that picture with a satisfaction quite beyond the power of words.

" 'Twas in '27," he would say ; " I was Lieutenant then : Sir Edward Codrington was Admiral. We sailed into Navarino harbour at 2 P.M. after dinner. Gad ! it was a warm afternoon we had, and lucky it was the lads dined before it. Something to remember afterwards. Don't tell me that Turks can't

fight. A better fight was never made even by the French in the old days. But their ships, of course, were not handled like ours, and out of eighty odd craft, which made up their fleet, we didn't leave a dozen fit for sea again."

And on the mantelshelf was a model, made by the Captain, of the *Asia* herself.

The piano, I explained above, was my own. Everything else I had in the world came from the Captain ; the clothes I wore were bought by him ; it was he who brought me up, educated me, and lifted me out of the mire. I am bankrupt in gratitude to the Captain. I have no words to say what I owe to him. I can never repay by any words, acts, or prayers, the load of obligation under which I rejoice to be towards that good man.

It began, his incomparable benevolence to Leonard and to me, like a good many other important things, with a crime. Not a very great crime ; nor was the criminal a very important person ; but, as the Rev. Mr. Pontifex once said of it, it was emphatically a Wrong Thing, and like all Wrong Things ought to be remembered with Repentance. Mr. Pontifex, although he had never had the opportunity of reading a certain great Bishop's Treatise on the Sinfulness of Little Sins, was as uncompromising as that Prelate could wish, and I hope that Leonard, who was the criminal, has long

since repented. Certainly, it was the infraction of a commandment. Now Mr. Pontifex has repeatedly asserted, and his wife approved, that he who breaks one commandment breaks all. This is what was done.

The Captain's house, one of a row, stood separated from the street by the respectability of three feet clear and an iron railing. It was close to St. Faith's Square, a fashionable and almost aristocratic quarter, inhabited by retired naval officers, a few men who had made fortunes in business, and a sprinkling of lawyers. It was a plain square red-brick house, with nothing remarkable about it but the garden at the back. This was not a large garden, and, like others in the old town, was originally intended as a drying ground — all builders in those days were accustomed to consider a house as, in the first instance, a family laundry. The garden was planted with raspberry canes, gooseberry bushes, and currant-trees. Peaches and plums were trained along the walls. There were one or two small pear-trees, and there was a very fine mulberry. In the spaces the Captain cultivated onions, radishes, and lettuce with great success. But the garden was remarkable in having no back wall. It looked out upon the Mill-dam, an artificial lake designed, I believe, to flood the moats of the fortifications if necessary. Projecting

iron spikes prevented the neighbours on either hand from invading our territory, and you could sit on the stone-work at the end of the wall with your feet dangling over the water. It was a broad sheet periodically lowered and raised by the tide, which rushed in and ran out by a passage under the road-way, close to which was the King's Mill, worked by the tide. Sitting in the garden you could hear the steady grinding noise of the mill-wheels. The Mill-dam was not without its charm. In the centre stood an island redoubt, set with trees like the walls, and connected with the road which crossed the water by a light iron bridge. There was a single-storied house upon that island, and I remember thinking that it must be the grandest thing in the world to live upon it, all alone, or perhaps with Celia, to have a cask of provisions and absolute liberty to wander round and round the grassy fort, particularly if the iron bridge could be knocked away, and a boat substituted.

They have filled up the Mill-dam now; pulled down the King's Mill; destroyed the redoubt; and replaced the bright, sparkling sheet of water with an open field, on which they have made a military hospital. The garden at the back of the house has got a wall too, now. But I wish they had let the old things remain as they were.

It was in this garden that the Captain was ac-

customed to sit after dinner, except when the weather was too cold. One day, nine or ten years before my story begins, he repaired thither on a certain sultry day in August at half-past two in the afternoon. He had with him a long pipe and a newspaper. He placed his arm-chair under the shade of the mulberry-tree, then rich with ripe purple fruit, and sat down to read at ease. Whether it was the languor of the day, or the mild influence of the mill hard by, or the effects of the pipe, is not to be rashly decided, but the Captain presently exchanged the wooden chair for the grass under the mulberry-tree, upon which, mindful of his white ducks and the fallen fruit, he spread a rug, and then leaning back against the trunk, which was sloped by Nature for this very purpose, he gazed for a few moments upon the dazzling surface of the Mill-dam, and then fell fast asleep.

Now at very low tides the water in the Mill-dam would run out so far as to leave a narrow belt of dry shingle under the stone wall, and that happened on this very afternoon. Presently there came creeping along this little beach, all alone, with curious and wondering eyes which found something to admire in every pebble, a little boy of eight. He was bare-footed, and bare-headed, a veritable little gutter-boy, clad almost in rags. It was a long way round the lake from the only place where he

could have got down, a good quarter of a mile at least, and he stopped at the bottom of the Captain's garden for two excellent reasons, one that he felt tired and thirsty, and the other that the tide was already racing in through the mill like the rapids at Niagara, that it already covered the beach in front and behind, and was advancing with mighty strides over the little strip on which he stood. And it occurred to that lonely little traveller that unless he could get out of the mess, something dreadful in the shape of wet feet and subsequent drowning would happen to him.

He was a little frightened at the prospect, and began to cry gently. But he was not a foolish child, and he reflected immediately that crying was no good. So he looked at the wall behind him. It was a sea wall with a little slope, only about five feet high, and built with rough stones irregularly dressed, so as to afford foot and hand hold for any boy who wished to climb up or down. In two minutes the young mountaineer had climbed the dizzy height and stood upon the stone coping, looking back to the place he had come from. Below him the water was flowing where he had stood just now; and turning round he found himself in a garden with some one, a gentleman in white trousers, white waistcoat, and white hair, with a blue coat, sitting in the shade. His jolly red

face was lying sideways, lovingly against the tree, his cap on the grass beside him ; his mouth was half open ; his eyes were closed ; while a soft melodious snore, like the contented hymn of some æsthetic pigling, proclaimed aloud to the young observer that the Captain was asleep,

The boy advanced towards the sleeping stranger in a manner common to one of tender age, that is, on all-fours, giving action to his hands and arms in imitation of an imaginary wild beast. He crept thus, first to the right side, then to the left, and then between the wide-spread legs of the Captain, peering into his unconscious face. Then he suddenly became conscious that he was under a mulberry tree, that the fruit was ripe, that a chair was standing convenient for one who might wish to help himself, and that one branch lower than the rest hung immediately over the chair, so that even a child might reach out his hand and gather the fruit.

This was the Wrong Thing lamented by the Rev. Mr. Pontifex. The unprincipled young robber, after quite realising the position of things—strange garden—gentleman of marine calling sound asleep—ripe fruit—present thirst—overwhelming curiosity to ascertain if this kind of fruit resembled apples—yielded without resistance to temptation, and mounted the chair.

Five minutes later, the Captain lazily opened his eyes.

Boom—boom—boom—the mill was going with redoubled vigour, for the tide had turned since he fell asleep, and was now rushing through the dark subterranean avenues with a mighty roar. But except for the tide and the mill everything was very quiet. Accustomed noises do not keep people awake. Thus in the next garden but one two brothers were fighting, but as this happened every day, and all day, it did not disturb the Captain. One was worsted in the encounter. He ran away and got into some upper chamber, from the window of which he yelled in a hoarse stammer to his victorious brother, who was red-haired, "J—J—Jack—you're a c—c—c—carrotty thief." But invective of this kind, not addressed to himself, only gently tickled the Captain's tympanum ; the sun was still very bright, the air was balmy, and I think he would have fallen asleep again but for one thing. A strange sound smote his ears. It was a sound like unto the smacking of tongues and the sucking of lips ; or like the pleased champing of gratified teeth ; a soft and gurgling sound ; with, unless the Captain's ears greatly deceived him, a low breathing of great contentment. He listened lazily, wondering what this sound might mean. While he listened, a mulberry fell upon his nose and

bounded off, making four distinct leaps from nose to shirt-front, from shirt-front to white waistcoat, from waistcoat to ducks, and from ducks to the rug. That was nothing remarkable. Mulberries will fall when over-ripe, and the Captain had swept away a basketful that day before dinner. So he did not move, but listened still. The noises were accompanied by a little *frou-frou*, which seemed to betoken something human. But the Captain was still far from being broad awake, and so he continued to wonder lazily. Then another mulberry fell; then half-a-dozen, full on his waistcoat, cannoning in all directions to the utter ruin of his white garments, and a low childish laugh burst forth close to him, and the Captain sprang to his feet.

To his amazement there stood on the chair before him a ragged little boy, barefoot and bare-headed, his face purple with mulberry juice, his mouth crammed with fruit, his fingers stained, his ragged clothes smirched; even his little feet, so dusty and dirty, standing in a pool of mulberry juice.

The Captain was a bachelor and a sailor, and on both grounds fond of children. Now the face of the child before him, so bonny, so saucy, so full of glee and confidence, went straight to his heart, and he laughed a welcome and patted the boy's cheek.

But the fact itself was remarkable. Where had

the child come from? Not through the front door, which was closed; nor over the wall, which was impossible.

"How the dickens——" the Captain began. "I beg your pardon, my lad, for swearing, which is a bad habit; but how did you get here?"

The boy pointed to the wall and the water.

"Oh!" said the Captain, doubtfully. "Swam, did you? Now that's odd. I've seen them half your size in the Pacific swim like fishes, but I never heard of an English boy doing it before. Where do you live, boy?"

The child looked interrogative.

"Where's daddy? Gone to sea, belike, as a good sailor should?"

But the boy shook his head.

"Daddy's dead, I suppose. Drowned, likely, as many a good sailor is. Where's your mammy?"

The boy looked a little frightened at these questions, to which he could evidently give no satisfactory reply.

"The line's pretty nigh paid out," said the Captain; "but we'll try once more. Who takes care of you, boy—finds you in rations, and serves out the rope's end?"

This time the boy began to understand a little.

Then the Captain put on his hat and led him by the hand to the *quartier* where the sailors' wives

did mostly congregate. In this he was guided by the fine instinct of experience, because he *felt*, in spite of the rags, that the boy had been dressed by a sailor's wife. None but such a woman could give a sea-going air to two garments so simple as those which kept the weather from the boy.

He led the child by the hand till presently the child led him, and piloted the Captain safely to a house where a woman—it was Mrs. Jeram—came running out, crying shrilly:

"Lenny! why, wherever have you bin and got to?"

There was another ragged little boy with a round back, five or six years old, sitting on the door-step. When the Captain had finished his talk with Mrs. Jeram, he came out and noticed that other boy, and then he returned and had more talk.

CHAPTER III.

VICTORY ROW.

MRS. JERAM was a weekly tenant in one of a row of small four-roomed houses known as Victory Row, which led out of Nelson Street, and was a broad, blind court, bounded on one side and at the end by the Dockyard wall. It was not a dirty and confined court, but quite the reverse, being large, clean, and a very Cathedral Close for quietness. The wall, built of a warm red brick, had a broad and sloping top, on which grew wallflowers, long grasses, and stonecrop; overhanging the wall was a row of great elms, in the branches of which there was a rookery, so that all day long you could listen if you wished to the talk of the rooks. Now this is never querulous, angry, or argumentative. The rook does not combat an adversary's opinion: he merely states his own; if the other one does not agree with him

he states it again, but without temper. If you watch them and listen, you will come to the conclusion that they are not theorists, like poor humans, but simply investigators of fact. It has a restful sound, the talk of rooks; you listen in the early morning, and they assist your sleeping half-dream without waking you; or in the evening they carry your imagination away to woods and sweet country glades. They have cut down the elms now, and driven the rooks to find another shelter. Very likely, in their desire to sweep away everything that is pretty, they have torn the wallflowers and grasses off the wall as well. And if these are gone, no doubt Victory Row has lost its only charm. If I were to visit it now, I should probably find it squalid and mean. The eating of the tree of knowledge so often makes things that once we loved look squalid.

But to childhood nothing is unlovely in which the imagination can light upon something to feed it. It is the blessed province of all children, high and low, to find themselves at the gates of Paradise, and quite certainly Tom the Piper's son, sitting under a hedge with a raw potato for plaything, is every bit as happy as a little Prince of Wales. The possibilities of the world which opens out before us are infinite; while the glories of the world we have left behind are still clinging to the brain,

and shed a supernatural colouring on everything. At six, it is enough to live; to awake in the morning to the joy of another day; to eat, sleep, play, and wonder; to revel in the vanities of childhood; to wanton in make-belief superiority; to admire the deeds of bigger children; to emulate them, like Icarus: and too often, like that greatly daring youth, to fall.

Try to remember, if you can, something of the mental attitude of childhood; recall, if you may, some of the long thoughts of early days. To begin with—God was quite close to you, up among the stars; He was seated somewhere, ready to give you whatever you wanted; everybody was a friend, and everybody was occupied all day long about your personal concerns; you had not yet arrived at the boyishness of forming plans for the future. You were still engaged in imitating, exercising, wondering. Every man was a demi-god—you had not yet arrived at the consciousness that you might become yourself a man; the resources of a woman—to whom belong bread, butter, sugar, cake, and jam—were unbounded; everything that you saw was full of strange and mysterious interest. You had not yet learned to sneer, to criticise, to compare, and to down-cry.

Mrs. Jeram's house, therefore, in my eyes, contained everything that heart of man could crave

for. The green-painted door opened into a room which was at once reception-room, dining-room, and kitchen; furnished, too, though that I did not know, in anticipation of the present fashion, having plates of blue and white china stuck round the walls. The walls were built of that warm red brick which time covers with a coating of grey-like moss. You find it everywhere among the old houses of the south of England; but I suppose the clay is all used up, because I see none of it in the new houses.

We were quite respectable people in Victory Row; of that I am quite sure, because Mrs. Jeram would have made the place much too lively, by the power and persistence of her tongue, for other than respectable people. We were seafaring folk, of course; and in every house was something strange from foreign parts. To this day I never see anything new in London shops or in museums without a backward rush of associations which lands me once more in Victory Row; for the sailors' wives had all these things long ago, before inland people ever heard of them. There were Japanese cabinets, picked up in Chinese ports long before Japan was open; there was curious carved wood and ivory work from Canton. These things were got during the Chinese war. And there was a public-house in a street hard by which was decorated, instead of with a red window-blind, like other such establishments,

with a splendid picture representing some of the episodes in that struggle: all the Chinese were running away in a disgraceful stampede, while Jack Tar, running after them, caught hold of their pigtails with the left hand, and deftly cut off their heads with the right, administering at the same time a frolicsome kick. John Chinaman's legs were generally both off the ground together, such was his fear. Then there were carved ostrich eggs; wonderful things from the Brazils in feathers; frail delicacies in coral from the Philippines, known as Venus's flower-baskets; grewsome-looking cases from the West Indies, containing centipedes, scorpions, beetles, and tarantulas; small turtle shells, dried flying-fish, which came out in moist exudations during wet weather, and smelt like haddock; shells of all kinds, big and little; clubs, tomahawks, and other queer weapons, carved in wood, from the Pacific; stuffed humming-birds, and birds of Paradise. There were live birds, too—avvadavats, Java sparrows, love-birds, parroquets, and parrots in plenty. There was one parrot, at the corner house, who affected the ways of one suffering from incurable consumption—he was considered intensely comic by children and persons of strong stomach and small imagination. There were parrots who came, stayed a little while, and then were taken away and sold, who spoke foreign tongues with amazing

volubility, who swore worse than Gresset's Vert Vert, and who whistled as beautifully as a boatswain—the same airs, too. The specimens which belonged to Art or inanimate Nature were ranged upon a table at the window. They generally stood or were grouped around a large Bible, which it was a point of ceremonial to have in the house. The live birds were hung outside in sunny weather, all except the parrot with the perpetual cold, who walked up and down the court by himself and coughed. The streets surrounding us were, like our own, principally inhabited by mariners and their families, and presented similar characteristics; so that one moved about in a great museum open for general inspection during daylight, and free for all the world. Certain I am that if all the rare and curious things displayed in these windows had been collected and preserved, the town would have had a most characteristic and remarkable museum of its own.

Victory Row is the very earliest place that I remember. How I got there, the dangers to which I was exposed in infancy, the wild tragedy which robbed me of both parents—these things I was to learn later on, because I remembered nothing of them. I was in Mrs. Jeram's house, with three other boys. There was Jem, the oldest. His surname was Hex, and as it was always pronounced

without the aspirate, I thought, when I had learned the alphabet, that to be named after one of the letters was a singular distinction, and most enviable. Jem was a big boy, a good-natured silent lad, who spent his whole time on the beach among the sailors. Moses came next. I never knew Moses' surname. He was a surly and ill-conditioned boy. Leonard Copleston, the third, was my protector and my friend. The day, so far as I can recollect, always began with a fight between Leonard and Moses; later on, towards dinner-time, there would be another fight; and the evening never ended without one or two more fights. From my indistinct recollection of this period, I fancy that whenever Leonard and Moses came within a few yards of each other they as naturally rushed into battle as a Russian and a Turk. And the only good point about Moses was that he was always ready to renew the battle. For he hated Leonard; I suppose because Leonard was as handsome, bright, and clever, as he was ugly, lowering, and stupid.

Naturally, at the age of five one does not inquire into antecedents of people. So that it was much later when I learned the circumstances under which we four boys were collected beneath one roof. They were characteristic of the place. The paternal Moses, returning from a three years' cruise in the Mediterranean, discovered that his wife, a lady of

fickle disposition, had deserted. In other words, she was gone away, leaving a message for her husband to the effect that little Moses, the pledge of their affections, and his curious collection of china brought from foreign parts would between them console him for her loss. So he put the boy under the charge of Mrs. Jeram, gave her a sum of money for the child's maintenance until he came back again; smashed the crockery in a rage; wept but little, if at all, for his ruined household gods; went away, and never came back any more. Jem Hex, on the other hand, was the son of a real widower, also a Royal Navy man, and he was left with Mrs. Jeram to be taken care of under much the same circumstances except that he was regularly paid for. As for Leonard, you will hear about him presently. In one respect he was worse off than any of us, because we had friends and he had none. There was, for instance, an aunt belonging to Moses who came to see him about once a month. In the course of the interview she always caned him, I do not know why; perhaps because she felt sure he deserved it, as he certainly did, perhaps because she thought it a thing due to her own dignity as the boy's only relative. She wore a dress, the splendour of whose original black colour was marred by patches of brown snuff lying in the creases. She was a stiff and stately dame of forbidding appear-

ance, and manners which were conventional. Thus, she always began the conversation, before she caned Moses, by remarking, even in August, that the weather was "raw." The monthly caning was the only thing, I know now, that she ever contributed towards the maintenance and education of her nephew. Jem Hex had plenty of uncles and other relations. One was a harbour boatman, a jolly old man, who had been in the wars; one was a dockyard foreman, and one was a ship's carpenter. They used to drop into Victory Row for a talk on Sunday afternoons when the weather was warm. I used to envy Jem his superior position in the world and his family connections.

I had friends, too, in plenty, but they were of a different kind. Not rich to begin with—not holders of official rank, and unconnected in any way with the Royal Navy, and, which stamped them at once as objects of pity and contempt, they were unable to speak the English tongue except with difficulty. They were big and bearded men; they had scars on their faces, and went sometimes maim and halt; they were truculent of aspect, but kindly of eye. When they came into our court they took me up gently, carried me about, kissed me, and generally brought me some little simple gift, such as an orange or an apple.

Somehow or other I learned that these friends of

mine were Poles, and that they had a great barrack all to themselves, close to the walls, whither I used to be sometimes carried. It was a narrow building, built of black-tarred wood, with windows at both sides, so that you saw the light quite through the house.

It stood just under the walls, almost in the shade of the great elms. Within it were upwards of a hundred Poles, living chiefly on the tenpence a day which the English Government allowed them for their support, with this barn-like structure to house them. They were desperately poor, all of them living mostly on bread and frugal cabbage-soup. Out of their poverty, out of their tenpence a day, some of these poor fellows found means by clubbing together to pay Mrs. Jeram, week by week, for my support. They went hungry that I might eat and thrive; they came every day, some of them, to see that I was well cared for. They took me to their barrack, and made me their pet and plaything; there was nothing they were not ready to do for me, because I was the child of Roman Pulaski and Claudia his wife.

The one who came oftenest, stayed the longest, and seemed in an especial manner to be my guardian, was a man who was grey when I first remember him. He had long hair and a full grey beard. There was a great red gash in his cheek

which turned white when he grew excited or was moved. He limped with one foot because some Russian musket-ball had struck him in the heel; and he had singularly deep-set eyes, with heavy eyebrows. I have never seen anything like the sorrowfulness of Wassielewski's eyes. Other Poles had reason for sorrow. They were all exiles together, they were separated from their families without a hope that the terrible Nicolas, who hated a rebel Pole with all the strength of his autocratic hatred, would ever let them return; they were all in poverty, but these men looked happy. Wassielewski alone never smiled, and carried always that low light of melancholy in his eyes, as if not only the past was sad, but the future was charged with more sorrow. On one day in the year he brought me *immortelles*, tied with a black ribbon. He told me they were in memory of my father, Roman Pulaski, now dead and in heaven, and of my mother, also dead, and now sitting among the saints and martyrs. I used to wonder at those times to see the eyes which rested on me so tenderly melt and fill with tears.

Three or four days in the week, sometimes every day, Mrs. Jeram went out charing. As she frequently came home bearing with her a scent of soapsuds, and having her hands creased and fingers supernaturally white, it is fair to suppose that she

went out washing at eighteenpence a day. Something, indeed, it was necessary to do, with four hungry boys to keep, only two of whom paid anything for their daily bread, and Mrs. Jeram—she was a hard-featured woman, with a resolute face—must have been possessed of more than the usual share of Christian charity to keep Moses in her house at all, even as a paying boarder, much less as one who ate and drank largely, and brought to the house nothing at all but discord and ill-temper. And besides the food to provide, with some kind of clothing, there was always "Tenderart," who called every Monday morning.

He was the owner of the houses in the Row, and he came for his rent. His name was Barnfather, and the appellation of Tenderart, a compound illustrating the law of phonetic decay, derived from the two words *tender heart*, was bestowed upon him by reason of the uncompromising hardness of heart, worse than that of any Pharaoh, with which he encountered, as sometimes happened, any deficiency in the weekly rent. Behind him—the tool of his uncompromising rigour—walked a man with a blanket, a man whose face was wooden. If the rent was not paid that man opened his blanket, and wrapped it round some article of household furniture, silently pointed out by Tenderart, as an equivalent.

My early childhood, spent among these kindly people, was thus very rich in the things which stimulate the imagination. Strange and rare objects in every house, in every street, something from far-off lands, talk to be heard of foreign ports and bygone battles, the poor Poles in their bare and gaunt barracks, and then the place itself. I have spoken of the rookery beyond the flower-grown Dockyard wall. But beyond the rookery was the Dockyard itself, quiet and orderly, which I could see from the upper window of the house. There was the Long Row, where resided the Heads of Departments ; the Short Row, in which lived functionaries of lower rank—I believe the two Rows do not know each other in society ; there was the great Reservoir, supported on tall and spidery legs, beneath which stood piles of wood cut and dressed, and stacked for use ; there was the Rope Walk, a quarter of a mile long, in which I knew walked incessantly up and down the workmen who turned hanks of yarn into strong cables smelling of fresh tar ; there were the buildings where other workmen made blocks, bent beams, shaped all the parts of ships ; there were the great places where they made and repaired machinery ; there were the sheds themselves, where the mighty ships grew slowly day by day, miracles of man's constructive skill, in the dim twilight of their wooden cradles ; there was

a pool of sea water, in which lay timber to be seasoned, and sometimes I saw boys paddling up and down in it; there was always the busy crowd of officers and sailors going up and down, some of them god-like, with cocked hats, epaulettes, and swords.

And, all day long, never ceasing, the busy sound of the Yard. To strangers and visitors it was just a confused and deafening noise. When you got to know it you distinguished half-a-dozen distinct sounds which made up that inharmonious and yet not unpleasing whole. There was the chatter of the caulkers' mallets, which never ceased their tap, tap, tap, until you got used to the regular beat, and felt it no more than you feel the beating of your pulse. But it was a main part of the noise which made the life of the Yard. Next to the multitudinous mallets of the caulkers, which were like the never-ceasing hum and whisper of insects on a hot day, came the loud clanging of the hammer from the boiler-makers' shop. That might be likened, by a stretch of fancy, to the crowing of cocks in a farmyard. Then, all by itself, came a heavy thud which made the earth tremble, echoed all around, and silenced for a moment everything else. It came from the Nasmyth steam hammer; and always, running through all, and yet distinct, the r—r—r—r of the machinery, like the rustling of

the leaves in the wind. Of course I say nothing about salutes, because every day a salute of some kind was thundering and rolling about the air as the ships came and went, each as tenacious of her number of guns as an Indian Rajah.

Beyond the Dockyard—you could not see it, but you felt it, and knew that it was there—was the broad blue lake of the harbour, crowded with old ships sacred to the memory of a hundred fights, lying in stately idlesse, waiting for the fiat of some ignorant and meddling First Lord ordering them to be broken up. As if it were anything short of wickedness to break up any single ship which has fought the country's battles and won her victories, until the tooth of Time, aided by barnacles, shall have rendered it impossible for her to keep afloat any longer.

When the last bell rang at six o'clock, and the workmen went away, all became quiet in the Dockyard. A great stillness began suddenly, and reigned there till the morning, unbroken save by the rooks which cawed in the elms, and the clock which struck the hours. And then one had to fall back on the less imaginative noises of Victory Row, where the parrot coughed, and the grass widows gathered together, talking and disputing in shrill concert, and Leonard fought Moses before going to bed, not without some din of battle.

CHAPTER IV.

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

RECOLLECTIONS of childhood are vague as a whole, but vivid in episodes. The days pass away, and leave no footprints on the sands, one being like another. And then one comes, bringing with it a trivial incident, which somehow catches hold of the childish imagination, and so lives for ever. There are two or three of these in my memory.

It is a sunshiny day, and, as the rooks are cawing all day in the elms, it must be spring. Sitting on the doorstep of Mrs. Jeram's, I am only conscious of the harmonious blending of sounds from the Dockyard. Victory Row is quiet, save for the consumptive parrot who walks in the shade of the wall coughing heavily, as if it were one of his worst days, and he had got a bronchial asthma on the top of his other complaints. With me is Leonard,

dancing on the pavement to no music at all but the beating of his pulse, enough for him. Jem and Moses are always on the beach. I suppose, but I am not certain, that it is afternoon. And the reason why I suppose so is that the Row is quiet. The morning was more noisy on account of the multifarious house duties which have to be got through. We hear a step which we know well, a heavy and limping step, which comes slowly along the pavement, and presently bears round the corner, its owner, Wassielewski. Leonard stops dancing. Wassielewski pats his curly head. I hold up my arms: he catches me up and kisses me, while I bury my face in his big beard. Then he puts me down again, lays aside the violin which he carries in one hand (it is by this instrument that Wassielewski earns a handsome addition to the daily tenpence, and, in fact, pays half my weekly allowance), and seeks in his coat-pocket for an orange. He does all this very gravely without smiling, only looking depths of care and love almost paternal out of his deep-set eyes. While Leonard holds the orange he places the violin in my hands. Ah! what joy even to draw the bow across the strings, though my arms are not long enough yet to hold the instrument properly. Somehow this rugged old soldier taught me to *feel* music, and the rapture of producing music, before my fingers could handle

notes or my hands could hold a bow. He leaves the orange for Leonard and myself, and disappears. Moses returns unexpectedly, and demands a share. There is a fight.

Or it is another visitor, the Captain. He wears his blue frock-coat with brass buttons and white ducks; he carries his hands behind him, and a stick in them, which drags at his heels as he walks. We do not see him till he is with us. We look up, and he beams upon us, smiling all over his rosy face.

"How is the little Pole?" asks the kindly Captain, shaking hands with us. "How is the other young rascal?"

I have a distinct recollection of his eyes wandering in the direction of our boots, which were certainly going, if not altogether gone, both soles and heels. And I remember that he shook his head. Also that in the evening new boots came for both of us. And that Mrs. Jeram said, nodding her head, that *he*—meaning perhaps the Captain—was a good man.

Another recollection.

I am, somehow or other, in the street by myself. How I got there, what I proposed to myself when I set out on my journey, I cannot tell. But I was lost in the streets of the old seaport town. I was walking along the pavement feeling a good deal

frightened, and wondering how I was to get back to Victory Row, or even to the Poles' Barrack, when I became aware of a procession. It was a long procession, consisting of sailors marching, every man with a lady on his arm, two and two, along the middle of the street, singing as they went. They wore long curls, these jolly tars, shining with grease, hanging down on either side below, or rather in front of, their hats. Curls were the fashion in those days. There were about thirty men in this rollicking train. At their head, limping along very fast, marched my poor old friend Wassielewski, his grave face and melancholy eyes a contrast to the careless and jovial crew who followed him. He was fiddling as he went one of those lively tunes that sailors love, a tune which puts their legs a dancing and pours quicksilver into their feet. Some of them, indeed, were capering along the line, unable to wait till the "crib" was reached. Also down the street I saw another exactly similar procession. How was I to know that the *Royal Frederick* had been paid off that morning, and that a thousand Jack Tars were all together chucking away the money in a few days which it had taken them three years to earn? The old Pole would get some share of it, however, for that was the way in which he earned the money which mostly came to me.

He spied me presently standing alone on the kerbstone, and handing the fiddle to one of the men, hurried across the road, and took me in his arms.

"Ladislas!" he said, with his quaint foreign accent. "What are you doing here? Why are you not at home?"

"Bring him over, Fiddler Ben," cried one of the men. "I'll carry the little chap. Lord! what's one boy? I've had a dozen of 'em at home, somewheres. Now then, messmates——Strike up, Fiddler Ben. With a will, my lad."

"It is the son of my old master and lord," began Wassielewski, holding me in his arms helplessly.

"Bring along his lordship, then," said the man. "I'll carry the noble hearl."

The Pole resumed the fiddle with a sigh, and took up his place as band and bandmaster in one.

"Uncommon light in the arms is the noble duke. Many a fo'k'sle kid 'ud weigh more. Poll, our'n 'ud weigh twice as much. Come up, yer Ryal Highness."

I suppose I must have been a very small boy, even for a five years' old child. But the man carried me tenderly, as sailors always do. We came to a public-house; that one with the picture

outside it, of the Chinese War. There was a long, low sort of hall within it, at the end of which Wassielewski took his place, and began to fiddle again. Dancing then set in, though it was still early in the morning, with great severity. With dancing, drink. With both, songs; with all three, Wassielewski's fiddle. I suppose it was the commencement of a drunken orgie, and the whole thing was disgraceful. Remember, however, that it was more than thirty years ago, when the Navy still retained its old traditions. Foremost among these was the tradition that being ashore meant drink as long as the money lasted. It sometimes lasted a week, or even a fortnight, and was sometimes got through in a day or two. There were harpies and pirates in every house which was open to Jack. Jack, indeed, was cheated wherever he went. Afloat he was robbed by the purser; he was ill-fed and found, the Government paying for good food and good stores; contractors and purveyors combined with the purser to defraud him. Ashore, he was horribly, shamefully cheated and robbed, when he was paid off by a Navy bill, and fell into the hands of the pay agents. He was a rough-hided ruffian who could fight, had seen plenty of fighting, was tolerably inured to every kind of climate, and ready to laugh at any kind of danger, except, perhaps, Yellow Jack. He was also tender-hearted and sentimental.

Sometimes he was away for five years at a stretch, and, if his Captain chose to make it so, his life was a dog's life. Floggings were frequent; rum was the reward of good conduct; there were no Sailors' Homes, none of the many humanising influences which have made the British sailor the quiet, decorous creature, generally a teetotaller, and often inclined to a Methodist way of thinking in religion, half soldier, half sailor, that he is at present.

It was an orgie, I suppose, at which no child should have been present. Fortunately at half-past twelve, the landlord piped all hands for dinner, and Wassielewski carried me away. He would return after dinner to play on and on till night fell, and there was no one left to stand upon his legs. Then Wassielewski would put the fiddle away in its case, and go back to the barrack, where he sat in silence, and brooded. The other Poles smoked and talked, but this one held himself apart. He was an Irreconcilable, and he refused to accept defeat.

One more scene.

The Common Hard, which is still, after all the modern changes, a street with a distinct character of its own. The houses still look out upon the bright and busy harbour, though there is now a railway terminus and an ugly pier; though steam launches run across the water; and though there

are telegraph posts, cabs, and omnibuses, all the outward signs of advanced civilisation. But thirty years ago it was a place which seemed to belong to the previous century. There were no great houses and handsome shops, but in their place, a picturesque row of irregular cottages, no two of which were exactly alike, but which resembled each other in certain particulars. They were two-storied houses; the upper story was very low, the ground-floor was below the level of the street. I do not know why, but the fact remains that in my town the ground-floors of all the old houses were below the level of the pavement. You had to stoop, if you were tall, to get into the doorway, and then, unless you were experienced, you generally fell headlong down a step of a foot or so. Unless the houses were shops they had only one window below and one above, because the tax on windows obliged people to economise their light. The roofs were of red tiles, high-pitched, and generally broken-backed; stone-crop and house-leek grew upon them. The Hard existed then only for the sailors. There were one or two jewellers who bought as well as sold; many public-houses; and a plentiful supply of rascally pay-agents. That side had little interest for boys. In old times the high tide had washed right up to the foot of these houses which then stood upon the beach itself. But they built a stone wall, which

kept back the water, and allowed a road to be made, protected by an iron railing. An open space gave access to what was called the "beach," being a narrow spit of land, along which were ranged on either side the wherries of the boatmen. A wooden bench was placed along the iron railing near the beach, on which sat every day and all day long old sailors, in a row. It was their club, their daily rendezvous, the place where they discussed old battles, smoked pipes, and lamented bygone days. They never seemed to walk about or to care much where they sat. They sat still, and sat steadily, in hot weather and in cold. The oddest thing about this line of veterans was that they all seemed to have wooden legs. There was, or there exists in my memory, which is the same thing, a row of wooden pegs which did duty for the lost legs, sticking out straight in front of the bench when they were on it. The effect of this was very remarkable. Some, of course, had lost other outlying bits of the human frame; a hand, the place supplied by a hook, like that of Cap'en Cuttle, whose acquaintance I formed later on; a whole arm, its absence marked by the empty sleeve sewn to the front of the jersey; and there were scars in plenty. Like my friends, the Poles, these heroes had gained their scars and lost their limbs in action.

Thirty years ago we were only a quarter of a

century or so from the long and mighty struggle which lasted for a whole generation, and filled this seaport town with prosperity, self-satisfaction, and happiness. Oh, for the brave old days when week after week French, American, Spanish, and Dutch prizes were towed into harbour by their victors, or sailed in, the Union Jack flying at the peak, the original crew safe under hatches, in command of a middy and half-a-dozen British sailors told off to take her home. They talked, these old grizzle heads, of fights and convoys, and perilous times afloat. I sat among them, or stood in front of them, and listened. Child as I was, my little heart glowed to hear how, yardarm to yardarm, they lay alongside the Frenchman ; how a dozen times over the plucky little French beggars tried to board them ; how she sheered off at last, and they followed, raking her fore and aft ; how she suddenly broke out into flame, and before you could say "Jack Robinson," blew up with all that was left of a thousand men aboard ; with merry yarns of Chinese pigtails, made to be pulled by the British sailor, and niggers of Jamaica, and Dutchmen at the Cape. Also, what stories of slavers, of catching American skippers in the very act of chucking the niggers overboard, of cutting out Arab dhows, of sailing in picturesque waters where the natives swim about in the deep like porpoises; of boat

expeditions up silent rivers in search of piratical Malays; of lying frozen for months in Arctic regions, long before they thought of calling men heroes for passing a single winter on the ice with every modern appliance for making things comfortable.

Among these old salts was one—of course he had a wooden leg—with a queer, twisted up sort of face. One eye was an independent revolving light, but the other obeyed his will, and once you knew which eye that was you were pretty safe with him. He had a very profound and melodious bass voice. When I passed he used to growl a greeting which was like the thunder of a distant salute. He never went farther than the greeting, on account of certain family differences, which made us shy of becoming too intimate. I learned the fact from a curious ceremonial which happened regularly every Saturday night. At eight o'clock, or in summer at nine, Mrs. Jeram drew down her white blind, if it was not already drawn, placed one candle on the table, and herself between the candle and the window. The natural effect of this was to exhibit to the world a portrait in profile of herself. She sat bolt upright, and being a thin woman with plenty of bone—though the most kind-hearted of all creatures—the portrait thus presented was angular, stiff, and uncompromising.

Meanwhile in the street outside sat my friend, "timber-toed" Jack—the ancient mariner with the deep voice and the revolving eye. He was perched comfortably on a three-legged stool lent by a friend, his remaining limb tucked away snug and ship-shape among the legs of the tripod, and the peg sticking out as usual at right angles to his body. There he sat and smoked a pipe. From time to time he raised his voice, and in an utterance which shook the windows of every house in the Row, he growled:

"Rachel! Come out and make it up."

There was no answer. Then the neighbours, who always congregated on this occasion, and took an intense interest in the progress of the family jar, murmured a soft chorus of persuasive and honeyed words, meant for Rachel too—who was Mrs. Jeram. But she never moved.

"Rachel! 'Twarn't my fault. 'Twas her as dragged me along in tow. Took prisoner I was."

"Ah! the artful thing"—this was the chorus—"which well we know them; and they'll take in tow the best, at times; and a little in drink as well."

No answer again this time, but an angry toss of the head which conveyed to the *silhouette* on the blind an expression of incredulity.

After half-an-hour's enjoyment of the pipe, the old sailor would noisily beat out the ashes. Then we inside the house would hear him once more.

"Then, Rachel, God bless you, and good night; and bless the boys. And, please the Lord, I'll be here again next Saturday. And hoping to find you in a forgivin' mood."

When he was gone Mrs. Jeram would leave her seat and come to her own chair by the fireplace. But her hands always trembled, and sometimes her eyes were wet. For it was her husband, and she could not make up her mind to forgive him the old offence.

That was why, on the Hard, the wooden-legged sailor and I had little or no conversation together.

One day—I was between eight and nine at the time—we were all four on the Logs. The Logs were, to begin with, a forbidden place, and, if only on that account, delightful. But also on other accounts. There was a floating pier there, consisting of two or three square-hewn timbers laid alongside of each other, between posts stuck at intervals in the mud. They had a tendency to turn round beneath the tread of a heavy man, and when that happened, and the heavy man's feet fell in between two logs, it was apt to be bad for those feet. Men-of-war's boats used to land their officers and crew at the end of the Logs; there was a constant run-

ning to and fro of sailors, officers, and harbour boatmen. Also, on the left-hand side as you went down this rough pile, there was a space of water some acres in extent, in which lay in orderly rows, one beside the other, a whole forest of timbers, waiting for time, the sun, and salt water together to season them. And if the logs were apt to turn under the tread of a heavy man, these timbers would turn under the foot of a light boy. Judge therefore of the joy of running backwards and forwards over their yielding and uncertain ground.

Leonard, who rejoiced beyond measure to run over the Logs himself, would seldom let me come with him even down the pier, and never over the timbers. On this day, however, we had all four gone down to the very end of the Logs, half-a-dozen ships' boats had touched, landed their men, and gone back again. Jem, the simple and foolish Jem, was gazing in admiration at the sailors, who looked picturesque in their blue shirts, straw hats, and shiny curls. I even caught Jem in the act of feeling whether his own hair behind the ear would not curl if twisted between finger and thumb. Moses was sitting straddle-legged on a projecting log, his boots in his hands, and his bare feet and legs lapped by the water. Leonard and I stood on the pier, watching. Presently there came along a man-o'-war's gig, manned by twelve sailors sitting

side by side, rowing their short, deep stroke, without any feathering, but in perfect time. In the stern sat a middy, the very smallest middy I ever saw, no bigger than Leonard, dressed in the most becoming uniform in the world, and calmly conscious of his importance. He landed, gave a brief order, and strode as manfully as his years would allow down the Logs. As he passed on his eye rested on Leonard, and I saw the latter flush.

When the middy was gone I turned to Leonard, and said with the enthusiasm of admiration :

"Lenny, when I grow up I shall be a middy like that."

A small thing to say, and, indeed, the grandeur of the boy and his power overwhelmed me for a moment, else I ought to have known, at eight years of age, that children living with charwomen on charity are not the stuff out of which officers of the Royal Navy are generally manufactured.

"Ah ! yah !" roared Moses, tossing up his legs.

"What are you laughing at ?" cried Leonard in a rage.

"Ah ! yah !" he repeated. "Hunchback ! Hunchey in a uniform, with a sword at his side."

I declare that up to that moment I had no more consciousness of being deformed than I had of Hebrew. I suppose that in some dim way I knew that I was differently shaped—smaller than

Leonard, that my clothes were not such as he could wear, but not a thought, not a rough suspicion that I was, by reason of this peculiarity, separated from my fellows. Then all of a sudden it burst upon me. Not in its full misery. A hunchback has to grow to manhood before he has drunk the whole of the bitter cup ; he has to pass through the years of school life when he cannot play like other boys, nor run, nor jump, nor fight like them, when he is either tolerated or pitied. He has to become a young man among young men, to realise that he is not as they are ; to look on envying while they rejoice in the strength and beauty of their youth ; to hear their talk of girls and sweet looks and love, while all girls look down upon him, he foolishly thinks, with contempt. I did not feel the whole misery at once. I only realised, all of a sudden, that I was *disgracié*, that the grandeurs which I envied were not for me, that I was to be despised for my misfortune—and I sat down in this sudden misery and cried aloud.

A moment afterwards there was a fight. Leonard and Moses. They fought on the narrow log. Leonard was the pluckier, but Moses was the stronger. The sailors in the gig looked on and laughed, and clapped their hands. Through my shameful tears I only saw half the duel. It was terminated by the fall of both into the water, one

on either side the Logs. The water was only two or three feet deep, and they came up, face to face, and driving fists at each other across the eighteen-inch plank. It was Jem who stopped the battle, stepping in between the combatants, and ordering in his rough way that both should get out of the water and fight it out on dry land.

"He called me Hunchback, Leonard," I gasped, holding his hand as he ran, wet and dripping, through the streets.

"Yes, Laddy," he replied. "Yes, Laddy, he's a cub and a cur, and a thick-headed fool. But I'll let him know to-morrow."

"And you won't let him call me Hunchey, Leonard?"

"Not if I have to fight him all day long, Laddy. So there."

But next day's fight, if it was begun, was never finished, because in the afternoon we both, Leonard and I, walked away with the Captain, each holding one hand of his, Leonard carrying his stick. And when we got to the Captain's it was explained to us that we were to stay there.

CHAPTER V.

THE YOUNG PRINCE.

TEN years of boyhood followed. In taking us both away from Mrs. Jeram the Captain promised her on behalf of Leonard, and Wassielewski on behalf of myself, that we should be brought up, in his old-fashioned way of putting it, in the fear of God and the desire to do our duty. It was an uneventful time, which has left few recollections. I suppose that kind of time—it has been always mine—is the happiest which leaves the fewest memories. Yet its happiness for the want of contrast is not felt. Perhaps it is better not to be happy, and to lead the life of action and peril such as has been granted to Leonard and denied to me. When the time arrives to lie down and go to sleep it must be good to leave behind the memory of bygone great days big with issues dependent on your

courage and self-possession. My life has but one episode, and because it is not likely to have another I have sat down to tell it. In the end I am like any rustic on a farm, any secluded dweller on a remote island, inasmuch as one day has followed and will follow another, marked with no other change than from sunshine to rain, from summer to winter.

Of course we were soon sent to school. The fact that I was a Pole, coupled with my deformity, produced in my favour the mingled feeling of respect and curiosity with hardly disguised contempt which boys always feel for a foreigner or a cripple. Of course, too, it immediately became known that we had been living in Victory Row, under the care of a charwoman. Contumely was the first result of the knowledge. Leonard, however, then about eleven, showed himself so handy with his fists—one consequence of his many combats with Moses—with a disregard of superior weight and strength as complete as any one of Nelson's captains might have shown—that any further reference to charwomen or accidents of birth had to be made with bated breath and went out of fashion in the school. New boys, it is true, were instigated, as if it was a joke, to ask Leonard for information as to the price of soap and the interests of washing. The miserable victim introduced the subject generally with a grin of superiority, as became a boy who had a

father living in the flesh. It was very beautiful, then, to observe how that new boy, after the short fight which followed, became anxious ever after to avoid the subject of charing and charwomen; for however big that boy was Leonard went for him, and however often Leonard was knocked down he arose from Mother Earth bruised and bleeding, but fresh. The bigger the new boy, the more prolonged was the fight. The more resolute the new boy, the more delightful to spectators was Leonard's bull-dog tenacity. Once or twice the battle was drawn by foreign intervention. Never once was Leonard defeated.

After each battle we walked home proudly certain of receiving the Captain's approbation when he learned the *casus belli;* for he always insisted on hearing the full details, and gloried in the prowess and pluck of the boy.

We led a frugal life, because the Captain had little besides his half-pay and the house we lived in, which was his own, and had been his father's before him. Sunday was the day of the weekly feast. On that day the Captain wore his undress uniform, and we went to church in the morning. After church we walked round the walls, and at half-past one we came home to dinner. It was Leonard's privilege to pipe hands for the meal, which always consisted of roast beef and plum-duff,

brought in by the Captain's one servant, while Leonard played on the fife the "Roast Beef of Old England." After dinner there was a glass of port all round, with a double ration for the chief, and fruit for the boys. In the evening we read aloud, the Captain acting as expositor and commenting as we went; we did not go to church, because the Captain said it was ridiculous to suppose there was any necessity for church oftener ashore than afloat. But after I got a piano I used to play and sing hymns till supper, when the Captain told us yarns.

When Leonard was fourteen another change was made. We left the school, and went, he and I together, to the Rev. Mr. Verney Broughton, as his private pupils. Mr. Broughton, the perpetual curate of St. Faith's, gave us, as I have since learned, these lessons at his own request, and gratuitously, though he was far from being a rich man.

Our tutor was a scholar of the old-fashioned school; he was an ex-fellow of Oriel, and openly held the opinion that nothing new had been written for about eighteen hundred years: he considered science, especially mechanical science, as unworthy the study of a scholar: he looked on Latin and Greek verse as the only safe means of educating the higher faculties: and he regarded the great writers of Rome and Athens as the only safe models of style, thought, and taste.

He was a stout, short man, with a red face, due, perhaps, to his fondness for port, his repugnance to physical exercise, and his habit of spending all the money he could spare on his dinners. A kind-hearted man, and a Christian up to his lights. His method of "working" his parish would hardly find favour in these days of activity, consisting, as it did, in nothing whatever except three services on Sunday and one on Wednesday and Friday evenings. No mothers' meetings, no prayer meetings, no societies, no early celebrations, no guilds. His sermons were learned and scholarly, with a leaning towards morality, and they inculcated the importance of holding Church doctrines. He was a Churchman high and dry, of a kind now nearly extinct. Those who wanted emotional religion went to other places of worship ; those who were content with the old paths sat in their square pews every Sunday, and "assisted" in silence at a service which was a comfortable duet between parson and clerk.

We were put through the classical mill by Mr. Broughton. The course made me, in a way, a scholar. It made Leonard a man of action. He read the Homeric battles, and rejoiced to follow the conquering Diomede in the "way of war." He read the tragedies of Euripides, and, like all boys, espoused the cause of Troy the conquered.

He had, however, no inclination in the direction of scholarship, and persisted in looking on books as, on the whole, a rather disagreeable necessity in the training for after-life. For, with the knowledge of his first beginnings ever present in his mind, there grew up in him more and more strongly a resolution that he would make himself a gentleman. Somehow—he did not at all know how—but by some path or other open to lads who are penniless, alone in the world, and almost friendless, he would become a gentleman. Thus, when the Captain proposed that he should enter the Navy as a master's assistant, Leonard scornfully refused on the ground that he could be nothing under the rank of combatant officer. Mr. Broughton suggested that the two Universities are rich with endowments, and that fellowships await those who are strong enough to win them; but Leonard would not hear of the years of study before the prize was reached.

"In the old days, Laddy," he said, "I should have been put into a monastery, I suppose, and made my way by clinging to the skirts of a great ecclesiastical minister, like Richelieu and Mazarin. But I cannot go in for the modern substitute of university and fellowship. Fancy me in a black gown, when I should like to be in a uniform!"

"In the old days," I said, "men sometimes forced their way by joining the Free Companies."

"Ay," he replied, "that was a life worth having. Fancy riding through the country at the head of a thousand lances, gentleman adventurers every one, a battle every other day, and an adventure the day between. What a pity the time is past for Free Companies. Let us go on the Common and see the soldiers."

That was his favourite resort. The march and movement of troops, the splendour of the array, the regimental bands, the drill of the awkward squad, delighted his soul. And here he would stand contentedly for half a day, watching the soldiers at their exercises.

"If one could only be a soldier, Laddy," he would say, "if there was any chance of rising, as there used to be in the French army! Every drummer boy with a marshal's baton in his pocket."

"And how many were able to take it out of their pocket?"

"One here and there. I should have tried to be that one."

One day, as he was talking in this strain, a soldier's funeral passed us—his comrades carried the coffin. Before it marched the fifes and muffled drums playing the Dead March, behind it a file of men with arms reversed. We followed. After the short service the men fired a round over the nameless grave, and all marched off at quick step.

"That one has failed, Leonard," I said.

"Ay, he has failed. Poor common soldier! He had but a slender chance. None of them have any real chance."

He was dejected for a few minutes. Then a thought struck him, and he brightened up.

"Perhaps he was only an ignorant, beer-drinking clod. No doubt that was all. Pah! What chance could he have? Such a soldier was not a failure, Laddy. He rose in the world. He became drilled, civilised, and useful. And when he died he was buried with military honours."

At sixteen he gave up his classical work altogether, arriving at the conclusion that it was not by Latin and Greek he would reach his aim. Other things, he discovered, would be of more use to him. Among them was French. He found in the Polish Barrack two or three men who knew French as well as their own language, one of whom undertook for a very small fee to teach him. He worked at the new study almost feverishly, learning the language after his own way, by reading French books all day, by talking with his tutor as much as possible, and by learning whole pages of the dictionary. As we had no French books in our little library, we picked up for nothing at a bookstall a packet of old French newspapers and pamphlets dated about the year 1809, which probably once belonged to

some French prisoner in the long wars, and these formed Leonard's introduction to the French language. His spare time he devoted to mathematics and to drawing. Here the Poles helped him again, many of the poor fellows being full of accomplishments and knowledge, so that, for the last year of his home life, Leonard was almost wholly in the Polish Barracks. The exiles, to whom this bright and handsome lad was a godsend of sunshine, rejoiced to teach him what they could, if only as a break in the monotony of their idle lives. And while I was welcome among them for my name's sake, Leonard was welcome for his own sake. They taught him, besides French, mathematics and drawing, how to speak Russian, how to ride, with the aid of borrowed steeds, how to fence, and what was the meaning of fortification.

As Leonard approached manhood he assumed a prouder carriage, due partly to the resolution within his heart, and partly to the defiance natural to his position. Mrs. Jeram said he was a prince born. Certainly no one acted the character better. Everything that he did was princely: he spoke as one born to command: with his quick keen eye, his curly locks, his head flung back, his tall and slender figure, full of grace and activity, he was my hero as well as my leader and protector.

He would not associate with any boys in the

town—those boys whose society was open to him—nor would he suffer me to know them. "You are a gentleman of Poland," he said grandly. "You may call yourself a Count if that would help you." I am going to make myself a gentleman, whatever my father was. We must not hamper ourselves by early friendships which might afterwards prove annoying."

It was not altogether boyish bounce, nor altogether self-conceit, because, full of sympathy in other things, in this he was inexorable, that nothing whatever should interfere with his determination to lift himself out of the ranks. And almost the only reading he permitted himself lay in any books he could find which showed how men have risen from small beginnings to great things. Not greatness in the way of authorship. He had no feeling for literary success. "I would like," he said, "to have my share in making history, let who will write it. Who would not rather be Hannibal than Livy, or Hector than Homer? If you were to offer me the choice between Sir Philip Sidney and Shakespeare, I would rather be Sidney. All the greatest men have been soldiers and sailors—fighting men."

Then he would dilate on the lives of the French generals, and tell how Murat, Lannes, Kleber, Hoche, Augereau, and Marmont, fought their

way valiantly up the ladder from the very lowest round.

How his purpose was to be accomplished, by what means he was to rise, he never explained. Nor did he, I think, ever seriously consider. But we all believed in him. The Captain, Celia, Mrs. Jeram, and I looked forward confidently to the time when Leonard should rise, superior to all disadvantages, a leader of men. If he had told us that he was going to become Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Chancellor, or even H.R.H. the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, we should have believed that with the same confidence.

One day—it was Saturday, about Christmas-time—Leonard did not come home to dinner. The Captain waited for no one, and we sat down without him. It was three o'clock when he returned, and it was evident that something had happened, for his face was flushed and his hands trembled.

"I have been with Mrs. Jeram, sir," he said in reply to the Captain's look of inquiry. "She has told me about my mother," his voice breaking into a sob, "about my poor mother."

He buried his face in his hands.

"Ay, ay. Poor boy. Natural to ask." The Captain put out his hand and stroked Leonard's curls.

"Mrs. Jeram," Leonard lifted his head and went

on, " gave me all she left. Only a wedding-ring. Nothing but a wedding-ring. See, and a message. A strange message. 'Tell my boy,' she said, when she died, 'that if ever he finds his father he must forgive him; but he had better not seek for him. And tell him, but not till he grows up, that his father is a gentleman and his mother was a lady.' That was the message, sir."

"Ay!" said the Captain, clearing his throat. "I knew it long ago, Leonard. Mrs. Jeram told me, when you came here, you and Laddy—you were both alike—gentlemen born——"

"How shall I forgive him?" asked Leonard, springing to his feet, panting and trembling. "How shall I forgive the man who let my mother—his wife—die deserted and alone?"

"The Rules are laid down," said the Captain gravely, "clear and distinct. 'Forgive us as we forgive.' Likewise 'Honour thy father.'"

Leonard was silent.

"And as for this wedding-ring," said the Captain, taking it from the boy's hand, "I think if I were you, I would wear it always." He opened a drawer and found a piece of black ribbon. "Uniforms," he went on, without my seeing the connection, at first, "uniforms and badges are useful things. You *can't* do anything disgraceful in the Queen's uniform. Clergymen wear black to show they are in mourn-

ing for the world's sins. Do you wear this ring as a badge only known to yourself, my boy. A wedding-ring—it's a pretty thing," looking at the symbol lying in his hand—"it means purity and faith. If you wear it, boy, in that sense, your mother's memory will be honoured. Purity and Faith. Perhaps we've given the ring to the wrong sex."

The Captain turned in his chair, and took up a book. It was his sign that he had no more to say on the subject.

Leonard touched my arm, and we stole out together. Then we took our hats, and went into the street.

"I cannot bear myself, Laddy," he burst out. "I am half mad to think of it. She was deserted; she wandered about, and came here. Mrs. Jeram picked her up, houseless and crying in the street. She had a little money then, but the doctor took it all, because next day, before she could say who she was, or where she came from, I was born, and my mother died. Not a line, not a letter, to say who she was; Mrs. Jeram took me, and promised her whose life—Oh! my mother—was passing swiftly from her—that she would bring me up,"—he stopped here for a moment—"And then she died, and they buried her. . . Do you know where the paupers are buried, Laddy? They buried my mother there."

Yes, I knew. Some of the Poles were buried there. The old parish church, with its broad churchyard, stood a mile and a half from the town. The God's Acre was so crowded with graves that its surface was raised six feet above the level of the road, and the tombstones stood side by side, almost touching each other. But in one corner there was a large open space on which there were no stones, where the grass grew thinly, and where the newly-turned clay, if you looked closely, was full of bits of wood, remains of old coffins. There was no shape to the graves in this corner; only rows of shapeless mounds and irregular unevenness in the ground. This was the paupers' corner, the place where they bestowed those for whose funeral the parish had to pay, so that the contempt of poverty followed after them, and rested on their very graves. I knew the place well, and shuddered when Leonard turned his steps to the road which led to the church. It was nearly four, and the early winter's day was drawing to a close. From a sky almost black poured down great flakes of snow, silently falling and giving an appearance of light after the hidden sun had gone down. As our heels echoed on the iron bridges beyond the Gate, I looked round and saw the ramparts standing up white and smooth, like a great wedding-cake against the gloomy heavens. Down in the moat, the sluggish

water lay between two banks of dazzling white, flanked with scarp and counterscarp. Leonard hurried on, and we passed in silence along the streets of the suburb, and so into the fields beyond, till we came to the church standing with its old tower among the dead.

It was growing dark now, in spite of the snow.

The iron gates of the churchyard were open, and the church, where the choir were practising for next day's service, was partially lighted up. Leonard led the way to the far-off paupers' quarter.

It lay, a quarter of an acre in extent, quiet and peaceful, wrapped in the pall of the soft white snow. About the rest of the crowded churchyard there were paths among the graves, up and down which were the footsteps in the snow of those who came to visit the dead. Here there were no paths and no footsteps. In the rest of the churchyard there was always some one to be seen—a widow leading her child to see the father's grave, an old man wandering among the monuments of those he had known in their youth, a sister weeping over a brother's grave, a mother over her son—always some one to connect the world of the dead with the world of the living. Here no one came to break the lonely silence of the forgotten graves. Elsewhere there were flowers in spring, cypresses and evergreens in and among the graves. Here there was

nothing, not even a straggling briar, and even the grass was so often disturbed that it had not time to grow. For these were the graves, not of the poor, but of the very poor, of those hapless mortals who die in the misery of destitution, and have not even money enough left to buy them a separate resting-place. They lay there, thickly crowded, and every one forgotten. For among their own class Death speedily brings oblivion. Who can remember those that are gone before when from hour to hour one has to think about the next meal ? Whether they were buried ten years before or only yesterday, the hundreds who lay before us in that corner, covered over with a thin layer of mould and the sheet of snow, were everywhere as absolutely forgotten as if they had never even lived. Was it to rescue the dead from this ignoble oblivion that people once worshipped their ancestors ?

And amongst them, somewhere, was Leonard's mother.

"Where is she ?" he whispered. "Oh ! in what spot did they lay her ? A lady, born of gentle parents, the wife of a gentleman, to die neglected and be buried like a pauper ! And not to know even where she is laid !"

"That does not matter, Leonard," I said weakly. "Her spirit is not in her grave."

He made no answer, but flung his arms above his head.

"My poor dead mother," he prayed, "my poor lost mother! I believe that you can see and hear me, though you cannot come to me. If you can help me where you are, help me. If you can pray for your son, pray for me. If you can lift me upwards, lift me. But how can I forgive my father?"

Within the church, close by, they were practising the responses to the Commandments. And as Leonard concluded they sang:

"Incline our hearts to keep this law?"

He heard the words and applied them, for he turned to me in that quick way of his:

"How can I honour my father, Laddy, when I don't know where he is, or what he is, and when my mother's last words were that I should forgive him?"

But his passion was over, and we walked away from the old churchyard.

CHAPTER VI.

CELIA.

I CAN hardly remember a time when I did not know Celia, but, as my memory of the life with Mrs. Jeram does not include her, our acquaintance must have sprung up some time after we went to the Captain. It was formed, I suspect, upon the walls where we were sent to play, and was allowed, or encouraged by Mrs. Tyrrel, Celia's mother, one of the Captain's friends. Our playground was a quiet place, especially at our end, where the town children, to whom the ramparts elsewhere were the chief place of recreation, seldom resorted. There were earthworks planted with trees and grass, and the meadows beneath were bright with buttercups and daisies. We were privileged children; we might run up and down the slopes or on the ramparts, or through the embrasures, or even

clamber about the outer scarp down to the very edge of the moat, without rebuke from the "Johnnies," the official guardians of the walls, who went about all day armed with canes to keep boys from tearing down the earthworks. It was this privilege, as well as the general convenience of the place for children to play in, which took us nearly every day to the Queen's Bastion. There never was a more delightful retreat. In summer the trees afforded shade, and in winter the rampart gave shelter. You were in a solitude almost unbroken, close to a great centre of life and busy work; you looked out upon the world beyond, where there were fields, gardens, and trees; there was our own round corner, with the stately elms above us; the banks of grass, all sorts of grass, as one finds where there is no cultivation, trembling grass, foxtail grass, and that soft, bushy grass for which we had no name; there was the gun mounted on its high carriage, gazing out upon the harbour, a one-eyed Polyphemus longing for human food.

We walked and ran about the walls, we sat, read, and talked in Celia's Arbour. I was the principal reader, because Leonard used to act what I read, and Cis always wanted to do what Leonard did.

My usual seat was on the wheel of the gun-carriage, or in warm weather I would lie extended full length on the grass, while I read, in the high-

pitched voice which Nature or my rounded back had given me, the narrative which stole us from ourselves. Why does no one write such books now? We were Don Quixote and Sancho Panza ; we were Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday, that is, Leonard was Don Quixote or Robinson, while Celia was Sancho or Man Friday. Up the harbour was a flat little island, a peninsula at low tide, on which was a farmhouse. I dare say it must have been a dismal place to live upon, and by no means free from rats. But to us it was charming, for it was Robinson's Island. To this day I cannot look at the book without seeing the island again, and peopling it once more with the Solitary and his faithful Indian. When we read the "Pilgrim's Progress" Leonard with a stick personated Christian's terrific combat with Apollyon. Or, if we chanced upon the second part, Celia was Mercy, and knocked very prettily at the gate while Leonard multiplied himself, and became in turns, or at the same time, the Dog, Beelzebub, and the Interpreter.

It was Leonard who called this place Celia's Arbour, after a glee which I found among Mrs. Tyrrell's music. The harmonies of the old four-part song lie in my heart associated with those early days, and with our own retreat. It is a tender glee, whose notes are yearnings and sighs, whose

cadences are love's hypocrisies, breathing an almost arrogant confidence ; while veiled behind a mask of pretended fear, assumed out of good manners, and certain to deceive no Celia that ever lived. We breathed no sighs, we hung no wreath by our Celia's Arbour, but it was a place where two boys learned to love one girl.

She was at first a wilful and uncertain little maid, her moods like the April sky for fitfulness, her way for the moment the one right way ; her will law. She would have been a despot of the fiercest kind, but for one thing which saved her. It was her gift of reading the hearts of those she knew. If by that power of hers she read mine, and so could say with unerring instinct the thing she had to say, always in the way it should be said, then, I suppose, she could read others. That wilfulness wore off as she grew up, but the mysterious power remained. She felt, or seemed to feel, what others thought. It is quite certain that this power can belong to those who think little about themselves, and comes from long watchfulness in observing the connection between thought and expression, and learning how to read the lightest flash of the eye. She was an only child, and her father was the very greatest man in all the town. Not that he was greater than the Governor Commandant of the Forces, or than the Port Admiral, but he was the greatest man of

the municipality. He held, or had held, all the offices. He was a borough magistrate, ex-Mayor, chairman of everything, churchwarden, Past Master of the Masons' Lodge, and leader in everything. In person he was tall and portly, bearing himself with an upright and solid carriage. When he passed down the street the shopkeepers came to their doors and bowed; mothers pointed him out to their boys as an object of emulation; all the town respected him. He deserved their respect for showing them what Leonard was so anxious to find out for himself, how a man may rise in the world. He had been errand-boy in a lawyer's office; he worked every evening, and so got learning, and he finally found himself at forty the leading solicitor and the most "prominent citizen" of the town.

He lived, after the fashion of the time, in the same house where he had his offices. It was a large red brick house, the very last in Castle Street before you came to the town wall. It had the door in the middle opening into a broad hall with a large room on either side. These were the offices, and in addition to them was a certain structure built out at the side devoted to the clerks. The dining-rooms and Mrs. Tyrrell's habitual sitting-room, called the parlour, were at the back, overlooking a garden, large for a town house, planted

with standard apples and pears, and standing behind borders in which flourished the common old-fashioned flowers, Virginia stocks, candy-tuft, mouse-ear, London pride, double stocks, wall-flowers, gillyflowers, and the rest, including big hollyhocks, round which bees swarmed all the summer, planted in the corners. A gate at the end of the wall was unlocked all day, so that Celia and I could pass in and out without seeing or disturbing the clients. On the first floor was Mrs. Tyrrell's drawing-room, a *salon* which impressed the visitor with a sense of really aristocratic magnificence, so cold, so prim, and so very comfortless was it. It was never used, except for a dinner-party, that is, once or twice in the year. For lighter entertainments, such as "a few friends to tea," the parlour was thought quite good enough. Celia's piano was in the parlour; there was a grand in the drawing-room; downstairs you found comfort and ease; upstairs splendour and cold.

The daily life of a professional man, thirty years ago, was a good deal simpler, though in many ways more conventional, than at present. He lived almost always, like Mr. Tyrrell, in the house where he had his office; he dined at one o'clock, and his dinners were extremely plain. At five he took tea, with bread and butter; at eight he finished work for the day, dismissed his clerks, and sat down at

nine with his family to supper, the most cheerful meal of the day, going to bed at half-past ten.

There was no talk in those days of a month on the Continent, of the necessity for change, or an autumnal holiday ; a dance for the young people might be looked for, in some quarter or other, three or four times in the year ; to dance in the summer was unheard of ; garden-parties were never dreamed of ; lawn-tennis—even croquet—not yet invented ; picnics things to imagine. There was a large garrison in the town, but the officers rarely appeared at the houses of the lawyers, and kept in their own sets ; the best available society consisted of the numerous half-pay and retired naval officers, with the clergy and the professional men, and the maidens, who were far more "proper" than are their daughters of rinks and Badminton, looked on a friendly gathering to tea, with a little music afterwards, or a round game, as the highest dissipation consistent with properly brought up young ladyhood. Yet they were perfectly happy. They did not read so much ; they did not know so much as their successors ; their taste in Art, Dress, Furniture, and Decoration had not been developed ; they had not, like Ulysses, seen many men and many manners ; they had no doubts on religion ; they had not become strong-minded ; they did not sit on School Boards, nor sigh for Female Suffrage ;

they had never heard of the Subjection of the Sex; they did not envy the wild delights open to rich young persons of their own sex in London, because they did not know them, except in terms too vague to be harmful. Yet they were, I should think, happier than the girl of the present day, because their hearts were set on simpler things. They dressed themselves as prettily as they knew how and could afford. I looked the other day in an old illustrated paper, and saw with a shudder the dresses of the girls whom I knew as a boy ; the picture of female beauty adorned in the fashion of the day seemed a horrid caricature ; but then the artist had not caught the sweet look of faces which not even a hairdresser can disfigure ; and failed in showing the graceful lines which no foolish fashion-copyist can wholly conceal. Pass over the dress. They flirted a little, in their quiet way, after church on Sunday morning, and over the tea-things in the evening. They read novels, of a decorous order, and not in the least like certain romances now in vogue, written "by ladies for ladies." In the course of time, one by one, they got married, and became good wives and good mothers with old-fashioned notions. It was peaceful, this *vie de province*, and would have been virtuous, but for the sin of gossip ; it was calm, and might have been happy, but for the misfortune of monotony.

A certain conventionality hung about every act of family life which was, or might be, public. People pretended a great deal. If a visitor called —I speak from information received, and not from my own experience—the work which the young ladies were engaged upon was put aside hastily, and they were presented, on the rising of the curtain, so to speak, reading in graceful attitudes. There was a fiction that callers required refreshment, and the decanters were placed upon the table, with the choice of "red or white." I observed, at an early age, that Mr. Tyrrell, when he took wine, which was not every day, abstained from the decanters reserved for the use of visitors, and opened a fresh bottle for himself. I thought, in those days, that it was disinterested generosity on his part, so as to give his visitors the best, but I know better now. The duration of a visit was inversely proportionate to the rank of the caller. In the case of "carriage company," a quarter of an hour at the outside was granted, so much at least being needed to impress the street. Humbler friends, in whose case the decanters might be speedily put away, and the needlework resumed, could stay a whole afternoon, if they pleased. On Wednesday and Friday evenings those ladies who could boast of having "experienced" religion went to church, and gave themselves little airs on account of superior

spirituality. No one ever dreamed of inviting himself to any meal whatever, and if anybody was invited, he was made to feel that he was the guest, being pressed to eat of things provided in his honour, and becoming, whether he liked it or not, the centre of conversation. There was, therefore, a good deal of ceremony in our social festivities. The handing of the muffins, the dexterous use of the kettle, the division of the cake at tea, the invitation to hot spirits and water after supper, the request to sing, the management of the album : all these things required grace and deportment ; quite young men went through the prescribed duties with manifest anxiety; young ladies were careful not to allow their natural happiness over a little social excitement to interfere with the exigencies of propriety ; middle-aged men took a pride in saying and doing exactly the right thing in the right way. Everything in *bourgeois* society of that time had a right way. It is true that this anxiety to keep in the groove prevented originality of conversation ; but then we all knew what to expect, were able to criticise the performances, afterwards, of a well-known *rôle*, and to congratulate ourselves on the very proper way in which everybody had behaved.

Pretence is vulgar, but when it is custom it somehow ceases to vulgarise. We have our customs

still, but they are not quite so binding on us. There were plenty of vulgar people among us, but we were not necessarily vulgar because we dined at one, supped at nine, gave few parties, never went abroad, and observed little fashions, with little pretences which deceived nobody. So far we were only simple. Celia, at least, who was brought up in the lap of this conventionality, could not be, could never have been vulgar.

On Sunday we went to St. Faith's Church, which stands in St. Faith's Square. The building belonged to the reign of the Third George, and was, externally, a great barn of red brick, set in a courtyard, surrounded by a red brick wall, and with a roof of red tiles. Inside it was a large white-painted edifice, resting on four pillars. There was a great gallery running all round, and, because the church was crowded, a second gallery higher up at the west end contained the organ and choir. The pulpit, reading-desk, and clerk's desk, forming between them a giant staircase, stood in the middle of the church; all three were broad and roomy; round the altar-rails sat a school of charity children, who pinched each other during the service. In the aisles were placed, between the pew-doors, little triangular brackets, on each of which sat, in evident discomfort, an aged lady, clad in black. They used to rise, curtsey, and open the doors for the gentle-

folk when they came and when they went away. I used to wonder why these ancient dames came to church at all, considering the profound misery of those three-cornered brackets. But I believe there was a dole of some kind for them, and once a month they had the satisfaction of finishing the sacramental wine. The arrangement of the pews was irregular, the better sort among them being square. In those you sat upon high narrow seats of rough baize, with your feet on large hassocks, which made your flesh creep to touch. The square pews were a great stumbling-block to children because they were convenient for making faces at each other, and this often led to subsequent tears. The Tyrrells had a square pew, in which little Celia sat always as demure as a nun. During the Communion Service, while the Epistle and Gospel were read, we all faced to the east out of politeness to the clergyman. Social distinctions were observed in getting up and sitting down. Poor people obeyed the summons of the organ promptly ; those who had a position to illustrate got up in the Grand style, that is, slowly, and with deliberation. They were well on their feet at about the middle of the second line in the hymn, and they held their hymn-books with an air of condescending criticism, as if there might, after all, be something in the words of the poet. At the close of the hymn they sat down as slowly as they

had got up, long after the organ had finished, even some moments after the last of the old ladies in the triangular seats had ended her final squawk. And as they sat down they looked about the church as if to see that everybody was behaving properly. The Captain's pew, a long one, was behind Mr. Tyrrell's. Leonard often tried, but never succeeded in making Celia laugh. Not a single glance of her eye did she permit towards the pew where her two friends sat. Not a single smile when, Sunday after Sunday, the Captain lugged a key out of his pocket when the hymn was given out, and audibly instructed Leonard to "get out the tools," meaning the hymn-books. During the sermon, the seats were so high that there was no one to be seen except the preacher and the clerk ; the latter was always asleep. And when we came out, we walked away with much solemnity, the elders discussing the sermon.

Time that is long past appears to have been so much longer than any period of the present. In twenty years or so, I suppose I, for one, shall have finished my earthly career—perhaps before then. But it does not seem so long to me now, looking forward to the end, as it does looking back on those years of school and early life, on which I have dwelt, perhaps, at too great length. Being a lonely man, without wife, kith, or kin, I like to think of the days when I had a brother and

a sister. To be sure, I have them still, unaltered in affection, but they are not here. In the long winter evenings, when I am tired of pupils and melancholy, so tired sometimes that even Mendelssohn cannot bring me comfort, I sit by the fire and see little Celia once more, as she was, wayward and fitful, restless as a sprite, bright as a sunbeam, rosy-fingered as Aurora, dancing in and out among our hours, making them gay as a bright June morning; or standing as Minerva might have done, had that most unfortunate goddess ever known childhood, pensively looking out on the sunlit harbour; or, when she grew older, declaiming with passion against the wrongs she read of and the miseries she saw. For, as in every town where soldiers and sailors congregate, and drink is provided, there were many wrongs and much misery; wicked things which obtruded themselves upon even childish eyes. All evil seems to the young so easy to prevent and cure.

Sitting now by the winter fire, and gazing into the coals, it is always Celia that I see. She runs through my life like a scarlet thread in silk. And for five years—the five years of Leonard's "Wander Time," we were always together, for I was her tutor.

I forgot to mention that I was a musician. Music is my profession. I am a music-master—

"Mr. L. Pulaski" is on the brass door-plate, with underneath, "Lessons in Music and Singing." Music has been my joy and solace, as well as my profession. I believe I could play as soon as I was born; at all events I had no difficulty in learning; and when Mr. Tyrrell heard of my great gift, and generously presented me with a piano, I made myself, almost unassisted, a musician of skill as well as of feeling. For I played at every spare moment, and therefore I learned to play well. It was natural that I should help Cis in her music, and when I left school it was natural also that I should become not only her music-master, but her tutor in other things, and her companion. It was good of Mrs. Tyrrell to trust her to me; it was an education for me to have the charge. No brother and sister could have been drawn more closely together than we two. And I am quite sure that no man could love a girl more than I at all times loved Celia.

CHAPTER VII.

AUGUSTUS IN THE LEGAL.

I HAD one short experience of the way in which other people work for money. It lasted three months, and happened when Mr. Tyrrell, out of pure kindness, proposed that I should enter his office. He said many handsome things about me, in making this offer, especially in reference to his daughter, and pledged himself to give me my articles if I took to the work.

I accepted, on the condition that I kept my afternoons free for Celia, and began the study of the law.

Well, suffice it to say that after three months the Captain became my ambassador to convey my resignation. And the only good thing I got out of my legal experience was the friendship of the Bramblers.

Augustus Brambler, the head of the family, was one of Mr. Tyrrell's clerks. Not the head clerk, who was a man of consideration, and had an office to himself, but one of half-a-dozen who sat in the room built for them at the side of the house, and drove the quill for very slender wage from nine in the morning to eight at night. Augustus was no longer young when I first met him, being then past forty years of age. And although the other clerks were little more than boys, Augustus sat among them with cheerful countenance and contented heart. He was short of stature, and his face was innocent of whisker and as smooth as any woman's; his features were sketchy, his eyes were large and bright, but his expression, in office hours, was maintained at a high pressure of unrelenting zeal. Nature intended him to be stout, but with that curious disregard for her colleague which Fate often shows, his income prevented the carrying out of Nature's intention. So that he remained thin, and, perhaps, in consequence, preserved his physical activity, which was that of a schoolboy. I was placed under his charge, and received papers to copy, while the chief clerk gave me books to read. I did copy the papers, to my infinite disgust, and I tried to read the books, but here I failed.

Augustus Brambler, I soon discovered, did the least responsible work in the office, enjoying a

certain consideration by reason of the enormous enthusiasm which he brought into the service. He magnified his humble office; saw in it something great and splendid; beheld in himself the spring of the whole machine; and identified himself with the success of the House. You would think, to listen to him, that he had achieved the highest ambition of his life in becoming a clerk to Mr. Tyrrell, that his weekly stipend of thirty shillings was a large and magnificent income, and that the Firm was maintained by his own personal exertions.

Certainly these were not wanting. He was in the office first in the morning, and left it the last in the evening. He kept the other clerks to their work, not only by example but by precept, admonishing them by scraps of proverbial philosophy, such as—in the case of one who longed to finish and be gone—

"Hurry and haste are worsen than waste;"

or of one who was prone to scamp the work in order to talk,

"Sure and slow is the way to go;"

while in the case—too common among lawyer's clerks—of one who came too late to office, he had a verse as apt as if it had been a Shakespearian

quotation, though I have never seen it in Shakes-peare.

"What," he would say, "do we learn from the poet?

> "'Get up betimes, and at the dawn of day,
> For health and strength to serve your Master pray.
> Sharp at clock striking at the point of eight,
> Present yourself before the office gate.'

"It should have been nine," he would add, "but for the sake of the rhyme."

His eagerness to work was partly counterbalanced by his inability to do anything. He knew nothing whatever, after years of law work, of the most ordinary legal procedure; he could not even be trusted to copy a document correctly. And yet he was never idle, never wasting his employer's time. Mostly he seemed to be ruling lines laboriously in red ink, and I often wondered what became of the many reams beautified by Augustus with such painful assiduity. At other times he would take down old office books, ledgers and so forth, and, after dusting them tenderly, would turn over the leaves, brows bent, pencil in hand, as if he were engaged in a research of the most vital importance. At all events, he did not allow the juniors to waste their time, and, as I afterwards found out, was only continued in the service of Mr. Tyrrell because he earned his weekly stipend by keeping

the youngsters at their work, carrying with him wherever he went an atmosphere of zeal.

He had not been always in the present profession.

"I have been," he would say, grandly, "in the Clerical, in the Scholastic, and in the Legal. Noble professions all three. I began in the Clerical —was a clerk at Grant and Gumption's, where we had—ah!—a Royal business, and turned over our cool Thousands. Thought nothing of Thousands in that wholesale House. Mr. Gumption, the junior partner—he was an affable and kind-spoken man—once took me aside, after I had been there two years or so, and spoke to me confidentially. 'Brambler,' he said, 'the fact is this work is not good enough for you. That's where it is; you're too good for the work we give you. I should say you ought to change it for something superior—say in the Commercial Academy line, where your abilities would have full scope—full scope.' I thought that advice was very kindly meant, and I took it, though it really was a blow to give up sharing in those Enormous profits. However, he seemed to know best what was to my advantage, and so I retired from Grant and Gumption's with the best of recommendations, and joined Mr. Hezekiah Ryler, B.A., in his select Academy for Young Gentlemen. Perhaps the salary was not so good

as might have been desired, but the work—there was the great advantage—the work was splendid. There you are, you know, that's what it is, in that line—there you are. Dozens of possible Shakespeares learning their Latin grammar under your direction; posterity safe to read about you. 'This great man,' the biographer will say, 'was educated at the Select Academy of Mr. Hezekiah Ryler, B.A., one of whose assistants was the zealous Augustus Brambler.' That thought was enough to reconcile me to much that was disagreeable, for there are things about the work of an ush—I mean the assistant of a Commercial Academy, which some men might not like. I was with Mr. Ryler, B.A., for a year, I think, when he suggested—his manner was kindness itself—that perhaps I should find a more congenial sphere for my talents. I gave up the Scholastic, and tried some other line. He was so good as to suggest the Legal, and so I tried it. That was twenty years ago. Since then I've been going backwards and forwards between the Scholastic, the Legal, and the Clerical. It's a very remarkable thing, if you come to think of it, to be born with a genius fit for all three professions."

He firmly believed himself endowed by Nature with exceptional qualities, which fitted him equally for the positions of commercial clerk, legal clerk, or

schoolmaster, and regarded the numerous dismissals which rewarded his labours as so many compliments to his energy and worth. In the sense I have already explained he was invaluable; his honesty and enthusiasm were contagious, and he never, I am sure, understood that, owing to some strange fogging of his enthusiastic brain, he could do nothing at all in the way in which it ought to have been done. When he was in the employment of a merchant his figures always came out wrong; when he was a teacher the boys never learned anything, and when he was a lawyer's clerk he could only be trusted to rule lines in red ink, copy letters in the press, serve a writ, and make a show, with a pile of paper, of doing important work. Yet, because the man was well known in the town for his breezy enthusiasm, for his integrity, and for the honesty which characterised all he did, Augustus Brambler had never been long without a place. He was now, however, a fixture at Mr. Tyrrell's.

One evening, after I had been a month or so in the office, he invited me, in the finest manner, to take supper at his house. Had he bidden me to a lordly banquet the invitation could not have been conveyed more grandly. I accepted, and walked home with him, presently finding myself in a back parlour lighted by a single candle, multiplied by two on our arrival. The cloth was laid for supper,

and half-a-dozen children, from ten or twelve downwards, crowded round the bread-winner, and noisily welcomed him home. They were all absurdly like their father, their eyes were as twinkling, their faces as full of eager enthusiasm ; their figures as stout. And there was exactly the same regularity of diminution in their size that may be remarked in a set of Pandean pipes.

The mother, on the other hand, was thin and anxious-looking. It was easy to see that this poor wan-cheeked and careworn creature shared none of her husband's golden joy in the present.

We sat down at once to the meal, Augustus Brambler saying grace in an impressive manner. It was a rich, and even an unctuous grace, such a grace as might be pronounced before a City dinner, thanking the Lord for the many and various good things He had provided for His creatures. And then, the hearts of all attuned to the solemnity of the occasion, he seized the knife, and looked round him with the air of one who is about to commence an important work.

"Bread, my children, bread and cheese. Your mother will carve the cheese. Mr. Pulaski—I should say, perhaps, Count Pulaski? No. My dear, Mr. Pulaski takes supper with us incognito, like a foreign prince. It is not often that we receive a

nobleman at our simple table. Pray assist Mr. Pulaski from the green corner which is more tasty. Crust, Mr. Pulaski? Forty-seven, your elbows are on the table. Forty-six, calm your impatience. That boy, Mr. Pulaski, will carry through life the effects of the fatal year in which he was born."

While he talked, he went on distributing crust and crumb with the same vigour with which he was wont to rule the red ink lines.

I ventured to ask if the children had no Christian names.

"It is only their father's way," said the mother. "They *have* names like any other Christians, but I don't think they know them, themselves."

Augustus—the children being now all helped—sat back in his chair, and waved his hand with importance.

"My own theory," he explained; "formed even before I married, while I was in the Clerical. Matured while in the Scholastic, where I had access to works of philosophy, including the first book of Euclid, and to works of biography, including Cornelius Nepos. Published, if I may use the expression, while in the Legal. It is this, Mr. Pulaski. Childhood catches measles and whooping-cough, and shakes them off; but a child never shakes off the influences——Forty-eight, if you do not obey your sister you shall go to bed—of the year in which it

was born. My eldest," he said, pointing to the tallest of his family, a girl, "was born in '44. She is therefore predisposed to poetry."

I did not ask why, but the girl, a pretty child of twelve, blushed and looked pleased.

"Her brother, Forty-five," Augustus continued, "is restless and discontented. That is easily explained if you think of the events of that year. A tendency, my boy, which you will have to combat during life. Like asthma.

"When we come to Forty-six," he went on, "what can we expect? The Famine Year. The appetite of that boy would strain the finances of a Rothschild."

Forty-six, who was a healthy, rosy-cheeked boy, with no outward marks of the great Famine upon his fat little figure, was working his way diligently through a great crust of bread and cheese. He looked up, laughed, and went on eating.

"Forty-seven,"—pointing to a little girl,—"the year of calm. The calm before the storm. The next boy is Forty-eight. Ah! the year of rebellion. He is a boy who questions authority. If that boy does not take care to struggle with his tendency, I should not be surprised, when he grows up, to find him throwing doubt upon the Thirty-nine Articles——"

"Oh! Augustus," cried his wife.

"I should not, indeed, my dear. Forty-nine is gone to bed. So is Fifty. So is Fifty-two."

I was afraid to ask after Fifty-one, for fear there had been a loss, but I suppose the question showed in my face, because the family faces instantly clouded over.

"We never had a Fifty-one," said Augustus, sorrowfully.

His wife sighed, and the little girls put their handkerchiefs to their eyes. Forty-six took advantage of the general emotion to help himself to another piece of bread.

"No Fifty-one," Augustus sighed. "It was our unlucky fate. What a boy that Fifty-one would have been! All the wealth and genius of the world came to the front that year. I even wish, sometimes, that he had been twins."

We were all deeply touched, nor did it occur to me till afterwards that we were lamenting over a mere solution in the chain of annual continuity.

"But talking is dry work," resumed Augustus, taking up a brown jug, one of those jolly old jugs, with a hunt upon them in relief, that are only now to be seen in the National Club, and bestowing an Anacreontic smile upon his family. "What have we here, boys and girls, eh? What have we?"—as if there were an infinite choice of drinks in that house. He poured out a glass, holding it up to the

light, turning it about, and critically catching the colour at the proper angle. "Clear as a bell—sparkling as champagne. Let us taste it.——Toast and water, my children—aha! Toast and water—and—the—very—best—I ever tasted."

We had glasses round, and all smacked our lips over the nasty concoction, and he went on in his enthusiastic strain.

"It is a splendid business, the Legal. We are making, not to betray the confidence of the house, only we are here all friends, we are actually making more than two hundred pounds a month; think of that, children, Two—Hundred—Pounds—a month. Fifty pounds a week—eight pounds six shillings and eightpence every working day. Nearly fifteen shillings an hour—threepence a minute!"

All the children gave a great gasp. At the moment they firmly believed their father to be personally in receipt of this fine income. Poor little shabby boys and girls, with their darned and patched clothes, their bread and cheese banquets, and their toast and water. It was, indeed, a splendid income that their father enjoyed.

Supper ended, the children went off to bed. Then we put out the candles, not to waste light, and sat round the open window for half an hour, for it was a warm night, talking.

At least Augustus Brambler talked. And I

began to see in what an atmosphere of imaginary ease the man lived and moved. His social position was, in his own eyes, an enviable one; his abilities were recognised; his future was one of steady advance; his children were well fed, well dressed, and well educated; his poor wife as happy as himself.

From time to time I heard a footstep overhead.

"It is Herr Räumer. We allow him to occupy our first floor," Augustus explained grandly. He was not by any means anxious to hide the fact that he had a lodger who paid the whole of the rent, but it was his way of putting it.

I knew Herr Räumer by sight, because he came a good deal to Mr. Tyrrell's office. He was a German—a very big man, tall and stout, with a white moustache—a great mass of perfectly white hair, of the creamy whiteness which does not convey the impression of age or decay, and had a tread like a cat for lightness. He walked as upright as a soldier, wore blue spectacles out of doors, and had a curious voice, very deep, with a rasp in it. But as yet I had never spoken to him.

"He is our lodger," said Mrs. Brambler. "And he gives us a deal of trouble with his veal cutlets."

"Eats them with prunes," said Augustus.

"And complains of his tea. But he pays his bill every week, and what we should do without

him I am sure I do not know. He is a very regular man. He has dinner at six, and smokes his pipe till half-past ten. Then he goes to bed. Where is Ferdinand, my dear?"

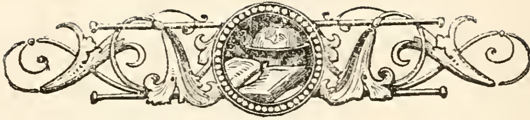
"At work in his room. But it is almost his time."

As he spoke the door opened, and Ferdinand Brambler came in. It was almost too dark to see him, but I knew his face, having seen it about the streets as long as I could remember. He was very much like his brother, being short, smooth cheeked, and inclined to be stout, but he had not the same look of eager zeal. That was replaced by an expression of the most profound wisdom. And he had a habit of throwing his head backwards, and gazing into the sky, which I understood later on.

I rose to go, because it was past ten. As Augustus led me out of the room I heard Mrs. Brambler ask anxiously,

"What have you done to-day, Ferdinand?"

"A leg of mutton," he replied in a sepulchral voice. "And I think heeling and soling for one of the children's boots besides."



CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNFORTUNATE YOUNG NOBLEMAN.

I CONTINUED my acquaintance with Augustus Brambler after I left Mr. Tyrrell's office. The atmosphere of that place very soon, as I have explained, became unbearable to me. The tips of my fingers began to feel as if they were made of parchment, which, as Cis confessed, would be bad for playing. In those days, too, clerks always stuck their pens behind their ears, a practice to which I could never reconcile myself. The association of that beautiful and delicate organisation the ear, the only avenue of the sixth sense, the appreciation of music, with quills and legal forms was revolting. Then what harmonies can be got out of the scraping of pens upon paper? The wind in the trees one can understand; and the waves by the shore; and the purling of a brook; but the

scratching of steel, which you hardly perceive at first, but which makes itself heard with a strident noise which after a time becomes out of all proportion to the size of the instrument, who is to become reconciled to that? As an instrument of torture, I can conceive nothing worse than a room full of pens all at work together.

Old Wassielewski, who after nearly effacing himself during the schooldays was beginning to take a new interest in my proceedings, approved of my giving up the law. That a Pulaski should be a clerk in a lawyer's office was a blot upon the scutcheon; that he should become an actual practising lawyer was an abandonment of everything. When my destiny came to me in the shape of music-lessons, he was good enough to signify approval, on the ground that it would do for the short time I should want to work for money. I paid small attention to his parenthetical way of looking at life—all the Poles lived in this kind of parenthesis, waiting for the downfall of Russia, carrying on their little occupations, which lasted them till death allowed their souls to return to Poland, under the belief that it was only for a time. The Captain, however, deserved more respectful attention. He had small admiration for writing in any form; was accustomed to confound the highest works of genius with the commonest quill-driving;

quoted an old acquaintance of the ward-room who once wrote a novel, and never held his head up afterwards; "Sad business, Laddy. Half-pay at forty."

As for giving music-lessons, the Captain was perplexed. To play on any instrument whatever seemed to him a waste of a man—at the same time there was no doubt in his own mind that I was only half a man. And when he clearly understood that I did not propose to lead a procession of drunken sailors like poor old Wassielewski, or to play the fiddle at a soldiers' free-and-easy, he gave in.

"Have your own way, Laddy. Jingle the keys and make other people jingle. There's sense in a song like 'The Death of Nelson' or 'Wapping Old Stairs'—and those you never care to play. But have your own way."

Gradually, the Captain came to see some of the advantages of the profession. "You give your lesson, take your money, and go. So much work and so much pay. No obligation on either side. And your time to yourself."

It was evident to me, as soon as I began to give lessons, that I was engaging myself for the rest of my life to become a music-master. I became a music-master because there was really nothing else for me at which I could earn my bread. Teaching

of any other kind would have been intolerable, if only for the fact of my unlucky figure. Æsop, himself the most philosophical of hunchbacks, would have trembled at the thought of facing a class of boys—that age which La Fontaine says is without pity. But to sit for an hour beside a girl playing exercises while the mild-eyed governess played propriety was different. So I gave up everything except the piano and the organ, and started in practice as a teacher of the pianoforte. As Nature had given me a reasonably good pipe, I engaged myself at the same time to teach singing.

I was eighteen then, perhaps too young to take upon myself the responsibility of teaching. But pupils came to me, and in a few months I was happily beyond the want of any further help from the Captain. People invited me to give lessons from different motives: some because they thought that a Pole would take their girls at half the price of ordinary professors—in the same way, after the Commune of 1871, the friends of the exiles got them pupils on the ground that they would teach French for a shilling an hour; some came to me because I was young, and they wanted to boast that they were encouraging rising genius; a few, no doubt, because they really thought I could play well and teach their daughters. One lady who had

a select boarding and day school—she dressed in black cotton velvet, and bound her brows with a black ribbon, as if to compress and control the gigantic intellect beneath—engaged my services, as I afterwards learned, in order that she might announce on her cards that music was taught at Cape St. Vincent House (established 1780) by the "young, unfortunate, and talented Polish nobleman, Count Ladislas Pulaski." But as there is no possible romance about a lad of five feet nothing, with long arms, crooked back, and round shoulders, parents who came from a distance, allured by the "unfortunate foreign nobleman," were not allowed to see me. I found out the thing after a time, and was foolish enough, being then quite young, to throw up the engagement in a rage quite befitting my illustrious descent. Afterwards I learned to behave with patience when I was received, as always happened, with a certain deference; but I really think that English people did *not* grovel before a title so abjectly twenty years ago as they do now —and I grew accustomed to overhear the familiar whisper:

"A Count, my dear, in his own country, and here too, if he chooses to enjoy the title, of most distinguished Polish family."

"Enjoy the title." What a wonderful expression! Does a Duke awake in the morning and

begin to smack his lips when a valet says "Your Grace?" Does he stand before his title as before a picture, catching it in different lights? Does he turn the name about as a jewel of many facets, pleasing his eyes with the lustre? I have tried to imagine all the sensual delights possible to be got out of an acknowledged Countship, were one independent enough to bear it openly, and I have always failed.

My lessons were given in the morning, so that I had the more time for Celia. Long before this I had become a son of the house at the Tyrrells'. I came and went unnoticed; it was not thought necessary to improve the family tea or supper on my account; no cakes and muffins were provided, and the decanters were not produced in my honour. That was very pleasant. Also it was an understood thing that I was Celia's companion, guardian, duenna, watch-dog—anything. "It is a great comfort," said her mother, "to feel that she is with Ladislas. He is so steady."

In those days there were no choral societies, madrigal unions, or part-singing in our town. Girls sang duets, but young men seldom took any trouble to cultivate their voices, and unless sometimes when, under pressure, they attempted ambitious things set for high tenor voices, like "Good-bye, Sweetheart," or "Ever of Thee," wreaking a wicked will

upon time and tune, they never sang at all. Musical young men, as they were called, were looked upon with a little disfavour as likely to turn out badly. Therefore it was a novelty in our small circle when Celia and I sang duets.

She learned to play, not brilliantly—perhaps from some defect in my teaching power—but softly and delicately, as if she loved what she played. She had the power of bringing out fresh sweetnesses, such as I had never felt in my own playing of the same piece. It is so always in the highest music. Play it a hundred times, exhaust, as you think, every chord of passion, yearning, faith, prayer, and hope, teach yourself to believe that it is a landscape which you have studied under a thousand effects of light and shade until you know its every possible aspect. Another plays it. Lo! on every side you discern hitherto undiscovered glades of sweet greenery arched by great cathedral aisles in which birds sing endless songs of praise; and clear before you, erewhile so dark and doubtful, lies the path which leads to the higher world, a sunny lane planted by loving hands with flowers, bordered with honeysuckle and meadowsweet, stretching broad and bright to the Gates of Emerald. The best thing about being a musician is that you can understand the music of others.

I encouraged Celia to play only from the best composers, because, while we have the best music to teach us, and the best poetry to speak our thoughts for us, it seems so great a sin to waste ourselves upon lower and ignoble things.

In course of time I began to essay little things of my own: feeble flights, imitations, echoes of the masters. Celia played them, praised them, and then went back to the masters. This showed me what a mere apprentice I was. For that matter I am not yet out of my articles.

Sometimes, after playing one of my own studies, it would please us to see Mrs. Tyrrell waking up out of the doze in which she spent most of her afternoons, and nod her head placidly.

"That is a very pretty piece of Mozart, Celia. I always liked that movement."

Or: "That has always been my favourite in Mendelssohn."

Why is it that people should take shame to themselves for not understanding music, and cover themselves with ignominy by the pretence? No one is ashamed to say that he does not know Hebrew or mathematics. And yet, unless one goes through the regular mill, how can music be known any more than mathematics?

Mrs. Tyrrell reminded me of those fakeers, or *yogis*, who attain to Heaven by perpetually gazing upon a particular toe. She spent her afternoons in a motionless contemplation of the work which she held in her hands. From time to time her eyes closed, but only for a few moments, when the lazy eyelid lifted, and her limpid eyes, which were like the eyes of fallow-deer for absence of care, rested again upon the work. A gentle, easy, emotionless woman, who could not understand her bright and eager daughter. A good woman, too, and a kind mother, always careful that her Celia had the best.

We were at that age when the soul is charged with uncertain longings. Youth is the time when poetry has the greatest power over us. There are so many things we have to say; our thoughts fly here and there like a young bird in early summer, not aimlessly but without control; the brain has not been forced into a single groove, and hardened by long continuance in that groove; the ways of the world are all open. There is no relief in speech, because, for such thoughts, the tongue is powerless. Therefore one falls back upon poetry. It makes me sad now to think of the days when our minds, saturated with the winged words of Keats, Byron, or Wordsworth, were as full of clouded visions, sunlit, mist-coloured, crossed with gleams of glory,

as any picture by Turner. Where are they gone, the dreams of youth? "Où est la neige d'autan?" For if, in the after years, one such vision comes, evoked for a few moments by the breath of some mighty music, it is but a passing gleam. The fierce noontide light of midday soon disperses the clouds, and gathers up the mists. Perhaps, when evening falls upon us, they will come again, those glimpses of the better world.

We wandered hand-in-hand, a pair of dreaming children, or sat in Celia's Arbour, gazing out upon the broad bosom of the harbour. From the moat below us, which was the practice-ground of young buglers, trumpeters, and drummers, there came blown about by the breeze, the *reveille*, the call to retreat, the charge, and the eager rub-dub of the drum, which somehow acts so strongly upon the fighting nerves of the soldier. And every day in that busy port there was the firing of salutes, the solemn Dead March for a regimental funeral, with the quick rattle of muskets over his grave, the band of a regiment marching through the streets, and the booming of artillery practice, sounds to remind us of the world outside, to which we did not belong, but which fired our imagination.

And many kinds of life. At the end of the grassy meadow before our feet was a gate leading into the upper end of the Dockyard. Through the

gate streamed the Liberty men, like schoolboys at play. And after them, going along as slowly as they possibly could, would be sometimes driven a file of wretched convicts, spade in hand, to dig and entrench in some of the Government works. There was a horrible fascination in looking at the convicts. What crimes had they committed? Why were they unhappy above other men who had sinned and not been found out? What miserable mothers and sisters mourned somewhere their degradation? How could they bear the grey uniform of disgrace, the horrible companionship of criminals, the wretched life on the hulks? Which were the men whose time was almost up, and how would they meet their release, and the return to a world which for ever afterwards would scorn them?

Sentiment all this, perhaps; it is the unhappy thing about us all when we pass into the work time, and youth's brief holiday is over, that we have no more sentiment, which is often but another name for sympathy. Men try to crystallise themselves into critics, and therefore put themselves as much as they can outside the emotions. That is what makes poets, novelists, and painters hate and detest the *métier* of critic.

Meantime, no news of Leonard. We knew that there could be none, and yet we hoped.

Leonard, of course, would keep his word. He would not write for five years; but yet, perhaps, in some indirect way, there might come news about him.

"I wonder in what way, Laddy? Of course he will be successful. Sometimes I think he is in London, writing poetry. Suppose he is already a great poet, everybody buying his wonderful verses?"

This was an extreme view to take, but then we were quite ignorant of publishing, and thought, perhaps, that a poet sprang ready made into existence and popularity. However, on cooler thoughts, the idea of Leonard taking to poetry did not commend itself to me.

"He may have gone to the Bar, Laddy, and be a great advocate."

It certainly did occur to me that advocates are seldom great at one or two and twenty.

"Or perhaps he may have become a merchant prince. Not a small trader, you know, but a great man, with fleets of ships and armies of clerks."

We breathed faster and looked at each other with flushed cheeks. What success was too great for our hero?

"Laddy," Celia went on sagely, "we must not choose, because we might be disappointed. Then

Leonard would see the disappointment in our faces, and that would hurt him. We must wait—and hope. Patience, Laddy."

"Patience, Cis."

It was some proof of the strength of Leonard's character that everybody believed in his success. This young hero had gone forth to conquer the world. There would be no difficulties for him. Celia and I naturally looked upon him, our elder playfellow, with the respect of those who had been children with him, and younger than himself. This kind of feeling never dies out. The opinions of childhood throw out roots which spread all through the after years, and cling round the heart of eighty as much as round the heart of ten. And to this day I regard Leonard, just as I used to, as a being quite superior to myself.

The Captain openly spoke of him as of one who had gone into the world to show what a man might do in it. Mr. Tyrrell, who was not naturally an enthusiastic man, would congratulate the Captain on the success of the boy. And Mrs. Tyrrell—how that good lady managed to be infected by the general enthusiasm I do not know—quoted Leonard as an example, when she felt inclined to moralise, of what Religion and industry will effect for young people. What she thought they had done for Leonard I do not know. Perhaps she pictured

him in a Bishop's apron. As for Mrs. Jeram, who also fell into the popular delusion, she openly thanked Providence for bringing such a boy into the world. She always knew, she said, by those infallible signs which only experienced persons can detect, that the baby—meaning Leonard—was going to be a great man.

There were others, too. The Rev. Mr. Broughton, when he met the Captain or myself, would invite us to go home with him and drink Leonard's health in a glass of curious brown sherry, adding that he always knew that boy would get on. And Mrs. Pontifex once warned us solemnly against the pride that comes of worldly success.

All this was very delightful, and helped to keep us in a glow of pride and pleasure which made the long five years pass away quickly. There was only one discordant voice. It came from Herr Räumer, who lodged with the Bramblers, whose acquaintance I had now made.

"You think," he said, in his German accent, "that this—what do you call him?—this boy has become a great man. What do you know about it? Nothing. What can a boy do without money and without friends? Nothing. He is some poor clerk in a merchant's office; he is a shopman behind a counter; he is an usher in a school; he has gone to Australia, and is a wretched

shepherd. What else can a poor boy become? Great man! Bah! you are all fools together, Ladislas Pulaski. But go on, go on, if it will make you happy; go on till you find out the truth."

CHAPTER IX.

HOPES AND FEARS.

In the year 1854 began the Russian war. To me, because in those days I read few papers and took small interest in politics, the first signs of the impending struggle came from the Polish Barrack. Here, from the autumn of 1853, there reigned an unwonted animation. Letters and foreign newspapers were received daily; secret information was whispered about; strangers came down from London; the men gathered themselves into little knots and whispered. The most eager of them all was Wassielewski. He was transformed; he bore himself erect, with head thrown back; those deep-set eyes of his lost their look of expectant melancholy, and were bright with hope; he even seemed to have lost his limp. It was easy for me to understand that all this preliminary joy meant another rising

in Poland. The weakness of Russia was to be the opportunity of my compatriots. In this quiet retreat they were plotting and conspiring. I came and went among them as I pleased, known to every one. They did not tell me their plans, but I observed that as they talked their eyes from time to time turned to me, and I discerned that they were discussing whether I should be made a conspirator with the rest and a sharer in their visions. I understood—it was only part of the general humiliation of a hunchback—that they were undecided whether one so useless physically could not be of use in the way of his name; whether, in fact, it was worth while to sacrifice my life, as well as their own, because I was Ladislas Pulaski. For the first time I felt a Pole indeed, in the strange thought that perhaps, after all, I, too, might be called upon to strike my blow, such as it was, for Polish freedom.

I had been kept strangely ignorant up to this time and even later, of my own family history and of the circumstances under which I was brought to England. I knew that I was the son of a Polish noble; that my father perished in one of the obscure and hopeless village risings which took place some years after the great insurrection of 1831, and were too local to be recorded in contemporary history; also, that it was old Wassielewski who brought me,

a mere infant, in his own arms, safely to England. When I asked the Captain for further information, he put off the question. When, as a boy, I asked Wassielewski, he patted my head kindly, and bade me wait. I understood, therefore, very early, that there was more to be told in somebody's good time.

I believe that it was by the Captain's wish that I was kept from the knowledge of things which might have maddened my boyish brain; because I can hardly give Wassielewski credit for an act of forbearance towards the Romanoff name which lasted twenty years.

In the spring of 1854, when it became quite certain that Russia would have to face the strongest combination of allies ever formed, the day of deliverance seemed to be dawning for Poland. It was a delusive hope, as we know, because Prussia and Austria, *participes criminis*, could not look on in silence while the Russian part of the divided land freed itself and set a bad example to their own Poles. I have sometimes dreamed an impossible thing—that Germany, which pretends to be the most advanced outpost of civilisation, and Austria, which boasts of her easy rule, might some day join together and restore their share in the unholy partition to Liberty. What madness possessed them ever to dismember that ancient kingdom of inde-

pendent Slavs, which could never threaten Germany and stood as a bulwark against the barbaric Muscovite? But it was a foolish dream. Nations never voluntarily make reparation. Unto the fourth and even the fifth generation they pay for crimes in their children's blood; but they do not make atonement for the sin.

While the hopes of the exiles were highest, Wassielewski began to tell me tales of Polish daring and Russian cruelty.

"You are a Pole," he used to finish his narrative, "remember always that you are a Pole. You owe yourself to your country. It may be your duty, as well as mine, to die in her cause. The day is coming when you will have to act."

But as yet, nothing of my father.

In those days, too, Herr Räumer first began to talk to me. I met him at Mr. Tyrrell's office, and he invited me to visit him at his lodgings, which were, as I have explained, the first floor of Augustus Brambler's house.

Here he received me with great cordiality. Indoors he removed the blue spectacles, which he habitually wore in the streets, and showed a pair of keen bright eyes which certainly did not look as if they required any shelter from the light. His room was furnished with great simplicity, like the quarters of an officer on active service—a table, a

sideboard, one or two chairs — his own being a wooden armchair—a slip of carpet before the fire —a pianoforte—constituted all that his simple wants required. On the wall hung one or two weapons, a pair of rapiers crossed, a rifle, and a brace of pistols. On the mantelshelf were two or three pipes and a cigar-case. In the open sideboard I observed a goodly row of bottles, which I rightly judged from their shape and colour of the glass to contain German wine. Herr Räumer drank every day a bottle of this for dinner and another bottle before going to bed. He had one of those heads which are never the worse for wine, however much they swallow.

I felt very small sitting opposite this big man with the keen eyes which looked straight through me, his great head crowned with a mass of grey hair, his face, which looked like the face of one who commanded men habitually, adorned with the heavy white moustache and the long white eyebrows, the strong and resolute chin, the upright pose, the very strength in the man's figure—all this impressed me.

He saw that I was impressed, and I think it pleased him.

He began to talk at once about Poland. He had long, he said, felt deeply for the sorrows and sufferings of my unfortunate country. Unhappily, as I

knew, he was a German, and in Germany there were some sympathies which were not to be openly expressed. If a German gentleman, he said, desired liberty of the Press, freedom of discussion, elevation of the masses, liberal institutions, the restoration of Poland, or any kindred thing, it behoved him to be silent and possess his soul in patience. Here in England, and the doors closed, alone with a Polish gentleman, he could speak his mind. The fact was, the condition of things not only in Russia, but also in Austria and Prussia, was deplorable. He saw before him one who had suffered in the cause.—I thought afterwards that my own exertions in the cause as a year-old baby hardly entitled me to speak as a martyr—he could tell me cases of Russian cruelty which would make my blood boil.

"There is," he said, "thank Heaven, left to mankind the sacred duty of rebellion. The Czar knows of this, and trembles on his throne. From generation to generation the duty is handed down. Even now," his voice sank to a whisper, "even at this very moment, it is whispered that the Poles are meditating another insurrection. Russia's weakness is Poland's opportunity. While her energies are all bent upon the war, the Poles will rise again, and proclaim the Republic of Warsaw. But of course your friends in the Polish Barrack tell you all that is going on."

"Indeed they do not," I replied, with a jealous feeling that if they did I should hardly be justified in retailing their information to one who, however much he might sympathise with the cause, was certainly not a Pole.

"I imagine," he said, "but of course I know nothing, that an attempt will be made this very year. It seems a favourable moment. The Polish exiles will return to join in the movement. It is devoutly to be hoped that they might succeed. And so Wassielewski tells you nothing. It seems hardly fair."

"Nothing."

It did not strike me till afterwards that it was strange that Herr Räumer should know anything of Wassielewski.

"Ah! he thinks the time has not yet come. And yet you are seventeen, you are strong, and can handle a gun. It is not well of Wassielewski. Courage, my boy. I prophesy that many a Russian shall fall by your hand yet."

He always spoke on the assumption that another outbreak was to come, that I was to take part in it, and that the Poles were keeping the knowledge of my own past from me. The prospect had its charm, even to me, the peaceful musician. I do believe that, hunchback as I was, I should have played the

part of a man had Fate willed that I was to revisit my native country.

He changed the subject and presently began talking about music. Then he sat at the pianoforte and began to run his fingers up and down the keys. He could not play, but he possessed—many men do—an almost instinctive power of picking out melodies, and filling them with simple chords. He asked me if I knew the German national airs, and then he began to sing them. We all know them now, these simple lieder with the tears in every bar—but twenty years ago they were not so well known. He sang them sentimentally, and if it had not been for that strange rasp in the voice, musically. The tears came into his eyes as he sang.

"The sorrows," he said, "of other people are so very sad — at a distance. Seen close, they annoy."

But the weeks passed on, and nothing was done. As hope changed to doubt the faces of the Poles grew despondent, Wassielewski left off telling his stories of Polish valour; he lost his look of eager expectation, and he hung his head, as before, with dejected air and mournful deep-set eyes.

"It is all over," said Herr Räumer one evening. "Your life is safe, friend Ladislas. For so much you ought to be thankful. And the Russians need not fear your rifle for another year or two. No

doubt," he added with a gentle sneer, "they are thankful, too."

"Why is it all over?"

"Because Austria and Prussia will not permit revolt. Have they not got Poles of their own?"

I began to declaim about the wickedness of Governments and statesmen.

Herr Räumer heard me politely.

Then he filled another pipe, leaving the old one to cool, drank two glasses of hock, and replied slowly:

"Quite true, Ladislas Pulaski. No doubt at your age I should have thought, and perhaps said, the same thing. The wickedness of diplomatists is a reproach to modern civilisation. Yet, if you consider the matter, you will acknowledge that without their wickedness, there would be really very little in life worth having. No indignation, no sermons, no speakers at meetings, no societies. What a loss to Great Britain!"

"We could do without societies," I said.

"A great deal more would go if political and other wickedness are to go. There would be no armies, no officers, no lawyers, no doctors, no clergymen. The newspapers would have nothing to say, because the course of the world could be safely predicted by any one. All your learned professions would be gone at a blow."

I laughed.

"Music and painting would remain."

"But what would the painters do for subjects? You can't create any interest in the picture of a fat and happy family. There would be no materials for pathos. No one would die under a hundred; and, as he would be a good man there would be no doubt about his after fate. No one would be ill. All alike would be virtuous, contented, happy——and dull."

"Why dull?"

"Why dull? Because there would be nothing left to fight, to fear, to guard against. Dull?" he took his pipe from his mouth, and yawned. "Dull? The human brain cannot conceive of a more appalling, of a more sleepy dulness than that of the world gone good."

"At least the rulers of the world are supposed to be always trying to bring that end about."

"Supposed, my young friend? Yes, by you, and enthusiastic young gentlemen like yourselves. Dull? Why, if you think of it, you would not even have your virtues left, because there would be no need for them. Bravery, self-denial, patience, resignation, patriotism, thrift—these would all vanish, because there would be no longer any occasion for them. No, Ladislas Pulaski, the wickedness of diplomatists keeps the world alive.

There are always plenty of fools to shout, fling up their caps, believe everything they are told, and go away to get killed. The world go good? Much as I deplore the wickedness of wicked man, I trust that general goodness may not happen in my time."

Herr Räumer was right. There was no Polish rising. But our little colony was broken up and thinned by the departure of many of the exiles. Some went out on secret service; some fought in the Turkish lines; a few volunteered in the English and French armies; some joined the German Legion. But Wassielewski stayed on, sadder, more hollow-eyed, than ever.

* * * * *

One day, about the beginning of the war, I was saluted in the street—it was on the Hard—by a tall and good-looking young sailor, in his naval rig, the handiest ever invented.

"Hope you're well, sir."

It was Jem Hex.

I shook hands with him. He told me that he was going aboard the *Impérieuse* for the Baltic Sea Fleet, and that they hoped to have a lively time.

The Baltic Fleet! The war was a real thing, then. And good-natured Jem was going to have the honour of fighting for his country.

He seemed to take it very easily; and he had all the old sea-dog's confidence in thrashing the enemy.

I asked him after Moses.

"Moses," he replied, in a hesitating way. "Moses—well—Mr. Pulaski—if I were you, sir—I don't think I'd ask about Moses. He hasn't turned out—not what you might call a credit."

One figure I missed, among others, from the row of wooden-legged veterans on the beach.

It was that of Mrs. Jeram's erring husband. The old man fell off his stool one night, outside his wife's house, in a fit. She took him in and nursed him till he died. So they were reconciled. And then Mrs. Jeram came to be housekeeper to the Captain.

CHAPTER X.

WAR.

War! I was eighteen at the close of the "long, long canker of Peace," as Tennyson called it—why does every poet try to be a Tyrtæus? And why should holy Peace be called cankerous?—The country put on its rusty armour, sharpened its swords, and sent out aged generals brought up in old traditions of Peninsular times. When news came of the first Turkish successes at Oltenitza, and we read of the gallant defence of Silistria, one began to realise that we were actually in the piping times of war. For my own part, I was pleased and excited, independently of my private, and Polish, reasons for excitement. It seemed to my foolish understanding that the forty years since Waterloo, those years in which the world had done so much in a quiet and peaceful way to make wars more

bloody, had been quite wasted and thrown away. The making of railways, the construction of steamers, the growth of great armaments, were things done slowly and without dramatic tableaux. Now what the world likes, in contemplating the never-ending human comedy, is that from time to time the curtain should fall for a few moments on a thrilling and novel situation. This we were going to have.

"It is splendid, Cis," I cried, with the latest war news in my hand. "Splendid. Now we are going to live in history. We too shall hear hymns to the God of battles; we shall understand the meaning of the war fever; we shall know how men feel who live in a time of battles, sieges, and victories."

Celia did not respond as I expected to this newly-born martial enthusiasm.

"And the soldiers will be killed," she said sadly. "The poor soldiers. What does war mean to them but death and wounds?"

"And glory, Cis. They die for their country."

"I would rather they lived for their country. Laddy, if the new history that we are going to live in is to be like the old, I wish it was over and done with. For the old is nothing but the murdering of soldiers. I am sick of reading how the world can get no justice without fighting for it."

Looked at from Celia's point of view, I have

sometimes thought that there is something in her statement. So many kings; so many battles; so many soldiers fallen on the field of honour. Blow the trumpets; beat the drums; bring along the car of Victory; have a solemn *Te Deum;* and then sit down and make all things ready for the next campaign.

"What good," this foolish young person went on, "does the glory of a nameless soldier shot in a field, and buried in a trench, do to his mourning people? I know, Laddy, needs must that war come, but let him who appeals to the sword die by the sword."

When General Février laid low the author of the world's disturbance, and the Poles lamented because their enemy was gone before they had had time to throw one more defiance in his teeth, I thought of Celia's words, and they seemed prophetic.

"Why do the Russians fight the Turks?" she went on. "What harm have Turks done to Russians, or Russians to Turks?"

I suggested outraged and oppressed Christians.

"Then let the Christians rise and free themselves," she went on, "and let us help them. But not in the Czar's way. And as for the soldiers, would they not all be far happier at home?"

Nor could any argument of mine alter her opinion

on this point : a heresy which strikes at the very root of all wars.

To be sure, if we read history all through—say the history of Gibbon, the most bloodthirsty historian I know—it would be difficult to find a single one out of his wars that was chosen by the people. "Now then, you drilled men," says King or Kaiser, "get up and kill each other." The *Official Gazette* proclaims the popular enthusiasm, shouting of war-cries, and tossing of caps—the value of which we know in this critical age. But the people do not get up of their own accord. There is a good deal of fighting again in the Chronicles of old Froissart, but I remember no mention anywhere of popular joy over it. The historian is too honest to pretend such nonsense. In fact it never occurred to him that people could like it. They were told to put on their iron hats, grasp their pikes, and make the best of things. They obeyed with resignation ; their fathers had done the same thing ; they had been taught that war was one of the sad necessities of life—that, and pestilence, and the tyranny of priests, and the uncertainty of justice ; you had to fight just as you had to work, or to be born, or to die ; the pike was an emblem of fate. For wise and mysterious purposes it was ordained by Providence that you were to be cuffed and beaten by your officers before being poked through the body by

the iron point of the enemy's pike. It has been, hitherto, impossible for mankind to get out of this mediæval way of thinking; some Continental nations, who believe they are quite the advance-guard of civilisation, even go so far as to preserve the cuffing to this day as part of their Heaven-sent institutions. It is taught in the schools as belonging to the Divine Order, and therefore to be taken with resignation. At the same time, we need not go so far as to expect actual love for cuffing—with desire for more cuffing—from modern Prussians any more than from mediæval French or English.

Not one single common soldier, among all the millions who make up the rank and file of modern armies, wants to go fighting. And yet what a lot of fighting there is!

Suppose, some day, when the glorious army on either side was ordered to advance, the brave fellows were to sit down instead with a cheerful grin, leaving the Kings to fight out the quarrel in a duel.

Now and then, things getting really intolerable, the people wake up and have a Jacquerie, a Revolution, or a Reformation. But that is civil war, the only kind of war which the unpatriotic mob really cares about.

"All the world," said foolish Cis, "praying daily for peace. And praying for peace since ever they

began to pray at all. And what has come of it?"

"I do not see much good," said the Captain, who took the mediæval view about war, "in praying for what you must help yourself to. If all the world agreed on peace, there would be peace. And then it would be no good having a bigger fleet than your neighbour."

I try to put my obvious point in a new and striking light: that nations who will not sit still, but get up quarrels with other nations, ought to have all their arms taken from them. Fancy Russia without an army or a fleet, obliged to live peacefully and develop herself! Why, in ten years she would be civilised; and then we should see strange things. But my point, however cleverly put, will not convince the Captain, whose opinions on the necessity of war are based upon the advantages of a superior fleet.

After all, it is a great thing to be the adopted son of a land like this isle of England, which can never again we hope, be made to serve the ambition of kings and priests; never more drive her sons by the thousand to the slaughter-house, or her daughters to lamentations and tears, for aggrandisement. The only country in Europe of which such a boast may be made.

When will it cease? When will men be strong

enough to say, "Enough; we will have no more of your military caste; we will have no more of your great armies; we will never fight again, except to defend ourselves?"

And Russia to set herself up as the protector of Christians! Russia to be the advocate of humanity! Russia the champion of civilisation! Ask the opinions of Poland on these points; go seek those of Turkestan; of Circassia; of Khiva; of Siberia. Call on the Czar and the Court to tell their secret history which everybody knows; on the nobles to lay bare the story of their lives; on the officers to confess their barbaric license; on the judges and officials to confess their corruption; on the priests to explain how they set the example of a Christian life. Call on police, secret agents, spies, ministers, governors, and soldiers to speak of Russia's Christian virtues in brutal beatings, torture of mind as well as body, infamous delations, universal bribery, filthy prisons, and inhuman punishments. That done, wish the arms of Russia success, and pray that all the world may become Cossack, and the kings of the world imitators of the Czar.

But I am a Pole, and may be supposed consequently to hate Russia. That is a popular error. The Poles do not hate Russians. Their qualities, their characteristics, are ours, because we are all of one common stock; as for their vices, they are

encouraged by the governing class, because without the degradation of ignorance and drink they could not be depended on, these poor mujiks, to obey orders. We only hate the Romanoffs, who are Germans. But we like the Russians. And the English people will find out, on that day when the great unwieldy empire drops to pieces, and the spectre of the Romanoff terror is laid for ever, what good qualities there are in Russian, Muscovite, or Pole, and how by the aid of the Devil, who invented autocratic rule, the good has been perverted into evil.

But what had the English and the Russian soldier done to each other, that they should be made to fight?

A most foolish and jealous girl's question. And yet—and yet——

And yet—it was pitiful to see our brave fellows, full of fire and enthusiasm, go down the narrow streets of the town to the Dockyard Gates on their way to the East. They marched in loose order, headed by the Colonel, the bands playing "The Girl I left behind me." The streets were lined with the townspeople; the women crying, some of them even kissing the soldiers; the men waving hats and shouting; the children laughing and running for joy at so splendid a spectacle. Among the honest faces of the rough and rude soldiers—far rougher, far ruder then than now—you could

see none that were not lifted proudly, flushed with hope. Drill the Muscovite and send him out to fight; he will go, and he will fight as he has been taught, a dogged, obedient creature. He asks for no reason, he neither questions nor criticises. When he begins to question, the end of the Romanoffs will not be far distant. Drill a Frenchman and order him into the field. He goes with a yell and a rush like a tiger. And he is as dangerous as a man-eater. The German, who, more than all men, hates soldiering, goes unwilling, patient, sad. He is among other men the least pleased to fight. But the Englishman goes willingly, quietly, and without shouting. He likes fighting. And if he begins he means to go on.

When the Dockyard Gates closed upon the Adjutant and the Doctor, who rode last, men and women alike turned away with choking throats and swelling hearts, ashamed to shed the tears that stood in their eyes.

The men were going to fight for their country. Could there be a nobler thing than to fight, and for that sacred cause to die?

And yet, Celia asked, what had Russians and Englishmen done to each other that they should fight?

Some day, perhaps even in my own time, the pale figure of Revolution, red-capped, gaunt, and

strong, will stalk into the Summer Palace, and bring out the Romanoffs, disturbers of the world's peace, one by one. "See," she will say to the onlookers, "they are but men, these Czars, two-forked radishes, like yourselves. They are not stronger, bigger-brained, or longer-lived than you. They are troubled by exactly the same passions; they have no better education than the best of you. But they must have war to delude ignorant people, and keep them from asking questions. As for you eighty millions, you want peace, with the chance of growing crops, and enjoying sweet love of wife and children. Once get this family with all their friends across the frontier, with strict orders that they are not to come back any more, and you shall have all that you reasonably want."

That is what the eager-faced woman with the Phrygian cap said, eighty years ago, to the French, who believed her, and proceeded to act in the courage of their convictions. They made a mess of it, because they expected too much. But they set an example, and we have not yet seen the end of that example.

Day after day the tramp of soldiers down the streets, infantry, cavalry, artillery, all alike light-hearted, all starting on the journey of death as if it were a picnic.

When the news came of the first fighting we

grew less tender-hearted, and sent out fresh squadrons with the same enthusiasm but fewer tears. The war fever was upon us, pulses beat fiercely, we had less thought for the individual men and more for the army. We were bound to win somehow, and the soldiers went out to win for us. If they fell—but we did not think too much, then, about falling. Individual life is only valuable in time of peace. In times of war it has a commercial value of its own—life for life, and perhaps one life for ten if we are lucky.

"I dare say," said the Captain one day, "that there is a Russian way of looking at things, though hang me if I can see it. But mark me, Laddy, unless a man sticks tight as wax to his own side, shuts his ears to the other side, won't hear of an argument, that man can't fight happy. There's no comfort in a battle unless you feel you're on the Lord's side. Wherefore hang all sea lawyers, and let every man, now, hate a Russian as if he were the Devil."

To do our red-jackets justice, that is about what they did.

Besides the long lines of soldiers embarking every week in the huge transports, there were the preparation and the despatch of the great and splendid Black Sea and Baltic Fleets.

It is something to have lived in a time when

such ships were to be seen. It is a memory which binds one to the past to think of that day, in March, 1854, when the Baltic Fleet set sail amid the prayers of the nation. Never was so gallant a fleet sent forth from any shore, never were shores more crowded with those who came to criticise and stayed to cheer. We had already—Cis and I among the number—cheered old Charley Napier when he walked down the pier to embark on his ship, pounding the timbers with his sturdy little legs as if they had been so many Russians. To-day he was on board the *Duke of Wellington*, the biggest ship in the world, a great floating fortress mounting a hundred and thirty-one guns, built to sail when wind was fair, with a crew of a thousand men, and an admiral who meant fighting. No one who ever saw that day will forget the departure of the Fleet. It was a fresh and breezy day in March, the sun came out in occasional gleams, and shot long arrows of light athwart the clouds. The sea was dark with multitudes of boats, yachts, steamers, and craft of all kinds; the shore was black with the thousands who sat there watching for the signal to be given. And riding at anchor lay the ships on whom the fortunes of England depended. There was the *St. Jean d'Acre* of a hundred guns, the *Royal George* of a hundred and twenty—she floated over the place where lay the bones of her name-

sake, the flag-ship of Admiral Kempenfeldt, when he went down with "twice four hundred men," and almost as many women; the *Princess Royal* of ninety-one guns; the *Impérieuse* and the *Arrogant*—I was launched on board the *Arrogant*, and remembered her well—there were, all told, in that Baltic Fleet, though all were not gathered together, between fifty and sixty ships. Presently we saw the Queen's steamer, the *Fairy*—the pretty little yacht, with her three sloping masts—threading her graceful way swiftly in and out of the ships, while the Jack Tars manned the yardarm, and cheered till the shore took it up with echoes and the counter-cheering of the spectators. When the old men with Nehemiah saw the diminished glories of the Second Temple, they lifted up their voices and wept. When the old men on our shore saw the magnified glories of the Victorian fleet, they lifted up their voices and wept, thinking of the days that were no more, the breezy battle with a foe who dared to fight, the long chase of a flying enemy, the cutting-out, the harvest of a score of prizes. This time, with better ships, better crews, we were going on a fool's quest, because all the good we did was to keep the Russians within their port. Well, our trade was safe. That was a great thing. The ships would go up and down the broad ocean without fear of the Russians, because these were all

skulking behind Cronstadt towers. I am not a Muscov, but a Pole, yet I was ashamed for the Russian sailors, who were not allowed to strike a blow for their country, while the soldiers were dying in thousands, dogged, silent, long-suffering, in obedience to the Czar whom they ignorantly worship.

They sailed, the Queen leading the way. Out flew the white canvas, fluttering for a moment in the windy sunshine, and then, with set purpose, bellying full before the breeze, and marshalling each brave ship to her place in the grand procession.

The Armada passed out of sight, and we all went home. The Captain was moved to the extent of a double ration that night; also, he sang a song. And at prayers, he invented a new petition of his own for the honour and safety of the Fleet. There were occasions, he said, when if a man did not feel religious he didn't deserve to be kept on the ship's books any longer. And he told us—Cis was staying with us that day—for a thousandth time the story of Navarino.

When the fleets were gone, and the soldiers nearly all sent off, we began to look for news. For a long time there came little. Charley Napier told his men to sharpen their cutlasses; that was just what the old fellow would do, because if he got a

chance of fighting, he meant fighting. But he did not get that chance. Within the fortress of Cronstadt, in ignoble safety, lay the Russian fleet, afraid to come out. There was a little bombardment of Sweaborg, Helsingfors, and Bomarsund ; we made as much as we could of it at the time, but it was not like the fighting which the old men remembered. And only a few prizes, here and there. One was brought in, I remember, by the *Argus*, at sight of which we all turned out to cheer. The Captain sorrowfully said that in the good old days when he entered the Navy, about the year 1805, he might have been in command of a dozen such prizes every year.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAR, AND AFTER.

THAT summer of 1854 was a long and dreary time. We were waiting for something to be done, and nothing was done. Good Heavens! Were our generals stupid, or incapable, or were they dreaming away the time? Who does not remember the cholera at Varna, after the long and unnecessary delay, the sickness of the troops before a blow had been struck, and at last the embarkation for the Crimea? So great and terrible was the spectre of Russian greatness that even the three great Powers of France, Turkey, and England hesitated before attacking this monstrous Frankenstein in his den. They went at last, greatly daring, and their reward was—Alma.

And then followed the splendid months of barren victory—Inkermann, the soldier's battle, the foolish

braggadocio of the Light Cavalry charge, followed by the cruel winter and the unmerited sufferings of the troops, for which a dozen commissariat officers ought to have been shot.

About this time I saw my compatriots, the Russians, for the first time. Some prisoners were brought to us ; they wore flat caps and long coats, they had good-natured faces, not at all foolish ; they had wide noses, like Tartars, and they made themselves quite happy and comfortable with us, carving all sorts of toys, and showing a power of laughter and humour quite incompatible with the devilry which we had been accustomed to attach to the Muscovite character. They were only devils, I suppose, by order of the Czar, and in the ranks. Outside the ranks as peaceable, docile, and quiet a set of fellows as ever wanted to grow an honest crop in peace.

But how we received the news in those days! With cheers, with illuminations, with feastings, with receptions of captains, generals, and admirals. Still the exodus of our *juventus* went on. The *juvenes* were younger, smaller, and more rustic in appearance. They all, however, had the same gallant bearing, these brave country lads, fresh from the plough and the stable, redolent of Mother Earth. A few weeks before, and they were leaning against posts in the village street, feeding pigs, driving

calves, striding with a sideward lurch after cows, sitting almost mute on a bench in the village alehouse. Now they were well set up, drilled, inspired with warlike ardour, filled with new ideas of duty, responsibility, and a career, ready to do—and to die. Let us confess that the readiness to die is always qualified by that belief which every soldier has, that he, if no one else, will be the one person to escape. If it were not for that saving clause I fear that even in the times of greatest danger to the country service in the ranks would not be popular. Men did not volunteer for those charming fights in the arena before Nero, when all had to die on the ground. Quite the contrary; they disliked that kind of fight, and I have often thought how greatly the vivacity and ardour of the combat would have been increased if the combatants had been told beforehand that one—say the bravest—would have his life spared, with a pension of a shilling a day ever afterwards. *Vos morituri salutant* might have been said by those fresh-cheeked young English lads on their way to club muskets at Inkerman, and to fall in the storming of the Redan.

And after a while they began to send the wounded home.

To receive them, a hospital was built in one of the meadows under the Ramparts, and a portion of the wall was railed off for the convalescents to walk

upon. This made our own end at the Queen's Bastion still more quiet and secluded.

In 1856, the sick and wounded were brought home by every ship that arrived from the East, and week by week, sometimes daily, might be seen filing up the long and narrow street a long and dismal procession. It consisted of sailors carrying stretchers, four to every stretcher. There was no band now, nor would be any more for most of the poor men upon the stretchers, till the muffled drums and the fifes went before the coffin and played the "Dead March." The townsfolk who had turned out to wave their handkerchiefs when the soldiers left came out now to greet them back. But what a greeting! and what a return! Some, sitting half upright, waved feeble hands in response to those who lined the way and cheered their return. Their faces were pale and worn with suffering; sometimes a sheet covered the lower limbs, which were mutilated and crushed; some, a little stronger than their comrades, sat up, laughed, and nodded. Some, worn out by the rolling of the ship, the pain of their wounds, and the long sufferings of the campaign, lay back with closed eyes, patient and sad to see, and made no sign. And here and there one was borne along ghastly, the pallor of death upon his cheeks, life done for him; not even vitality enough left to think about the future world; his

eyes half open, with a fixed glare which observed nothing. This, with the row of tombs in the Crimea and at Scutari, was the end of all that pride and pomp of war. What was it Tennyson said :

> "The long, long canker of Peace is over and done."

We were to wake to nobler aims, leave the sordid and base, give up cheating and strike home, were it but with the cheating yard-measure.

Well. The war came, ran its course, and ended. What nobler ends followed ? How much was abolished of the old cheating, the sorded aims, and the general baseness of a world at peace ? How much less wicked and selfish were we, when all the fighting was finished, and the soldiers come back to us ?

And after all, we return to Celia's question, "What had they done to each other, the Russians and the English, that they should stand face to face and fight ?"

"Take me away, Laddy," Celia said one day, after seeing one of the gloomy processions of the wounded partly file past. "Take me away. I cannot bear to see any more. Oh ! the poor soldiers—the poor soldiers—— What punishment can be great enough for the men who have brought all this misery upon the earth ?"

What, indeed ? But Nicolas was dead. General

Février killed him. Perhaps, after all, he was not the guiltiest. But he gave the word. It is to be hoped, for their own sakes, that autocrats do not know what war means, else surely the word never would be given, even to save the throne, and every nation would manage its own affairs in quietness.

And yet England had to fight. It seems most true that the war could not be avoided. All that blood, all that suffering, the moans of so many thousands of wounded, the tears of so many thousands of women and children, the awakening of so many evil passions, the letting loose of so many devils, must fall upon the head of Russia. First to excite revolt among the Christian subjects of the Turk; then to make difficulties for the Turks in putting down the miserable victims of the Russian plot; then to call on Europe to mark how Turkey treated her subjects; then to proclaim herself the protector of Christians; this was Russia's game in 1828, in 1853, and, lastly, in 1876. And the glory of the poor soldiers? They died for their country, and have such glory as belongs to one of a nameless fifty thousand fallen on the field.

The fight was just and the victory righteous. We pay the penalty now of not having carried the war to its legitimate end. We should have restored

Poland, driven Russia back to the Caucasus and the Caspian, given Finland again to Sweden, and taken away her southern ports. All this we could have done; it was possible to England and France, twenty years ago. Will the chance ever come again?

Through the whole of the war there was no man in the town who took a keener interest in it, who was oftener in the streets, who hung more about the harbour, or talked more with soldiers and sailors, than Herr Räumer.

The war, in any case, did good to our own people at the Dockyard town. There had never been such times since the good old long war, when a man who had a shop near the Hard had but to open it and stand all day taking the sailors' money as fast as they poured it out over the counter. Every ship that came home brought her sailors to be paid off, the money to be all spent in the town; every ship that sailed for the East carried away stores for the soldiers, chiefly bought in the town. Those who were in the way of all this money-making made fortunes out of it, and retired to suburban villas, with gardens, for the rest of their lives. I do not think that the green coffee berries, the putrid preserved meat, the mouldy compressed hay, or the biscuits that walked about animated by a multitudinous hive of lively creatures, were supplied by any

of our people. We were too patriotic; we had friends on board the ships if not in the regiments —*could* we send them out rotten provisions or brown paper boots? Then there was the revelry.

Out of all the millions spent in the Crimean War, think how many went in the drink-shops and the dancing kens. The fiddle of old Wassielewski, I know, was in constant request; often and often I heard the well-known sound—I knew his style, which was distinct from that of any other of the sailors' musicians—from behind the red curtains of a sailors' public-house, behind which Jack and Jill were dancing, drinking, and singing. The China War, by the way, was long since played out, and the picture had given way to another, in which Russians were playing an ignominious but dramatic part. A side picture represented French sailors and soldiers, very tight of waist, moustachioed, and black of hair, fraternising merrily with our own men —with drink, hand-shaking, and song, they were celebrating the *entente cordiale.* Listen! It is the sailors' hornpipe; within is one who, grave of face and agile of foot, treads that mazy measure alone, while around are grouped the crowd of sympathetic rivals, who drink, applaud, and presently emulate. The dancer is facing old Wassielewski, who sits with outstretched left leg, his deep-set eyes fixed on the opposite wall, his thoughts far away in the

dreadful past or the revengeful future, while the fingers, obedient to his will, play the tune that he orders but does not listen to. It is, I know—because I do not look in, but feel all this—a low room, and it is redolent of a thousand compound smells, ancient, fish-like, capable of knocking a stranger down and stunning him with a single blow. The windows have never been open for twenty or thirty years; of course, once in a way, a pane was broken; and there were occasions when some young mariner, ashore after three years' cruise, was fain, out of the plethora of his joy, to find relief in smashing them all. But the smell of that room was venerable by age and respectable by association, though more awful than it is permitted to me to describe. Jack and Jill did not mind it; they liked it. There was rum in it, plenty of beer, a very large quantity of tobacco, onions, beef-steaks, mutton-chops, boiled pork and cabbage, pea-soup, more tobacco, more rum, more beer. That smell, my friends, is gone; the public-house is gone, Jill is almost gone, Jack is an earnest Methodist by religion, and he spends his time ashore at the Sailors' Home.

And there then was the dockyard, with all its extra hands, and the work going on day and night, so that the solemn silence of the darkness was unknown. Victory Row must have lost one of its

chief charms. For the whole twenty-four hours there was the incessant tap-tap of the caulkers, the heavy thud of the steam-hammer, the melodious banging of the rivets, followed by countless echoes from the many-cornered yard, and the r—r—r—r of the machinery. No rest at all, except on Sunday. That emergency must be great indeed when the British Government would ask its workmen to give up their Sabbath rest.

As for the sailors, there seemed no diminution in their numbers, or in the number of the ships which crowded the harbour, and were perpetually coming and going with their thunder of salutes. Jack only had two stages: he was either just paid off, and therefore ostentatiously happy with his friends around him, his fiddlers, and his public-house, or he was just embarking again on a newly-commissioned ship, going off for another cruise with empty pockets, coppers terribly hot, and perhaps, if he was Jack in his youth, with the faint and dimly-seen ghost of a possible repentance somewhere lurking about his brain, a spectral umbra pointing heavenward which faded as the shore receded, and vanished about six bells in the morning.

For soldiers, we fell back upon the militia. We have never yet grasped the truth that England may have to defend what she has got; that she is not only the admiration, but also the envy, of all

other nations; that Russia would like Constantinople and India; Germany, Australia — good Heavens! think of the shame and ignominy of letting any un-English-speaking country have Australia; the States, Canada; France, Egypt and Syria; Italy, Cyprus; Greece, Crete, and so on. When these facts have become convictions, when we fairly understand how great is our position in the world; what a tremendous stake we have in it; how much of unselfish humanity depends on the maintenance of English hegemony; then will England arm every man between fifteen and fifty, and make all from twenty to thirty liable to foreign service. Patriotism sleeps, but it may be awakened. If it continues to sleep, farewell to England's greatness. A century of ignoble wealth, a generation or two of commerce diverted, trade ruined, industries forgotten, and the brave old country would become worse than Holland, because the English are more sensitive than the Dutch, and the memories of old glory combined with present degradation would madden the people and drive them to—the usual British remedy, drink.

In 1855 we—I do not speak as a Pole—were rather better off in the matter of regiments and recruits than we should be in 1877, were the occasion to arise. In all these years, we have learned nothing, taken to heart nothing, done nothing, pre-

pared for nothing. We have no larger army, we have no better organisation, we have no more intelligent system, we have not made our officers more responsible. Twenty years ago, we threw away twenty thousand men—with a light heart sent out twenty thousand men to die because we had no system of control, transport, and commissariat. All these poor lads died of preventible disease. What have we done since to make that impossible again? Nothing. Talk. At the very Autumn Manœuvres, when we have weeks to prepare and a paltry ten thousand men to provide for, we break down. Continental nations see it, and laugh at us. What have we done to make our children learn that they *must* fight *pro patriâ*, if occasion arise? Nothing. Board Schools teach the Kings of Israel; the very atmosphere of the country teaches desire of success and the good things which success brings with it; no school teaches, as the Germans teach, that every man is owed to his country. That *may* come; if it does not come soon, farewell to England's greatness. Again: that the Empire was created and grew great, not by truckling to the pretensions of modern diplomatists, but by saying, "Thus far, and no farther." Do this wrong or that, and you will have to fight England. That the most glorious country that the world has ever seen, the finest, the richest,

the most splendid, the most religious, the least priest-ridden and king-ridden, was made what it is by its children being willing and able to fight—all these things were not taught in 1855, and are not yet taught in 1877. Good heavens! I am a Pole, and yet more than half an Englishman: and it makes me sick and sorry to feel how great is the parsimony of an Englishman; how noble are his annals; how profound a gap would be made in the world by the collapse of England; and how little English people seem to understand their greatness. I have been waiting for twenty years to see the fruits of the Crimean War—and, behold, they are dust and ashes in the mouth.

Revenons à nos moutons. Our garrison, then, consisted of a couple of militia regiments. They came to us, raw country lads, like the recruits whom we sent to the East, but, being without the presence of the veterans to control and influence them, they took longer to improve. And yet it is wonderful to notice how an English lad takes to his drill and tackles his gun from the very first, with an intelligence that is almost instinct. He is, to be sure, almost *too* fond of fighting. There is no other country beside England, except France, where the recruits can be taught to march, to skirmish, and the rest of it, without the aid of Sergeant Stick, so largely employed in the Russian,

German, and Austrian services. These young fellows came up to barracks, with their country lurch upon them, their good-natured country grin, and their insatiable thirst for beer. They retained the last, but in a very short time got rid of the first. One whole regiment volunteered for foreign service —I forget what it was—and went to Corfu, the island which a late Prime Minister, more careful of a theory than of a country's prestige, tossed contemptuously to Greece, so that all the world sneered and even the gods wondered. Well, these rustics of militia men, I declare, after a few weeks were as well set up, pipe-clayed, and drilled, as any regiment of the line, and as trustworthy in case their services should be required.

In one thing, one must needs confess, they were inferior to the regulars. It was not in perpendicularity, which they easily acquired. We were still in the pipe-clay days, when the white belt and the cross shoulder-straps were daily stiffened by that abominable stuff; the white trousers of summer had also to be kept in a whited sepulchre semblance of purity by the same means; a man who is pipe-clayed cannot stoop; the black leather collar kept the head at an unbending line with the body; and the yellow tufts on the shoulder, with the swallow-tails of the absurd regimental coat and the tiny ball of red stuff on the regimental hat, all

combined to necessitate a carriage ten times stiffer and more rigidly upright than in these degenerate days. The most lopsided and lurcher-like of rustics was bound to become perpendicular. But their failing was in the way they took their beer. The old regular got drunk as often as the militiaman, but the drunker he got the stiffer he grew, so that when he was quite helpless he fell like a lamp-post, with uncompromising legs. And we, who knew by experience how a soldier should fall, remarked with sorrow rather than anger that the militiaman fell in a heap like a ploughboy, and so betrayed his customary pursuits.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BRAMBLER FAMILY.

THIS was an especially good time for Ferdinand Brambler, the journalist, and consequently for the children. Such years of fatness had never before been known to them. Not, it is true, that Fortune befriended Augustus. Quite the contrary. War might be made and peace signed without affecting his position in the slightest. Nothing ever happened to better his position. On one occasion even —I think it was in 1856—he received an intimation from Mr. Tyrrell's head clerk, who had vainly trusted him with some real work, that his resignation would be accepted if he sent it in. Therefore, with enthusiasm ever equal to the occasion, he hastened to desert the Legal, and once more returned to the Scholastic, taking the post of writing and arithmetic master in a Select Commercial Academy.

"After all," he said to me, "the Scholastic is my real vocation. I feel it most when I go back to it. To teach the rising generation—what can be nobler? I influence one mind, we will say. Through him I influence his six children; through them their thirty-six children; through them again their two hundred and sixteen—there is no end to the influence of a schoolmaster. I shall be remembered, Mr. Pulaski, I shall be remembered by a grateful posterity."

Perhaps he will be remembered, but his chances of exercising permanent influence were scanty on this occasion, because, although he taught with extraordinary zeal and activity, the Principal actually complained, after three months, that his boys were learning nothing, and gave him notice in the friendliest and kindest manner.

Some secret influence was probably brought to bear upon Mr. Tyrrell at this juncture, when the Brambler household threatened to lose the income derived from the labour of its chief, because Augustus went back to his old office and his old pay, sitting once more cheerfully among the boys, mending the pens with enthusiastic alacrity, serving writs with zeal, copying out bills of costs with ardour, and actively inspecting old books in an eager search for nothing.

"I do think," he said in a burst of enthusiasm,

"that there is nothing after all like the Legal. When you have deserted it for a time, and go back to it, you feel it most. Law brings out the argumentative side—the intellectual side—of a man. It makes him critical. Law keeps his brain on the stretch. Often on Saturday night I wonder how I have managed to worry through the work of the week. But you see they could not get on without me."

Perhaps not, but yet if Augustus had known by whose fair pleading he was received back to become a permanent incubus on the weekly expenses of that office——

In the Scholastic, in the Clerical, or in the Legal, Augustus Brambler never changed, never lost heart, never failed in zeal, never ceased to take the same lively and personal interest in the well-being of the House. He had his punctual habits and his maxims. He was a model among *employés*. Fortune, when she gave Augustus a sanguine temperament and a lively imagination, thought she had done enough for the man, and handed him over to the Three Sisters as sufficiently endowed to meet any fate. And they condemned him to the unceasing and contented exercise of illusion and imagination, so that he never saw things as they really were, or understood their proportion.

But during the years of war the children, in spite of their helpless father, waxed fat and strong, and even little Forty-six looked satisfied and well fed.

It was through the exertions of their Uncle Ferdinand.

I had long observed that whenever anything was going on—and something in these days was constantly going on—Ferdinand, besides Herr Räumer, was always on the spot. Whatever the nature of the ceremony, whether it was the embarkation of a regiment or the arrival of the invalided, or a military funeral, or an inspection of troops upon the Common, or a launch, Ferdinand was in attendance, and to the front, wearing a face of indescribable importance, and carrying a notebook. This in hand, he surveyed the crowd on arrival, and made a note; cast a weather eye upwards to the sky, and made a note; drew out his watch, and made a note; then as soon as the Function began he continued steadily making notes until the end. I did not at first, being innocent of literary matters, connect these notes with certain descriptions of events which regularly appeared on the following Saturday in the local *Mercury*. They were written with fidelity and vigour; they did justice to the subject; they were poetical in feeling and flowery in expression. A

fine day was rendered as "a bright and balmy atmosphere warmed by the beams of benevolent Sol;" a crowded gathering gave an opportunity for the admirer of beauty to congratulate his fellow-townsmen on the comeliness and tasteful dress of their daughters; when a ship was launched she was made by a bold and strikingly original figure to float swan-like on the bosom of the ocean; when a public dinner was held, the tables groaned under the viands provided by mine eminent host of the George; the choicest wines sparkled in the goblet; animation and enthusiasm reigned in every heart; and each successive flow of oratory was an occasion for a greater and more enthusiastic outburst of cheering. The writer was not critical, he was descriptive. That is the more popular form of journalism. Froissart was the inventor of the uncritical historian. And Ferdinand was born either too early or too late.

For all these beautiful and gushing columns, invaluable to some antiquary of the future, were due to the pen of Ferdinand Brambler, and it was by the frequency of the occasions on which his powers were called for that the prosperity of the Bramblers depended. And Ferdinand, an excellent brother, and the most self-denying creature in the world, worked cheerfully for his nephews and nieces. Beneath that solemn exterior, and behind those

pretensions to genius, there beat the most simple and unselfish of hearts.

Ferdinand did not report; first, because he could not write shorthand, and, secondly, because he thought it—and said so—beneath the dignity of genius to become the "mere copying clerk of Vestry twaddle." He lived on his *communiqués*, for which, as he was the only man in the place who wrote them, and therefore had the field all to himself, he received fairly good pay. During the Crimean War he had a never-ending succession of subjects for his pen, which was as facile as it was commonplace. It was the history of the regiment; it was a note on the next roster; it was the service roll of a ship; it was the biography of a general; nothing came amiss to the encyclopædic Ferdinand; and whatever he treated, it must be owned, was treated with the same hackneyed similes, the same well-worn metaphors, and the same pleasantries; for, while Augustus looked on life through the rosy glasses of a sanguine imagination, Ferdinand regarded things from the standpoint of genius. He wrote for a provincial weekly paper; nothing higher would take his papers; he was not the editor; he was not even on the regular salaried staff; he was a mere outsider, sending in articles on such topics as occurred to him; but in his own imagination he wrote for posterity. Like Augustus he believed in

himself. And just as Augustus assumed in the family circle the air of one who unbends after hard intellectual labour, so Ferdinand when he emerged from the ground-floor front, which was his study, and contained his library, moved and spoke with the solemnity of one with whom his genius was always present.

From 1853 to 1857 the family flourished and grew fat. For after the Russian War was finished, and the Treaty signed—to be broken as soon as the semi-barbaric Muscovite thought himself strong enough—there arose in the far East another cloud. I have often wondered whether the Indian Mutiny, like the late Bulgarian insurrections, was got up by Russian agents, and, if so, I have reflected with joy upon the maddening disappointment to the Tartar that it did not happen just two years before.

We had achieved peace, not a very glorious peace, because we ought to have driven Russia back to the Caucasus as a frontier before any peace was thought of, but still peace, and with the memory of those three years upon us, the sufferings of our troops, the unpreparedness of England, the rascality of contractors, and the inefficiency of our officers, we were glad to sit down and rest. How have we profited by the lesson of twenty years ago? What security have we that on the next

occasion, when our men are ordered out again, the same things will not happen again—the green coffee, the putrid preserved meat, the shoddy coats, the brown-paper boots, the very powder adulterated?

Peace! Well, we had fought two or three gallant battles, been jealous of our gallant allies, killed an immense number—say, altogether, with those who died on the march, and those who died of disease, and those who died in the field, about half a million of Russians, fifty thousand Englishmen, double the number of French, and the same number of Turks; we had put a sudden end to Tennyson's "long canker of peace," and made it war—first for righteous reasons, and then for the lust of blood and battle, the red-sheeted spectre which rises when the trumpet sounds and fires the blood of peaceful men. As for the morality at home, as I asked in the last chapter, were we the better?

Then came the Indian Mutiny. For a while it seemed as if the very foundations of the Indian Empire were shaken. And at no time were the hearts of Englishmen more stirred in the whole of England's history than by the tales of massacre and murder which came by every ship from the East. The troops which had enjoyed a brief year of rest were hastily re-embarked: the flags which

bore the names of Alma, Inkermann, and Balaclava were carried out again to get the names of Lucknow and Delhi ; but the men who marched out in '54 with the sturdy look of men who mean to fight because they must, went out now with the face of those who go to take revenge because they can. It was a war of revenge. And, whatever the provocation, it was a full and even a cruel measure of revenge that the British soldiers took. We were growing sick of "history," Cis and I. We waited and watched while the red coats went and came ; wanted to go on without excitement with our music and our reading, and we longed for peace.

"The Lord," said the Captain, "gives us peace, and the Devil gives us war. Until the nature of men is changed, there will be peace and war in alternate slices like a sandwich. In good times the sandwich is meaty. Meantime, let us keep up the Fleet."

We came to the spring of 1858. Mr. Tyrrell was Mayor for the second time. It was the year when Leonard should return—five years on June the twenty-first, Celia looked at me sometimes, and I at her. But we said nothing because we understood what was meant. And one day I surprised the Captain in Leonard's room. He was opening drawers, arranging chairs, and trying window-blinds. "All ship-shape, Laddy, and in good

order. Don't let the boy think the vessel has got out of trim after all these years."

The Mutiny was over, the punishment had been inflicted, and our town was now comparatively quiet. No more hurried preparations of armaments and despatch of ships. Things became flat, the people who had not already made fortunes out of the war saw with sorrow that their opportunity was past, the extra hands at the Dockyard were discharged. And the town became quiet again. It was bad for all who had to earn their bread—even I felt the change in a falling-off of pupils—and it was especially bad for poor Ferdinand Brambler.

I met him one day walking solemnly away from the Yard, notebook in hand. I stopped to shake hands with him, and noticed that his clothes were shabby, his boots worn at the heel, his hat ancient, and his general get-up indicating either the neglect of outward appearance peculiar to genius or a period of financial depression. While I accosted him his brother Augustus passed by. He, too, was in like pitiable guise. And he looked pinched in the cheeks, albeit smiling and cheerful as ever.

"What will it run to, Ferdinand?" he asked anxiously.

"I should say," said Ferdinand with hesitation, "unless I am disappointed, mind, which I may be,

I should say it will be a pound of tea, the green-grocer's bill, and something to Forty-seven's new shoes."

"The wife did say," replied Augustus, "that the children's breakings out are for want of meat. But if we can't have meat we can't. Awfully busy at the office, Ferdinand. Money pouring in. Nothing like the Legal."

Poor Ferdinand, who by long struggling with the family wolf had got to look on everything he wrote as representing payment in kind, was right in being proud of his profession, because he had nothing else to be proud of. It was not in quiet times a lucrative one, and I should think, taking one year with another, that this poor genius, who really loved literature for its own sake, and with better education and better chances might have made something of a name, received from his profession about as much as his brother in the Legal, and that was sixty pounds a year.

I repeated this conversation to the Captain at dinner. He became silent, and after our simple meal proposed that we should go for a walk. By the merest chance we passed the Bramblers' house.

"Dear me," said the Captain, "the very people we were speaking of. Suppose we pay our respects to Mrs. Brambler."

The poor mother was up to her eyes in work, her endless children round her. But the little Bramblers did not look happy. They wore a pinched and starved look, and there was no disguising the fact that they *were* breaking out. Forty-eight scowled at us with rebellious looks ; Forty-six was wolfish in hungry gaze, and even the mild-eyed Forty-four looked sad.

Mrs. Brambler read the pity in the Captain's eyes, and sat down, bursting into tears, and throwing her apron over her face. The elder girls stole to the window and sobbed behind the curtain—the younger children sat down every one upon what came handiest, and all cried together. They were a very emotional family.

"So—so," said the Captain, "we were passing—Laddy and I—and we thought we would drop in —thought—we—would—drop—in. Come here, Forty-six——Does this boy, do you think, Mrs. Brambler, have enough nourishment ?"

"Augustus does all he can, Captain, and so does Ferdinand, I'm sure. But there was the rent, and we behind with everybody—and—and—sometimes it's most too much for me."

"We dropped in," repeated the mendacious Captain, "to invite the children to tea and supper to-night——"

"Hooray !" cried Forty-six, dancing about ; and

the faces of all lighted up with a sunshine like their father's.

"It's only your kindness, Captain. You don't really want them."

"Not want them? Where is Forty-four? Come and kiss me, my dear. Where is your colour gone? Not want them? Nonsense. Nothing but shrimps and periwinkles, and watercress, perhaps, for tea; but for supper—ah!—eh! Laddy, what can we do in the way of supper? What's in the larder?"

"A leg of mutton, a beefsteak, and a pair of chickens," I replied. "I think that is all."

The larder was, in fact, empty, but this was not a time to parade the vacuum.

"You see, Mrs. Brambler; much more, very much more, than we can possibly eat. Friends in the country. And we did think that the steak for supper——"

"Ah!" cried Forty-six, irrepressibly.

"With the leg of mutton for yourself, and the pair of chickens——"

Mrs. Brambler laughed through her tears.

"There—go along, Captain," she said. "We know.—But if it wouldn't trouble you, the children shall go and welcome.

"Very lucky, Laddy," said the Captain, in the street, "that the larder is so full. Let us call at the butcher's as we go home."

I ventured to mention to Herr Räumer the distressed condition of the family with whom he lodged.

"I know it," he said, helping himself to a glass of Hock. "I have seen for some time that the children were not properly fed. It is a pity. A good many children about the world are in the same plight."

"Help them," I said sententiously, "when you can."

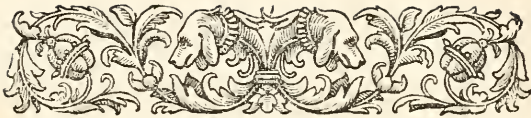
He shrugged his shoulders, and laughed.

"I am past sixty. I have seen so much distress in the world that I have long since resolved to help nobody. The weakest goes to the wall in this best of all possible worlds. If it is not the best it is not my fault, because I did not make it. Every man for himself, as you will say at sixty if you are honest. This is a comfortable chair, this is good Hock, this is excellent tobacco. Why should I trouble myself because people are starving in the room below us any more than because they are starving in China, which is a good many miles off? Pity and charity are excellent things in the abstract. Applied to individuals actually before you, they are disquieting. *Allons, cher Ladislas, soyons philosophes.*"

He was a man of infinite pity in the abstract, wept over any amount of woe served up in the

yellow paper covers of a French novel, but in the presence of actual suffering he was callous. "Every man for himself." Since I have grown older I have learned to distrust many a philanthropist whose sympathies grow deeper the farther they reach from home.

"And now," he went on, changing the position of his legs, "let us be cheerful, and talk of Celia. Pretty, delicate, little Celia. Tall and *gracieuse* Celia. Choice and delicious Celia. She is a credit to you, Ladislas Pulaski. Her husband will thank you. I drink her health. Ah! The English girls. . . After all, we must grant these islanders some superiority. They are stupid, ignorant, and prejudiced. They call Continental diplomacy bad names, and are going to ruin themselves because they will not have secret service money. But their girls—their girls are charming. And the most charming of them all is Celia."



CHAPTER XIII.

A FLOWER OF LOVE.

It was very early in that year, or at the end of 1857, that I made a discovery about myself. Regarded from the point of view which the climbing of so many following years have enabled me to reach, the discovery seems a thing which might have been expected—quite natural, and belonging to daily experience. At the time, I remember, it was most surprising.

I suppose no one would believe that a young man could come to the age of one-and-twenty, and remain so little of a man as I did. But I was deformed. I was morbidly sensitive of ridicule. I was extremely poor. I had some pride of birth ; I could not possibly associate with the professional men, the drawing, dancing, and music masters of the town, who might have formed my set. Their

thoughts were not mine; their ways were not my ways. Not that I claimed any superiority. Quite the contrary. Men who could ride, hunt, shoot, play billiards, and do all the other things which belong to skill of hand and eye, seemed, and still seem to me, vastly superior to a being who can do nothing except interpret the thoughts of the great masters. In a country town, unless you belong to the young men of the place, and take part in the things which interest them, you fall back upon such resources as you have in yourself. There was nothing for me but my piano and my books for the evening, and Celia in the afternoon.

It was partly on account of my deformity that we were so much together. When Leonard went away I had hardly an acquaintance of my own age in the town—certainly not a friend; and I was at the age when the imagination is strongest, and the need for close companionship is felt the most. In adolescence the heart opens out spontaneously to all who are within its reach. The friends of youth are close and confidential friends, there is no distrust, no reserve. I think it is rare for such a friendship as that between Celia and myself to exist between two persons who are not of the same sex, neither brother and sister, nor lovers. Yet it existed up to a certain time, and then, without a break on her part, but after a struggle on mine, it was re-

sumed, and has been since continued. There was no shadow of restraint between us, but only a perfect and beautiful confidence, when Celia was a girl and I was a boy. Like me, but for different reasons, she lived apart from other girls ; she had no schoolgirl friendships ; she never went to school, and had no masters, except myself. I taught her all I knew, which was not much, in a desultory and methodless fashion, and the girl poured out to my ear alone—it was a harvest sixty and a hundred fold—the thoughts that sprang up as clear and bright as a spring of Lebànon in her pure young heart. The thoughts of youth are sacred things ; mostly because young people lack power of expression, they are imperfectly conveyed in the words of the poets, who belong especially to the young. Great utterances by the men of old sink deep into the hearts of those who are yet on the threshold of life. They fertilise the soil, and cause it to blossom in a thousand sweet flowers. There is nothing to me, a teacher, and always among the young, more beautiful than the enthusiasms and illusions of youth, their contempt of compromise, their impatience of diplomatic evasions, their fancied impartiality, and their eager partisanship. And I am sometimes of opinion that the government of the world—its laws—its justice—its preaching—its decisions on war and peace—its expenditure—should all be under the

control of youth. Before five-and-twenty all but the hardest men are open to higher influences and nobler aims. The lower levels are reached, step by step, through long years of struggle for luxury and position. Let the world be ruled by the adolescent, and let the wisdom of the *senes*, who have too probably become cynical, disappointed, or selfish, be used for administration alone. Above all, no man should be Autocrat, King, President, or Prime Minister after his five-and-twentieth year. As yet, however, I have made no converts to my opinions, and I fear I shall not live to see this admirable reform.

I have had many pupils, and won some friendship among them, but Celia was my first and best. No one was ever like her in my eyes, so zealous for righteousness, so pitiful for wrong-doers, so sweet in thought. Perhaps we loved her so much—the Captain and I—that we saw in her more virtues than she possessed. It is the way of those who love. What would this world be worth without that power of illusion which clothes our dear ones, while yet in life, with the white robes of Heaven?

"Has she wings somewhere, do you think, Laddy?" said the Captain one evening. Turning over the pages of the Bible, he lighted on a chapter which, he announced to me, bore upon the subject,

and he would read it. "Celia's price," he read, commenting as he went along, "is far above rubies. That is perfectly true. The heart of her husband —she shall have a good one—shall safely trust in her. If he can't trust in her, he won't be fit to be her husband. She shall rejoice—there is prophecy for us, Laddy—in time to come.' Many daughters —listen to this—have done virtuously, but Celia excels them all. The woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised. Now, if that does not bear upon the girl, what does?"

It was not possible that our boy-and-girl confidences should remain permanently unchanged, but the change was gradual. I noticed, first of all, that Celia's talk grew less personal and more general. As I followed her lead, we ceased in a measure to refer everything that we read or played to our own thoughts. So that we grew more reserved to each other. An invisible barrier was rising between us that we knew nothing of. It was caused by the passage of the girl into womanhood, imperceptible as the rising of the tide, which you do not notice until you compare your landmarks, and see how the water has gained. It was the transformation of the child, open as the day, candid and unreserved, into the woman—the true emblem of her is this figure of the Veiled Nymph —who hides, nourishes, and guards her secrets,

gathering them up in the rich garner of her heart till she can show them all to her husband, and then keep them for her son. A woman without the mystical veil is no woman, but a creature androgynous, amorphous, loathsome. So that Celia would never be again—I see it so well now—what she had been to me. Her face was the same as it had been, set grave at one moment with its fine delicate lines and ethereal look, and at the next bright and laughing like a mountain stream, but always sweet with the same kindness when she looked at me. Only it seemed at times as if I was groping about in the dark for the soul of Celia, and that I found it not.

"Cis," I said, one afternoon—we were in our old place, and she was leaning against the gun looking thoughtfully across the harbour. The tide was out, and instead of the broad lagoon was a boundless stretch of green and black mud intersected by a stream of sea water, up and down which boats could make their way at all tides. "Cis, do you know that we are changed to each other?"

Almost as I said it, I perceived that if Celia was changed to me, I was no less changed towards her.

"What is it, Laddy?" she asked, turning gently and resting her eyes on mine. They were so soft

and clear that I could hardly bear to look into them—a little troubled, too, with wonder, as if she could not understand what I meant. "What is it, Laddy? How are we changed?"

"I don't know. I think, Cis, it is because—because you are growing a woman."

She sat down beside me on the grass. She was so much taller than I that it was nothing for her to lay her hand upon my shoulder. We often walked so. Sometimes I took her arm. But now the gesture humiliated me. I felt angry and hurt. Was I then of such small account that she should change in thought, and yet retain the old familiar fashion, as if it mattered nothing what she said or did to me? It was a shameful and an unworthy feeling.

"Because I am grown a woman?" she repeated quietly. "Yes, I believe I am a woman now."

She was, indeed, a stately, lovely woman, with the tall and graceful figure of Helen, and the pure face of Antigone, elastic in her tread, free in the movements of her shapely limbs, brave in the carriage of her head, full of strength, youth, and activity. Her face was long and oval, but her lips, which is not usual in oval faces, were as full and as mobile as the leaf upon the tree. Her features were straight and delicate. All about her was delicate

alike, from the tiny coral ears to the dainty fingers and little feet, which, like mice, went in and out. A maiden formed for love, altogether and wholly lovable; sweet as the new-mown hay, inexhaustible in loveliness—like the Shulamite, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, lovely as Tirzah, a spring of living waters, but as yet a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. And as I looked up at her my heart sank down within me.

"But why should that make a difference between us, Laddy?"

I put her hand from my shoulder roughly, and sprang to my feet, because suddenly my heart overflowed, and words came bubbling to my lips which had to be repressed. I walked to the parapet, and looked across the harbour, battling with myself for a few moments. Then I turned. The girl was looking at me with wonder.

"Why should that make any difference, Laddy?" she repeated.

I was master of myself by this time, and could answer with a smile and lightly.

"Because you have put away the thoughts of a child, Celia. You no longer think or speak as you used to. Not any sudden change, Cis. Do not think that I complain. I was thinking of what we were a couple of years ago, and what we are now. You cannot help it. You show your womanhood

in your new armour of reserve. Very bright and beautiful armour it is."

"I meant no reserve, dear Laddy. We always talked together since we were children, have we not? and told each other everything."

"Not lately, Cis, have we?"

She hesitated, and blushed a little. Then she evaded my question.

"Why, who could be more to me than you, Laddy? My companion, my tutor, my brother. What have I to hide from you? Nothing, Laddy, nothing."

"Not that you know of, Cis. But there is a change. I think that we do not talk so freely of our thoughts as we did. Do we?"

She pondered for a moment.

"I thought we did, Laddy. At least, I have not thought anything about it. There is no change indeed, dear Laddy. What if I am grown up, as you say, into a woman?"

"What, indeed, stately Cis? Only girls are so —they wrap themselves up in their own thoughts and become enigmas.

She laughed now.

"What do you know about girls, pray? We have so few thoughts worthy the name that we can hardly be said to wrap ourselves in them. And

why should girls be enigmas any more than your own sex, sir?"

"I don't know. Perhaps because we want to find out more than they care to tell us about themselves."

"Perhaps because men always think and talk of women as a class. Why can't they give us individuality? You see, Laddy, we are different from men chiefly because we have no ambition for ourselves. I suppose it is in our nature—so far we are a class—that we desire peace and obscurity for ourselves, and greatness only for those men we care about. I have no hopes for myself in the future, Laddy. But I want to see Leonard famous, and you a great composer of beautiful music, and the dear old Captain happy in your success, and my father to grow in honour and reputation. That is all my prayer for myself and my friends. And I like to think of good men and women working all over the world to make us all better and happier. Perhaps it may come in my way some day to do something quietly for the love of God."

"You do something quietly already, Cis," I said, "because you live as you do live."

"Ah, Laddy, I have so many people who love me. Life is very easy when one is surrounded by the affection of so many. Suppose one had been born in the courts, where the voices are rough and

men swear. Look at that troop of miserable men." She pointed to a gang of convicts passing through Liberty Gate. "What have been their temptations? How could they have lived the Christian life?"

"Their standard is lower than yours, Cis. Do you remember the statue of Christ, which was always higher than the tallest man? The higher one's thoughts carry one, the more wonderful, the more unattainable, seems the Christlike life. But our talk has led us into strange paths, Cis. All this because I said you were grown a woman."

"No, sir, you called me names. You said I was an enigma. See now, Laddy, I must never be an enigma to you. I promise this. If ever you think that I am hiding any thought from you, ask me what it is, and I will confess it unless it is an unworthy thought, and then I should be ashamed."

"You could not have unworthy thoughts, Cis."

She shook her head.

"Foolish and frivolous thoughts. Vain and selfish thoughts," she said. "Never mind them now. Let us only continue as we always have been—my brother, my kind and sweet-faced brother."

Mine, indeed; but that she did not know. She took my hands in hers, laid her sweet fair cheek to mine, and kissed me on the lips and forehead. I

think I feel her kisses still. I did not dare—I could not—return them. For when that ruby red-rose blossom of her lips met mine I trembled in all my limbs.

Think. I was small, mean of appearance, and deformed, but I was past twenty-one years of age. I was a man. And I loved the girl with an unbrotherly love, and with a passion which might even have belonged to a man whose back was straight.

If I trembled when she touched me, just as I rejoiced when I saw her, or heard the rustle of her dress, the kisses which she gave me struck my heart with a coldness as of death. Of course I knew it all along, but there is always a reserve power of illusion in youth, and I may have deceived myself. But now it came home to me with clearness as of crystal that Celia could never, never, by any chance, care for me—in that way.

I realised this in a moment, and pulled myself together with an effort, returning the gentle pressure of her soft warm hand just as if my heart was as calm as her own. Then I answered in commonplace and at random.

"Thank you, Cis. Some day, perhaps, I shall take you at your word, and make you confess all sorts of hidden things. Tutor and pupil is all very

well, so is elder brother and younger sister. But you are six inches taller than I already."

I have always thought that this simple speech was just the wisest I ever made in my life, because I was so very near saying what I should have repented ever after. Had I said what was in my heart, and almost on my lips, I might have destroyed the sweet friendship which existed then, as it still exists, pure and strong as the current of a great river. I thank God solemnly that I refrained my lips. "Whoso," says the wise man, "keepeth his tongue keepeth his soul from trouble." I loved her, that is most true ; in those days when I was yet struggling with the impulses of a passionate love, there were moments when the blood ran tingling and coursing through the veins, and when to beat down the words running riot in my brain, was almost beyond my strength. We were so much together, and she was so unconscious. She could not understand how her voice fell upon my soul like the rain upon a thirsty soil. Even when we were apart there was no moment when Celia was not present in my thoughts. All the morning the music of my pupils, even the very scales, sang "Celia, Celia, Celia," in accents which varied with my moods, now wild and passionate, now soft and pleading, now hopeful, and now despairing.

There was one time—I do not know how long it lasted—a week or a dozen weeks—when I was fain to pretend illness because the misery of crushing this hopeless love was too great for me, and I craved for solitude.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE SEA-SHORE.

In those days the new suburb, which is now a large town, had hardly yet been begun; there was no sea-wall along the beach outside the harbour, and half a mile beyond the rampart you might reach a place perfectly lonely and deserted. There was a common, a strip of waste land where the troops drilled and exercised, and beyond the common an old castle, a square and rather ugly pile built by Henry VIII., when he set up the fortresses of Sandown, Walmer, and Deal. It was surrounded by a star fort, and stood on the very edge of the sea, with a sloping face of stone which ran down to the edge of the water at low tide, and into the waves at high, protecting the moat which surrounded the town. As a boy I regarded this fortress with reverence. There had been a siege

there at the time of the Civil War. It was held for the King, but the governor, after a little fighting with his Roundhead besiegers, surrendered the castle, and then the town itself capitulated. One pictured the townsmen on the wall, looking out to see the fortunes of the battle, the men for Church and King side by side with their sour-faced brethren who were for God and country, the discomfiture of the former when the Royal Standard was hauled down, and the joy of the Puritans when their party marched in at the town gates. Of course in my young imagination I supposed that the town walls were just the same then as now, with their bastions, curtains, ravelins, and glacis. It was a lonely place in those days, fit for a dreamy boy, or a moody man. Beyond the castle the beach stretched far far away under a low cliff of red earth, curving round in a graceful line; behind the beach was a narrow strip of ground covered with patches of furze, whose yellow and sickly sweet blossoms seemed to flourish independently of all seasons; on its scanty edge grew sea poppies; and here, amid the marshy ground which lay about, we used to hunt as boys for vipers, adders, and the little evvet, the alligator of Great Britain, who is as long as a finger and as venomous as a lamb. Sometimes, too, we would find gipsy encampments planted among the furze, with their

gaudily-painted carts, their black tents—every real Rommany has a black tent like the modern Bedawi or the ancient dweller in the tents of Kedar. While we looked at the bright-eyed children and the marvellous old women crouching over the fire of sticks and the great black pot, there would come out of the tents one or two girls with olive skins and almond eyes—not the almond eyes of Syria, but bolder, darker, and brighter. They would come smiling in Leonard's face, asking him to cross his hand with silver. When he said he had no silver they would tell him his fortune for nothing, reading the lines of his palm with a glibness which showed their knowledge of the art. But it was always a beautiful fortune, with love, fighting, wife, and children in it.

Behind this acre or two of furze stood, all by itself, a mill, and there was a story about this mill because its centre pillar, on which the vanes revolved, had once been part of the mainmast of a French frigate taken in action. And higher up the beach again, because this was a place full of historic associations—stood two old earthwork forts at intervals of half a mile. The ramparts were green with turf, the grass all blown inland, and lying on the days of summer in long swathes upon the slopes, beaten down by the sea breeze ; the moats were dry, and these, too, were grown over with grass ;

there was an open place at the back where once had been a gate and a drawbridge ; there was a stonework well in the open part of the enclosure, only some inclined to the belief that it was only a sham well and masked, *prætexto sub nomine*, a subterranean passage to the castle ; the fronts of those forts were all destroyed and dragged down by the advancing tide. No ruined city in Central America, no temple of the Upper Nile, no tell of Kouyounjik could be more desolate, more lonely, more full of imaginative associations than these forts standing upon the unpeopled beach in a solitude broken only by the footstep of the Coastguard. Before Leonard went away, and when we were boys together, this place was to us as the uttermost part of the world, a retreat accessible on a holiday morning, where one could sit under the cliff or on the grassy slopes of the fort ; where I, at least, could dream away the hours. Before us the waves ran along the shingle with a murmurous sh—sh—sh, or, if the day was rough, rolled up their hollow threatening crests like the upper teeth of a hungry monster's jaw, and then dashed in rage upon the stones, dragging them down with a crash and roar which rolled unceasingly along the beach. In the summer months it was Leonard's delight at such times to strip and plunge to swim over and through the great waves, riding to meet them, battling and wrestling till he

grew tired, and came out red all over, and glowing with the exercise. After a storm the beach was strewn with odds and ends; there were dead cuttle-fish—Victor Hugo's *pieuvre*—their long and ugly arms lying powerless for mischief on the shingle; their backbone was good for rubbing out ink, and we had stores enough to rub out all the ink of the Alexandrian Library. There were ropes of sea-weed thicker than the stoutest cable; if you un-twisted the coils you found in them strange creatures dead and alive—the sea-mouse, with its iridescent tufts of hair; little crabs with soft shells killed by the rolling of the pebbles; shells inhabited by scaly intruders, cuckoos among crabs, which poked out hard, spiky legs, and were ready to do battle for their stolen house; starfish, ugly and poisonous; sea-nettles, and all kinds of sea-beetles. And lying outside the weed were bits of things from ships; candles, always plenty of tallow candles; broken biscuits, which like so many of Robinson Crusoe's stores were spoiled by the sea-water; empty bottles, bits of wood, and once we came upon a dead man rolling up and down. Leonard rushed into the water, and we pulled him up between two waves. He was dressed in sailor's clothing, and wore great sea-boots, his face was bruised by the stones, and his black hair was cut short. Also he wore a moustache, so that he could not possibly be an

English sailor. When we had got him beyond the reach of the waves, we ran to tell the Coastguard, who was on the cliff half a mile away, telescope in hand.

First he swore at us personally and individually for troubling him at all with the matter. Then, because Leonard "up and spake" in answer, he changed the object of his swearing, and began to swear at large, addressing the much-enduring ocean, which made no reply, but went on with its business of rolling along the beach. Then he swore at himself for being a Coastguardsman. This took altogether some quarter of an hour of good hard swearing, the excellent Solitary finding greater freedom as he went on. And he would have continued swearing, I believe, for many weeks if necessary, only that a thought struck him suddenly, like unto a fist going home in the wind, and he pulled up and gasped :

"Did you, did you," he asked, "look in that dead man's pockets ?"

We said "No."

Then he became thoughtful, and swore quite to himself between the teeth, as if he was firing volleys of oaths down his own throat.

"Now, lads," he said at last, "what you've got to do is this. You've got to go straight away to the parish," which I suppose he took for a police office,

"and tell the parish to come here and look after that man. I'm not stationed here to look after dead men. I'm for live smugglers, I am. You tell the parish that. Not but what it's proper for you to tell the Coastguard everything that goes on along the coast. And next time you fish up a drownded man you come straight to me first. No manner o' use to look in their pockets, because they've never got nothing in 'em. Them nasty fishes, you see, they gets into the pockets and pulls out the purses."

His belief in the emptiness of drowned men's pockets did not prevent him from testing its correctness. At least we looked back, and observed him searching diligently. But I suppose he was right, because the "parish" certainly found nothing in the pockets.

It was to this place that I came, as to a wilderness, to struggle with myself. Here I was free to think, to brood, and to bring railing accusations against Providence because I could not marry Celia. Sitting on the lonely beach I could find a gloomy satisfaction in piling up my grievances against high Heaven. Who was I that I should be singled out for special and signal misfortune? Had I been as other men, tall, straight, and comely, Celia might have loved me. Had I come to her gallant

and strong, rich and noble, one born in high station, the son of a brave and successful father, I might have had a chance.

Day after day I wandered here, brooding over my own wrongs, with bitter and accusing soul. The voice of the sea echoed the sorrow of my heart; the long roll from left to right of the ebbing or the rising wave was the setting of a song whose words were all of despair; the dancing of the sunlit waves brought no joy; my heart was dead to the blue sky, flecked with the white wing of sea-gull, and dotted along the distant horizon with the far-off sails of passing ships. It pleased me to lie there, with my chin upon my hand, thinking of what ought to have been. During this time I was with Celia as little as possible, and at home not at all. Both she and the Captain, I remember now, were considerate, and left me alone, to worry through with the trouble, whatever it was. It was not all hopeless; it was partly that for the first time in my life I thoroughly understood what I was, what my prospects were, and what I might have been. I said at the beginning that it takes a long time for a hunchback entirely to realise what his affliction means; how it cuts him off from other men's pursuits; and how it isolates him from his youth upwards. I saw before me, as plainly as I see it now, a solitary life; I thought that the mediocrity of

my abilities would never allow me to become a composer of eminence, or anything better than the organist of a church and the teacher of music in a country town ; I should always be poor, I should never have the love of woman, I should always be a kind of servant, I should live in obscurity and die in oblivion. Most of us live some such lives ; at least they can be reduced, in hard terms, to some such colourless, dreary wastes of weary years ; but we forget the compensations. My dream was true of myself ; I have actually lived the life of a mediocre musician ; I have few friends, and yet I have been perfectly happy. I did not marry Celia ; that I may premise at once ; and yet I have been happy without her. For I retained her love, the pure and calm affection of a sister, which is with me still, making much of me, petting and spoiling me almost while I write, as it did twenty years ago. Surely there was never any woman before so good as Celia. The vision of my life was prophetic ; it looked intolerable, and it has been more than pleasant. Say to yourself, you have thirty years to live ; you will rise every morning to drudgery ; you will live poorly, and will make no money ; you will have no social consideration ; you will make few friends ; you will fail to achieve any reputation in your profession ; you will be a lonely man—is that a prospect to charm any one ? Add to this,

that your life will be contented, that you will not dislike your work, that you will not live for yourself alone, that your days will be cheered by the steady sunshine of affection; and the prospect changes. Everything in the world is of magic. To some this old town of ours has seemed dirty, crowded, mean; to me it is picturesque, full of human interest, rich in association. To some my routine would be maddening; to me it is graceful and pleasant. To some—to most—a career which has no prizes has no joys. To me it is full of joys. We are what we think ourselves; we see everything through the haze of imagination; why—I am told that there is no such thing as colour in nature, but that it is an effect of light—so long as the effect is produced I do not care; let me only thank the Creator for this bunch of sweet peas in a glass before me, with their soft and delicate tints more beautiful than ever human pencil drew. We see what we think we see; people are what we think they are; events are what they seem to us; the man who least enjoys the world is the man who has the faculty of stripping things of their "effects;" who takes the colour from the flower, or the disinterestedness from love. That is common sense, and I would rather be without it.

One evening—it was after dusk and rather cold—I was still sitting in the enjoyment of a profound

misery, when I became aware of a Voice addressing me. The Voice was inside my head, and there was no sound, but I heard it plainly. I do not pretend that there was anything supernatural about the fact, nor do I pretend to understand how it happened. It sprang from the moody and half-distracted condition of my mind : it was the return of the overstretched spring : it was the echo of my accustomed thoughts, for the last fortnight pent up and confined in narrow cells to make room for the unaccustomed thoughts. This is exactly what the Voice said to me :

"You were a poor Polish boy, living in exile, and Heaven sent you the Captain to educate you, give you the means of living, and make you a Christian gentleman when you might have grown up among the companions of profligate sailors. You are an orphan, with neither mother, brother, nor sister. You have no relations to care for you at all. Heaven sent you Leonard to be your brother, and Celia to be your sister. From your earliest infancy you have been wrapped in the love of these two. You are deformed, it is true ; you cannot do the things that some men delight in. Heaven has sent you the great gift of Music : it is another sense by which you are lifted above the ordinary run of men. Every hour in the day it is your privilege as a musician to soar above the earth, and

lose yourself in divine harmonies. You have all this—and you complain.

"Ungrateful! With these favours you sit here crying because you cannot have one thing more. You would have Celia love you, and marry you. Are you worthy of such a girl?

"Rouse yourself. Go back to your work. Show a brave and cheerful face to the good old man your benefactor. Let Celia cease to wonder whether she has pained you, and to search her heart for words she has never spoken; work for her and with her again; let her never know that you have hungered after the impossible even to sickness.

"And one more thing. Remember Leonard's parting words. Are you blind or are you stupid? With what face could you meet him when he comes home, and say, 'Leonard, you left me to take care of Celia; you trusted to my keeping the secret of your own love. I have betrayed your confidence, and stolen away her heart.' Think of that."

The Voice ceased, and I arose and walked home, changed.

The Captain looked up as I entered the room, in a wistful, sad way.

"Forgive me, sir," I said. "I have been worrying myself—never mind what about, but it is over now, and I am sorry to have given you trouble."

"You have fought it down, then, Laddy?" he asked, pulling off his spectacles.

I started. Did he, then, read my soul? Was my secret known to all the world?

Only to him, I think.

"When I was a young fellow," he went on, walking up and down the room with his hands behind him, "I fell in love—with a young lady. I believed that young lady to be an angel, and I dare say she was. But I found that she couldn't be my angel, so I went to sea, which was a very good way of getting through that trouble. I had a spell on the West Coast—caught yellow fever—chased the slavers—forgot it."

I laughed.

"Do you recommend me to go out slave-chasing, sir?"

"You might do worse, boy. She is a beautiful creature, Laddy; she is a pearl among maidens. I have always loved her. I have watched her with you, Laddy, and all the love is on your side. I have seen the passion grow in you; you have been restless and fidgety. I remembered my own case, and I waited. No, my boy, it can't be: I wish it could; she does not look on you in that light."

After supper he spoke allegorically.

"I've known men—good men, too—grumble

at their posts in an action. What does it matter, Laddy, when the enemy has struck, where any one man has to do his duty? The thing is to do it."

This parable had its personal application, like most of the Captain's admonitions.

"You have been unlike yourself, Laddy, lately," said Celia.

"Yes, Cis, I have been ill, I think."

"Not fretting, Laddy, over things?"

I shook my head.

"It seems hard, poor boy, sometimes, does it not? But your life will not be wasted, though you spend it all in teaching music."

She thought I had been brooding over my deformity and poverty. Well, so I had, in a sense.

Enough of my fit. The passion disappeared at length, the love remained. Side by side with such a girl as Celia, one must have been lower than human not to love her. Such a love is an education. I know little of grown women, because I spend my time among girls, and have had no opportunity of studying woman's nature except that of Celia. But I can understand what is meant when I read that the love of woman may raise a man to Heaven or drag him down to Hell. Out of this earthly love which we share in common

with the lowest, there spring for all of us, we know, flowers of rare and wondrous beauty. And those who profit most by these blossoms sometimes express their nature to the world in music and in verse.

CHAPTER XV.

LA VIE DE PROVINCE.

THE twenty-fourth of May was not only the Queen's birthday, and therefore kept a holiday in the port, with infinite official rejoicings and expenditure of powder, but also Celia's as well. On that account it was set apart for one of the Tyrrells' four annual dinner-parties, and was treated as a Church festival or fast day. This was the period of early Christianity, when any ecclesiastical days, whether of sorrowful or joyful commemoration, were marked by a better dinner than usual, and the presence of wine. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday we had salt fish, followed, at the Tyrrells', by a sumptous repast, graced by the presence of a few guests, and illustrated, so to speak, by a generous flow of port, of which every respectable Briton then kept a cellar, carefully labelled and laid

down years before. The *novus homo* in a provincial town might parade his plate, his dinner service, his champagne—then reckoned a very ostentatious wine. He might affect singularity by preferring claret to port, and he might even invite his guests to drink of strange and unknown wines, such as Sauterne, Bucellas, Lisbon, or even Hock. But one thing he could not do: he could not boast of his old cellar, because everybody would know that he had bought it. Mr. Tyrrell was conscious of this, and being himself a *novus homo* he evaded the difficulty by referring his wine to the cellar of Mr. Pontifex, the husband of Mrs. Tyrrell's aunt. Now Mr. Pontifex was a man of good county family, and his port, laid down by his father before him, was not to be gainsaid by the most severe critic. Criticism, in our town, neglecting Literature and the Fine Arts, confined itself to Port, in the first instance, municipal affairs in the second, and politics in the third. As the two latter subjects ran in well-known grooves it is obvious that the only scope for original thought lay in the direction of Port. Round this subject were grouped the choicest anecdotes, the sweetest flowers of fancy, the deepest yearnings of the Over-soul. A few houses were rivals in the matter of Port. The Rev. Mr. Broughton, our old tutor, was acknowledged to have some '34 beyond all praise, but as

he gave few dinner-parties, on the score of poverty, there were not many who could boast of having tasted it. Little Dr. Roy had a small cellar brought from Newfoundland or New Brunswick, whither, as everybody knows, the Portugal trade carries yearly a small quantity of finer wine than ever comes to the London market. The Rev. John Pontifex inherited, as I have already said, a cellar by which Mr. Tyrrell was the principal gainer.

There were two or three retired officers who had made good use of their opportunities on the Rock and elsewhere. And the rest were nowhere. As Mr. Broughton said, after an evening out of the "best" set, that is, the set who had cellars worth considering, the fluid was Lamentable. Good or bad, the allowance for every guest at dinner was liberal, amounting to about a bottle and a half a head, though seasoned topers might take more. It was Port, with rum and water, which produced those extraordinary noses which I remember in my childhood. There was the nose garnished like Bardolph's with red blossoms; there was the large nose, swollen in all its length; there was the nose with the great red protuberance, waggling as the wearer walked, or agitated by the summer breeze; and there was the nose which paled while it grew, carry-in its general appearance, not a full-voiced song

and pæan of rum, like its brothers of the ruddy blossom and the ruby blob, but a gentle suspicion of long evening drinks and morning drams. Some men run to weight as they grow old; some dry up. It is matter of temperament. So some of those old topers ran to red and swollen nose, rubicund of colour and bright with many a blossom; while some ran to a pallid hue and shrunken dimensions. It is true that these were old stagers—the scanty remnant of a generation most of whom were long since tucked up in bed and fallen sound asleep. The younger men—of George Tyrrell's stamp—were more moderate. A simple bottle of Port after dinner generally sufficed for their modest wants; and they did not drink rum at all. The Captain, for his part, took his rations regularly: a glass of Port every day, and two on Sunday; a tumbler of grog every night and two on Sunday. To Sundays, as a good Churchman, he added, of course, the feasts and festivals of the Church.

Let us return to these occasions.

On Good Friday, it was—it is still, I believe—*de rigueur* to make yourself ill by eating Hot Cross Buns, which were sold in the streets to the tune of a simple ditty, sung by the vendors. On Whit Sunday, who so poor as not to have gooseberry-pie, unless the season was very backward? Lamb came in with Easter, and added its attractions to

heighten the spiritual joy of the season. Easter eggs were not yet invented ; but everybody put on something new for the day. The asceticism of Lent had no terrors for those who, like ourselves, began it with more than the customary feasting, conducted it without any additional services, broke its gloom by Mothering Sunday, and ended it by two feasts, separated by one day only. The hungriest Christian faced its terrors with cheek unblanched and lips firm ; he came out of it no thinner than he went in ; as for the spiritual use he made of that season, it was a matter for his conscience to determine, not for me to resolve. We marked its presence in Church by draping the pulpit, reading desk, and clerk's desk with black velvet, instead of red. The Rev. Mr. Broughton always explained the bearings of Lent according to the ordinances of the Church, and explained very carefully that fasting, in our climate, and in the northern latitude, was to be taken in a spiritual, not a carnal sense. It was never meant, he said, that Heaven's gifts were to be neglected, whatever the season might be. Nor was it intended by Providence, in the great Christian scheme, that we were to endanger the health of the body by excessive abstinence. This good shepherd preached what he practised, and practised what he preached. During Lent the hymns, until I became organist,

were taken more slowly than at other seasons, so that it was a great time for the old ladies on the triangular brackets. The Captain, who had an undeveloped ear for music, said that caterwauling was not singing praises, but it was only fair to let every one have his watch, turn and turn about, and that if the commanding officer—meaning Mr. Broughton—allowed it, we had to put up with it. But he gave out the "tools" with an air of pitiful resignation. On Trinity Sunday, Mr. Broughton, in a discourse of twenty minutes, confronted the Unbeliever, and talked him down with such an array of argument that when the benediction came there was nothing left of him. It is curious that whenever I, which is once a year, read that splendid encounter between Greatheart and Apollyon, I always think of Mr. Broughton and Trinity Sunday. When Apollyon was quite worsted and we were dismissed, we went home to a sort of Great Grand Day dinner, a Gaudy, a City Feast, a Commemoration Banquet, to which all other Christian Festivals, except Christmas, were mere trifles. For on Trinity Sunday, except when east winds were more protracted than usual, there were salmon, lamb, peas, duckling, early gooseberries, and asparagus.

From Trinity Sunday to Advent was a long stretch, unmarked by any occasion of feasting. I used to wonder why the Church had invented

nothing to fill up that space, and I commiserated the hard lot of Dissenters, to whom their religion gave no times for feasting.

The influence of custom hedged round the whole of life for us. It even regulated the amount of our hospitalities. Things were expected of people in a certain position. The Tyrrells, for instance, could hardly do less than give four dinner-parties in the year. Others not in so good a position might maintain their social rank with two. Retired officers were not expected to show any hospitality at all. To be sure this concession was necessary unless the poor fellows, who generally had large and hungry families, were allowed to entertain, after the manner of Augustus Brambler, on bread and cheese. Mrs. Pontifex again, who had very decided Christian views, but was of good county family, admitted her responsibilities by offering one annual banquet of the more severe order. A bachelor, like Mr. Verney Broughton, was exempt from this social tax. He gave very few dinners. To make up for this, he would ask one man at a time, and set before him such a reminiscence of Oriel in a solid dinner, with a bottle of crusted Port after it, as to make that guest dissatisfied with his wife's catering for a month to come.

The guests were divided into sets, with no regard for their special fitness or individual likings, but

simply in accordance with their recognised social status. The advantage of this arrangement was that you knew beforehand whom you would meet, and what would be talked about. I knew all the sets, because at most of their entertainments I was a guest, and at some a mere *umbra*, invited as *ami de famille* who would play and sing after dinner. On these occasions my profession was supposed to be merged in the more creditable fact of my illustrious birth. When strangers came I never failed to overhear the whisper, after the introduction, "Count Pulaski in Poland, but refuses to bear the title in England. Of very high Polish family." One gets used to most things in time. Mr. Tyrrell divided his dinner-guests into four sets. In October we had lawyers, one or two doctors, perhaps a clergyman, and their wives. At the summer feast (which was the most important, and was fixed with reference to the full moon for convenience of driving home) there were the important clients, who came in great state, in their own carriages. In February we entertained a humbler class of townspeople, who were also clients. And in December we generally entertained the Mayor and officers of the borough, a thing due to Mr. Tyrrell's connection with the Municipality. The May banquet was wholly of a domestic character. The dinners were solid and heavy, beginning early and lasting an immense

time. After dinner the men sat for an hour or two consuming large quantities of Port.

"If this," Celia used to say, "is Society, I think, Laddy, that I prefer Solitude."

She and I used to sing and play duets together, after dinner, occasionally giving way to any young lady who expected to be asked to sing. The songs of the day were not bad, but they lasted too long. It is more than possible to tire, in the course of years, of such a melody as "Isle of Beauty" or "Love Not" (a very exasperating piece of long-drawn music), or "My Pretty Page," a sentimentally beautiful thing; the men, some of whom had red faces after the Port, mostly hung about the doors together, while the ladies affected great delight in turning over old albums and well-known portfolios of prints. Photographs began to appear in some provincial drawing-rooms in the early fifties, but they were not yet well-established. It was a transition period. Keepsakes and Books of Beauty were hardly yet out of fashion, while portrait albums were only just beginning. Daguerreotypes, things which, regarded from all but one point of view, showed a pair of spectral eyes and nothing else, lay on the table in red leather cases. Mural decoration was an art yet in its infancy, and there must have been, now one comes to think of it, truly Awful things

to be witnessed in the shape of vases, jars, and ornamented mantel-shelves; the curtains, the carpets, the chairs, and the sofas were in colours not to be reconciled on any principle of Art. And I doubt very much whether we should like, now, the fashion in which young ladies wore their hair, dressed their sleeves, and arranged their skirts. Fashion is the most wonderful of all human vanities; and the most remarkable thing about it is that whether a pretty girl disguises herself in Queen Anne's hoops, Elizabethan petticoats, immense Pompadour *coiffure*, Victorian crinoline, or Republican scantiness, whether she puts patches and paint on her cheek, whether she runs great rings through her nose, whether she wears a coal-scuttle for a bonnet, as thirty years ago, or an umbrella for a hat, as last year, whether she displays her figure as this year, or hides it altogether as fifteen years ago, whether she walks as Nature meant her to walk or affects a stoop, whether she pretends in the matter of hair and waist, or whether she is content with what the gods have given her—she cannot, she may not, succeed in destroying her beauty. Under every disguise the face and figure of a lovely woman are as charming, as bewitching, as captivating, as under any other. When it comes to young women who are not pretty—but, perhaps, as the large-hearted Frenchman said—*il n'y en*

a pas—there are no young women who are not pretty.

We were, then, ignorant of Art in my young days. Art in provincial towns as commonly understood did not exist at all. To be sure, we had an Art speciality of which we might have been proud. There was no place in the world which could or did turn out more splendid ships' figure-heads. There was one old gentleman in particular, a genius in figure-head carving, who had his studio in the Dockyard, and furnished her Majesty's Navy with bows, decorated in so magnificent a style, that one, who, like me, remembers them, is fain to weep in only looking at the figure-headless ironclads of the present degenerate days.

As for conversation after dinner, there was not much between the younger men and the ladies, because really there was hardly anything to talk about except one's neighbours. In London, probably, people talked much as they do now, but in a country town, as yet unexplored by Mudie or Smith, there could be very few topics of common interest between a young man and a girl. The Great Exhibition of 1851 did one great service for country people; it taught them how easy it is to get to London, and what a mine of wealth, especially for after memory and purposes of conversation, exists in that big place. But remember that

five and twenty years ago, in the family circle of a country town, there were no periodical visits to town, no holidays on the Continent, no new books, no monthly magazines ; even illustrated newspapers were rarely seen ; there was no love of Art or talk of artistic principles, or Art schools ; there were no choral societies, no musical services ; no croquet, or Badminton, or lawn tennis. And yet people were happy. Celia's social circle was too limited to make her feel the want of topics of conversation with young men. No young man except myself was ever invited to the house, and of course I hardly counted.

When the formal dinner-parties were held, the guests at these banquets were principally old and middle-aged people. At our birthday dinner only the very intimate friends and relations were invited. Mr. Tyrrell had no relations ; or at least we never heard of them, but his wife was well connected ; the Pontifexes are known to be a good old county family, and Mrs. Pontifex, Mrs. Tyrrell's aunt, often asserted the claims of her own ancestry, who were Toplingtons, to be of equal rank with her husband's better known line.

Of course, the Pontifexes always came to the dinners.

Mrs. Pontifex—Aunt Jane—was fifteen years older than her husband, and at this time, I suppose,

about sixty-five years of age. She was small in person, but upright and gaunt beyond her inches. It is a mistake to suppose—I learned this from considering Mrs. Pontifex as a Leading Case—that gauntness necessarily implies a tall stature. Not at all. "If," I said to Cis one day, "if you were to wear, as Aunt Jane wears, a cap of severely Puritanic aspect, decorated with a few flowers which might have grown in a cemetery; if you were to arrange your hair, as she arranges it, in a double row, stiff curls, set horizontally on each side of her face; if you were to sit bolt upright, with your elbows square, as if you were always in a pew; if you were to keep the corners of your lips down—as Aunt Jane does—so—Cis—why even you would be gaunt. John of Gaunt, so called because he resembled Aunt Jane, was, I believe, a man under the middle height."

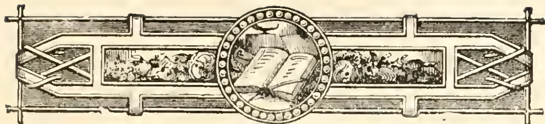
She married the Rev. John Pontifex, or rather they married each other, chiefly for money. They both had excellent incomes which united made a large income; they were both desperately careful and saving people; they held similar views on religious matters (they were severe views), and I suppose that Aunt Jane had long learned to rule John Pontifex when she invited him—even Cis used to agree that he would never have invited her—to become her husband.

Mr. Pontifex was a man of lofty but not commanding stature. Another mistake of novelists and people who write. You have not necessarily a commanding stature because you are tall. No one could have seen anything commanding in Mr. John Pontifex. He was six feet two in height, and, although by nature austere, he looked as meek as if he had been only five feet; the poor man, indeed, never had the chance of looking anything but meek; he had a pale face and smooth cheeks, with thin brown hair, a little grey and "gone off" at the temples. His features were made remarkable by a very long upper lip, which gave him a mutton-like expression as of great meekness coupled with some obstinacy. In fact, she who drove John Pontifex had at times to study the art of humouring her victim. Since his marriage he had retired from active pastoral work, and now passed his time in the critical observation of other men at work in his own field. He held views of the most Evangelical type, and when he preached at St. Faith's we received without any compromise the exact truth as regards future prospects. He spoke very slowly, bringing out his nouns in capitals, as it were, and involved his sentences with parentheses. But in the presence of his wife he spoke seldom, because she always interrupted him. He was fond of me, and for some reason of his own, always called me Johnny.

In strong contrast with his clerical brother was the Perpetual Curate of St. Faith's, my old tutor, Mr. Verney Broughton. The latter was as plump, as rosy, as jolly, as the former was thin, tall, and austere. Calvin could not have looked on the world's follies with a more unforgiving countenance than the Rev. John Pontifex; Friar John could hardly have regarded the worldliness of the world with more benignity than Rev. Verney Broughton. He was a kind-hearted man, and loved the world, with the men, women, and children upon it; he was a scholar and a student, consequently he loved the good things that had been written, said, and sung upon it, he was a gourmand, and he liked to enjoy the fruits of the earth in due season. Perhaps he loved the world too much for a Christian minister; at all events he enjoyed it as much as he could; never disguised his enjoyment, and inculcated both in life and preaching a perfect trust in the goodness of God, deep thankfulness for the gifts of eating and drinking, and reliance on the ordinances of the Church. Mr. Pontifex amused him; they were close companions, which added to the pleasures of life; and he entertained, I should say, dislike for no man in the world except Herr Räumer, whom he could not be brought to admire.

"He is a cynic," he would say. "That school has never attracted my admiration. He delights in

the *double entendre,* and is never so much pleased as when he conveys a hidden sneer. I do not like that kind of conversation. Give me honest enthusiasm, admiration, and faith. And I prefer Englishmen, Ladislas, my boy, though you are only an Englishman by adoption."



CHAPTER XVI.

A DINNER-PARTY.

THERE were several other people who entertained similar views with regard to Herr Räumer. Mrs. Pontifex disliked him excessively for one. Everybody began with distrust of this man; then they grew to tolerate him; some went on to like him; all ended with cordial hatred—it would be hard to say why. His eyes, without the blue spectacles, which he put off indoors, were singularly bright, though rather small. He had a way of turning their light full on to a speaker without speaking, which was as embarrassing a commentary on what you had just said as you can imagine. It conveyed to yourself, and to everybody else, which was even more humiliating, the idea that you were really, to this gentleman's surprise, even a greater fool than

you looked. Perhaps that was one reason why he was so much disliked.

You noticed, too, after a time, that he saw everything, heard everything, and remembered everything. When he spoke about his personal reminiscences, he showed an astonishing recollection of detail as if he preserved photographs of places and persons in his mind.

He was always about Mr. Tyrrell's office, and kept there a fire-proof safe, with his name painted on it in white letters. He carried the key in his own pocket. Of course I knew nothing of the nature of his business, but it was generally understood that he was a German who had money, that he chose to live in our town for his own pleasure and convenience, and that he invested his funds by Mr. Tyrrell's help and advice in local securities.

The Captain and little Dr. Roy always made up the party. Everybody liked the little doctor, who stood five feet nothing in his boots, a neat and well-proportioned abridgement of humanity, with a humorous face and a twinkling eye. He was an Irishman ; he had been in America ; and it was currently reported that if he ventured his foot on Canadian soil he would infallibly be hanged for the part he took in the rebellion of eighteen hundred and forty something. In certain circles he had the

reputation of being an Atheist—he was in reality as good a Roman Catholic as ever touched holy water—because he was constantly crying out about bad drainage, and taunting people with the hundreds of lives wantonly thrown away, he said, every year, and struck down by preventible diseases. "As if," the people said piously, "the issues of life and death were in man's hand." So typhus fever went on, and the town was not drained.

The birthday dinners were all alike, with the same guests. The year went on, and we met on the anniversary to drink Celia's health and talk the same talk. Let me take one of these dinners, the last at which this company met together for this purpose.

The Rev. Mr. Broughton took in Mrs. Tyrrell, so that Celia fell to Mr. Pontifex, Mrs. Pontifex, of course, took Mr. Tyrrell's arm. The grace was "pronounced" by Mr. Broughton. He was less unctuous over the petition than poor Augustus Brambler, but he threw considerable feeling into the well-known words, and had a rich, melodious voice, a fitting prelude to the banquet. Grace said, the benevolent divine surveyed the guests and the table with the eyes of satisfaction, as if he wished it was always feast time.

There were no *menus* laid on the table in those days, and you did not know what was coming as

you do now. But there was the smell of roast meats which, if you remembered what things belong to the season, was almost as good as a *menu.* And the things were put on the table. There were no dinners *à la Russe.* You saw your food before you. The host carved, too, and very laborious work it was. But it was still reckoned part of a gentleman's education to carve with discretion and skill. I should like to have seen Mr. Broughton's face if he had been compelled to sit in silence during the mangling of a hare. Perhaps, however he was too much of a martinet, and the exquisite finish with which he distributed a pheasant among half-a-dozen guests, however admirable as a work of Art, pointed to an amount of thought in the direction of dinner beyond what is now expected of the clergy. Mr. Pontifex, on the other hand, was a wretched carver.

"I am now more at ease," he would say, "in the Pulpit than in the Place of the Carver, though, in my youth, when I was at Oxford, when, alas! the pleasures of the—ahem—the Table, were in my day placed above the pleasures of the Soul—I was considered expert in the Art of Carving. There was one occasion, I remember—with sorrow—when a Goose was placed upon the board——"

"I wish, Mrs. Tyrrell," interrupted Mr. Broughton —and indeed we had all heard the goose story before; "I wish I could persuade my landlady to

give the same thoughtfulness to things as your cook. It is so difficult to make some women understand the vital importance of dinner. I can order the raw materials, but I cannot, unfortunately, cook them."

Mrs. Pontifex, I saw, sat opposite her husband, who took his dinner under her superintendence. I sat next to that divine, and felt pity for him as a warning or prohibition came across the table, and he had to shake his head in sorrowful refusal.

In his rich, mellow voice, Mr. Broughton, on receiving his fish, remarked:

"The third time this year, and only the 24th of May, that I have partaken of salmon. The Lord is very good——"

"No, John Pontifex," said that clergyman's wife loudly, "no salmon for you."

"My dear," he ventured to expostulate feebly, because he was particularly fond of salmon.

"Ladislas Pulaski, who is young, may make himself ill with salmon and cucumber if he likes," said Aunt Jane, "but not you, John Pontifex. Remember the last time."

He sighed, and I took the portion intended for him.

"The Lord is very good," resumed Mr Broughton, "to *nearly* all His creatures," as if Pontifex was an exception.

Dr. Roy began to talk of salmon-fishing in the Saguenay River, and we were all interested except poor Mr. Pontifex, whose face was set in so deep a gloom that I thought he would have rebelled.

He picked up a little when an *entrée* of pigeons was allowed to stop at his elbow. But the undisguised enjoyment with which he drank his first glass of champagne brought his wife, who was at that moment talking of a new and very powerful tract, down upon him in a moment.

"No more champagne, John Pontifex," she ordered promptly.

"Another glass for me," cried Mr. Broughton, nodding his head. "A glass of wine with you, Mrs. Pontifex. I am a bachelor, you know, and can do as I like."

It was not manners to refuse, and Aunt Jane raised her glass to her lips icily, while Mr. Broughton drained his with an audible smack. In 1858 we had already, in provincial towns, passed out of the custom of taking wine with each other, but it was still observed by elderly people who liked the friendly fashion of their youth.

I thought this assertion of independence rather cruel to Mr. Pontifex, but it was not for me, belonging, with Celia, to the class of "young people," to say anything at a party unless previously spoken to

or questioned. Then Aunt Jane began a talk with Herr Räumer, chiefly about the sins of people. As you came to know this German well, you discovered that, whenever he did talk about people, he had something bad to say of them ; also when he spoke of any action, however insignificant, it was to find an unworthy motive for it. Perhaps, however, I am now in that fourth and bad stage mentioned above.

Mr. Tyrrell was silent during the dinner, perhaps because he had to carve industriously and dexterously; he drank wine freely ; but he said nothing Celia noticed her father's taciturnity, and I saw her watching him with anxiety. No one else observed it, and when the first stiffness of ceremony wore off, there began the genial flow of conversation which ought to rejoice the heart of a hostess, because it shows that every one is feeding in content. Mr. Tyrrell, a florid, high-coloured man, who usually talked fast and rather noisily, was looking pale; the nerves of his cheek twitched, and his hand trembled.

When the cloth was removed—I am not certain that the old fashion of wine and dessert on the polished dark mahogany was not better than the present—we all drank Celia's health.

"In bumpers," cried Mr. Broughton, filling up Mrs. Tyrrell's glass and his own to the brim with

port. "In bumpers all. And I wish I was a young man again to toast Celia Tyrrell as she should be toasted. Don't you, Brother Pontifex? Here is to your *beaux yeux,* my dear. Some day I will preach a sermon on thankfulness for beauty."

"God bless you, Celia, my child," said her father, with a little emotion in his voice. "Many happy returns of the day, and every one better than the last."

"The best thing," continued Mr. Broughton, "for young girls is a young husband—eh, Mrs. Tyrrell? What do you think?"

"Vanity," said Aunt Jane. "Let them wait and look round them. I was thirty-five when I married my first."

"When I was at Oxford," Mr. Pontifex began, glancing anxiously at his wife—"When I was at Brasenose, Oxford (where I was known, I am ashamed to say, as—as—as Co-rin-thian Pon-ti-fex, on account of the extraordinary levity, even in that assemblage of reckless youths, of my disposition), there were some among us commonly designated as —as—as Three—Bottle—Men!!!" He said this with an air of astonishment, as if it was difficult to credit, and a thing which ought, if printed, to be followed by several notes of admiration. "Three —Bottle—Men! The rule among us was—I regret say—No—ahem—no Heeltaps."

"John Pontifex!" interposed his wife severely. "Recollect yourself. No Heeltaps, indeed!"

"My dear, I was about to conclude this sad Reminiscence by remarking that it was a Truly Shocking State of Things."

He spoke in capitals, so to speak, and with impressive slowness.

"When young people are present," said Aunt Jane, "it is well to consider the religious tendency of anecdotes before they are related."

Mr. Pontifex said no more.

"I will tell you, by-and-bye, Pontifex," said the jolly old parson, whose face was a good deal redder than at the commencement of dinner, "I will tell you, when the ladies have left us, some of our experiences in Common Room. Don't be afraid, Mrs. Pontifex, we shall not emulate the deeds of those giants."

"In *my* house," said Aunt Jane to her niece reproachfully, "it is one of our Christian privileges not to sit over wine after dinner; we all rise together."

"From a lady's point of view," observed Herr Räumer, "doubtless an admirable practice."

"Not at all admirable," cried the Captain, who had been quiet during dinner. Why shouldn't we have half-an-hour to ourselves to talk politics and tell yarns, while the ladies talk dress?"

"In my house," said Aunt Jane, "the ladies do not talk dress. We exchange our experiences. It is a Christian privilege."

Dr. Roy uttered a hollow groan, doubtless from sympathy with Mr. Pontifex.

Just then Mrs. Tyrrell sat bolt upright, which was her signal, and the ladies left us.

"Aha!" cried Mr. Broughton, "confess, Brother Pontifex, that you do not appreciate all the Christian privileges of your house."

He shook his head solemnly, but he did not smile.

"Three bottle men, were you?" said Dr. Roy. "Gad, sir, I remember at old Trinity, in Dublin, some of us were six bottle men. Not I, though. Nature intended me for a one pint man."

"It is only the German student," said Herr Räumer, "who can hold an indefinite quantity."

"I sincerely hope," said Mr. Pontifex, as he finished his glass, "that things have greatly changed since that time. I remember that the door was generally locked; the key was frequently thrown out of the window, and the—the—Orgy commenced. As I said before, the word was 'No Heeltaps.' It is Awful to reflect upon. Thank you, Dr. Roy, I will take another glass of Port. There were times, too, when, in the wantonness of youth, we permitted ourselves the most reckless

language over our feasts. On one occasion I did so, myself. The most reckless language. I positively swore. My thoughtless companions, I regret to say, only laughed. They actually laughed. The cause of this—this Iniquity arose over a Goose. It is a truly Dreadful Event to look back upon."

"We used at Oriel," said Mr. Broughton, again interrupting the Goose story without compunction, to drink about a bottle and a half a head; and we used to talk about Scholarship, Literature, and Art. And some of the men talked well. I wish I could drink a bottle and a half every night now; and I wish I had the Common Room to drink it in. It is a Beautiful Time for *me* to look back upon."

It was as if he tried in everything to be a contrast to his brother in Orders.

"The rising generation," said Dr. Roy, "who work harder, ride less, smoke more tobacco, and live faster, will have to give up Port and take Claret. After all, it was the favourite Irish wine for a couple of hundred years.

"Ugh!" from Mr. Broughton,

"The longer the Englishman drinks Port," said Herr Räumer, "Port and Beer, the longer he will continue to be—what he is."

As this was said very smoothly and sweetly, with the rasp peculiar to the voice, giving an unpleasant point at the end, I concluded at once

that the German meant more than was immediately apparent.

"Thank you, Herr Räumer," said Mr. Broughton sharply; "I hope we shall continue to remain what we are. The appreciation of your countrymen is always generous. As for Port, I look on that wine as the most perfect of all Heaven's gifts to us poor creatures. This is very fine, Tyrrell. From Pontifex's cellar? Brother Pontifex, you don't ask me to dinner half often enough. Forty-seven? I thought so. Agreeable,"—he held the glass up to the candles: we had wax candles for the dining-room—"with little body, but quite enough. Rather dry," he tasted it again. "How superb it will be in twenty years, when some of us shall not be alive to drink it! The taste for Port comes to us by Nature—it is not acquired like that for Claret and Rhine wines—pass me the olives, Roy, my dear fellow. It is born with some of us, and is a sacred gift. It brightens youth, adorns manhood, and comforts age. May those of us who are blessed by Providence with a palate use it aright, and may we never drink a worse glass of wine than the present. I remember," he went on sentimentally wagging his head, which was by this time nearly purple all over, "I remember the very first glass of Port I ever tasted. My grandfather, the Bishop of Sheffield, gave it to me when I was three years

old. 'Learn to like it, boy,' said his lordship, who had the most cultivated palate in the diocese. I did like it from that hour, though, unless my memory fails me, the Bishop's butler had brought up too fruity a wine."

The more Port Mr. Broughton consumed the more purple the jolly fat face and bald head became. But no quantity affected his tongue or clouded his brain, so that when we joined the ladies he was as perfectly sober, although coloured like his favourite wine, as Mrs. Pontifex herself, who was making tea.

Mrs. Tyrrell was asleep when we came upstairs, but roused herself to talk with Dr. Roy, who had certainly taken more than the pint for which, as he said, Nature intended his capacity.

Celia was playing, and I joined her, and we played a duet. When we finished I went to ask for a cup of tea.

By the table was standing Mr. Pontifex, a cup in his hand and a look of almost ghastly discomposure on his face, while his wife was forcing an immense slice of muffin upon his unwilling hands.

"Muffin, John Pontifex," she said.

"My dear," he remonstrated with more firmness than one might have expected; "My dear, I—I do not wish for any muffin—ahem."

"It is helped, John Pontifex," said his wife, and

leaving the unhappy man to eat it, she turned to me, thanked me sweetly for the duet, and gave me a cup of tea.

Mr. Pontifex retreated behind his wife's chair. As no one was looking I stole a plate from the table, and with great swiftness transferred the muffin from his plate to mine. He looked boundless gratitude, but was afraid to speak, and after a due interval returned the empty plate to the table, even descending so far in deception as to brush away imaginary crumbs from his coat. His wife looked suspiciously at him, but the muffin was gone, and it was impossible to identify that particular piece with one left in another plate. In the course of the evening he seized the opportunity of being near me, and stooped to whisper sorrowfully :

"I do not like muffin, Johnny. I loathe muffin."

The party broke up at eleven, and by a quarter past we were all gone. As I put my hat on in the hall I heard the voice of Herr Räumer in Mr. Tyrrell's office.

"This is the day, Tyrrell. After she was eighteen, remember."

"Have pity on me, Räumer ; I cannot do it. Give me another year."

"Pity ? Rubbish. Not another week. I am not going to kill the girl. Is the man mad ? Is he a fool ?"

I hastened away, unwilling to overhear things not intended for me, but the words struck a chill to my heart.

Who was "she?" Could it be Celia? "After she was eighteen"—and this Celia's eighteenth birthday. It was disquieting, and Mr. Tyrrell asking that white-haired man with the perpetual sneer and the rasp in his voice for pity. Little as I knew of the world, it was clear to me that there would be small chance of pity in that quarter. Herr Räumer and Celia! Why he was sixty years of age, and more; older than Mr. Tyrrell, who was a good deal under fifty. What could he want with a girl of nineteen? It was with a sad heart that I got home that night, and I was sorely tempted to take counsel of the Captain. But I forebore. I would wait and see.

I met Mr. Pontifex next morning. He was going with a basket to execute a few small commissions at the greengrocer's. He acted, indeed, as footman or errand boy, saving the house large sums in wages.

He stopped and shook hands without speaking, as if the memory of the muffin was too much for him. Then he looked as if he had a thing to say which ought to be said, but which he was afraid to say. Finally, he glanced hurriedly up and down the street to see if there was any one within earshot.

As there was no one, he laid two fingers on my shoulder, and said in agitated tones, and with more than his usual impressiveness :

"I am particularly partial to salmon, which is, I suppose, the reason why I was allowed none last night. When I married, however, I totally—ahem —surrendered—I regret to say—my independence. Oh! Johnny, Johnny!"

CHAPTER XVII.

AN OLD PROMISE.

AFTER a disquiet and uneasy night, haunted with Cassandra-like visions of coming trouble, I arose, anxious and nervous. "Am I going to kill the girl? Wait till she was eighteen?" What could these words mean except one thing? To connect Celia, even in thought, with this smooth and cynical old German was worse than any union of May and December. Innocence and trust: belief in high aims and pure motives on the one hand—on the other that perfect knowledge of evil which casteth out faith. A maiden whose chief charm, next to her beauty, to the adept of sixty, was her strange and unwonted ignorance of the world and its wickedness. And yet—and yet—we were in this nineteenth century, and we were in England, where men do not give away or sell their daughters, unless

in novels: how could it be possible that a man of the world, a successful man, like Mr. Tyrrell, should contemplate, even for a moment, the sacrifice of his only child on such an altar?

As our misfortunes always fall together, I received, the next morning, on my way home from giving my last lesson, a second blow, from an equally unexpected quarter. This time it was from Wassielewski. The old man, who had been dejected and resigned since the failure of his schemes in 1854, was walking along upright, swinging his arms, with an elated air. When he saw me he threw up his long arms, and waved them like the sails of a windmill.

"It is coming," he cried. "It is coming once more. This time it will be no failure. And you shall take your part. Only wait a week, Ladislas Pulaski, and you shall know all. Silence, until you are admitted into our plans."

He shook my hand with a pressure which meant more than his words, and left me, with his head thrown back, his long white hair streaming in the wind, tossing his arms and gesticulating.

I had almost forgotten that I was a Pole, and the reminder came upon me with a disagreeable shock. It was like being told of some responsibility you would willingly let sleep—some duty you would devolve upon others. And to take my part? Strange

transformation of a cripple and a music-master into a conspirator and a rebel.

For a week nothing was said by Mr. Tyrrell, and I was forgetting my anxiety on that score when, one afternoon, I went as usual to see Celia. There were, as I have said, two entrances, that of the front door, which was also the office door, and that at the end of the garden, which was used by Celia and myself. This afternoon, by some accident of choice, I went to the front door. To the right was Mr. Tyrrell's private office; as I passed I saw that the door was open—that he was sitting at his table, his head upon his hand in a dejected position, and that beside him, his back to the empty fireplace, stood, tall, commanding, as if the place belonged to him, Herr Räumer.

He saw me, and beckoned me to enter the office.

"Here is Celia's private tutor, adviser, and most confidential friend," he said, in his mocking tones. "Here is Ladislas Pulaski. Why not confide the task to him? Let him speak to Celia first, if you will not."

What task?

Mr. Tyrrell raised his face, and looked at me. I think I have never seen a more sorrowful face than his at that moment—more sorrowful, or more humiliated. I had always known him bold, confident, self-reliant, of a proud and independent

bearing. All that was gone, and in a single night. He looked crushed. Now, it was as if another spirit possessed the well-known features, for they were transformed. What had this man done to him—what power over him did he possess that could work this great and sorrowful transformation?

Herr Räumer had taken off his blue spectacles, and his sharp keen eyes were glittering like steel. If the man was cynical, he was also resolute. Years of self-indulgence had not softened the determination with which he carried out a purpose.

"Ladislas Pulaski," he went on, seeing that Mr. Tyrrell did not speak, "knows Celia better than you, even—her father—or than myself, her future husband."

"Your what!" I cried, as he announced the thing in a calm judicial way, like the voice of Fate.

"Her future husband," he repeated. "The words are intelligible, are they not? Celia will become my wife. Why do you look from Mr. Tyrrell to me in that extraordinary manner? Is there, then, something monstrous in the fact?"

"Yes," I replied boldly. "Celia is eighteen, and you are sixty."

"I am sixty-two," he said. "I shall live, I dare say, another eight or ten years. Celia will make these ten years happy. She will then be at liberty to marry anybody else."

"What you hear, Ladislas," said Mr. Tyrrell, speaking with an effort, and shading his eyes as if he did not venture to look me in the face; "what you hear from Herr Räumer is quite true. Celia does not know yet—we were considering when you arrived how to tell her—does not know—yet. Our friend here insists upon her being told at once. The fact is, my dear Ladislas," he went on, trying to speak at his ease, and as if it were quite an ordinary transaction, "some years since——"

"Ten years," said Herr Räumer.

"Ten years since, our friend here did me a service of some importance."

"Of *some* importance only, my dear Tyrrell?"

"Of very great importance—of vital importance. Never mind of what nature."

"That does not matter, at *present*," said Herr Räumer. "Proceed, my father-in-law."

"As an acknowledgment of that favour—as I then believed—yes, Räumer, it is the truth, and you know it—as I then believed, in a sort of joke——"

"I never joke," said the German.

"——I promised that he should marry Celia."

"That promise I have never since alluded to until last night," Herr Räumur explained. "It was a verbal promise, but I knew that it would be kept. There were no papers or agreements between

us; but they were unnecessary. As friends we gave a pledge to each other. 'My dear Tyrrell,' I said, 'you are much younger than I am; almost young enough to be my son. You have a daughter. If I am still in this town when she is eighteen years of age, you must let me marry her, if I am then of the same mind.' My friend here laughed and acceded."

"But I did not think—I did not understand——"

"That is beside the mark. It was a promise. Celia was a pretty child then, and has grown into a beautiful woman. I shall be proud of my wife. Because, Tyrrell"—his brow contracted—"I am quite certain that the promise will be kept."

"The promise did not, and could not, amount to more than an engagement to use my influence with Celia."

"Much more," said the other. "Very much more. I find myself, against my anticipations, still in this quiet town of yours. I find the girl grown up. I find myself getting old. I say to myself—'That was a lucky service you rendered Mr. Tyrrell.' And it was of a nature which would make the most grateful man wish silence to be kept about it. And the promise was most providential. Now will my declining years be rich in comfort."

"Providential or not," said Celia's father, plucking up his courage; "if Celia will not accept you, the thing is ended."

"Not ended," said Herr Räumer softly. "Just beginning."

"Then God help us," burst out the poor man, with a groan.

"Certainly," responded his persecutor. "By all means, for you will want all the help that is to be got. Mr. Pulaski, who is entirely *ami de famille*, is now in a position to understand the main facts. There are two contracting parties. One breaks his part of the contract—the other, not by way of revenge, but in pursuance of a just policy, breaks his. The consequences fall on the first man's head. Now, Tyrrell, let us have no more foolish scruples. I will make a better husband for your girl than any young fellow. She shall have her own way; she shall do what she likes, and dress—and—all the rest of it, just as she chooses. What on earth do women want more?"

I felt sick and dizzy. Poor Celia!

Herr Räumer placed his hand upon the bell.

"I am going to send for her," he said. "If you do not speak to her yourself I will do so. As Ladislas Pulaski is here to give us moral support"—the man could not speak without a sneer—"it will be quite a *conseil de famille*, and we shall not have to trouble Mrs. Tyrrell at all. You can tell her this evening, if necessary."

He rang. Augustus Brambler, as the junior

clerk, answered the bell. I noticed that his eyes looked from one to the other of us, as he took the message from the German, in a mild wonder. Augustus ran messages of all sorts with equal alacrity, provided they were connected with the office. He would have blacked boots, had he been told to do so, and considered it all part of the majesty of the law.

When Celia came, Herr Räumer made her a very profound and polite bow, and placed a chair for her.

She looked at her father, who sat still with his head on his hand, and then at me.

"What is it, papa? What is it, Laddy?" she asked.

"Your father has a communication to make to you of the very greatest importance," said Herr Räumer, softly and gently. "Of so great importance that it concerns the happiness of two lives."

I hardly knew the man. He was soft, he was winning, he was even *young*, as he murmured these words with another bow of greater profundity than would have become an Englishman.

Then Mr. Tyrrell rose to the occasion. Any man, unless he is an abject coward, can rise to the occasion, if necessary, and act a part becomingly, if not nobly. You never hear of a man having to be carried to the gallows, for instance, though the

short walk there must have a thousand pangs for every footfall. Mr. Tyrrell rose, and tried to smile through the black clouds of shame and humiliation.

"Celia, my dear child," he said, "Herr Räumer to-day has asked my consent to his becoming, if you consent, my son-in-law."

"Your son-in-law, papa?"

"My son-in-law, Celia," he replied firmly; the plunge once made, the rest of the work appeared easier. "I am quite aware that there are many objections to be advanced at the outset. Herr Räumer, you will permit me, my friend, to allude once and for all to——"

"To the disparity of age?" No wooer of five-and-twenty could have been more airily bland, as if the matter were not worth mentioning seriously. "The disparity of age? Certainly. I have the great misfortune to be forty years older than Miss Tyrrell. Let us face the fact."

"Quite so. Once stated, it is faced," said Mr. Tyrrell, gaining courage every moment. "The objection is met by the fact that our friend is no weak old man to want a nurse, but strong and vigorous, still in the prime of life."

"The prime of life," echoed the suitor, smiling.

"He is, it may also be objected," said Mr. Tyrrell, as if anxious to get at the worst aspect of

the case at once; "he is a foreigner—a German. What then? If there is a nation with which we have a national sympathy, it is the German nation. And as regards other things, he has the honour of——"

"Say of an Englishman, my friend. Say of an English lawyer and gentleman."

Mr. Tyrrell winced for a moment.

"He is honourable and upright, of an excellent disposition, gentle in his instincts, sympathetic and thoughtful for others——"

"My dear friend," the Herr interposed, "is not that too much? Miss Tyrrell will not believe that one man can have all those perfections."

"Celia will find out for herself," said her father, laughing. "And now, my child, that you know so much, and that we have considered all possible objections, there remains something more to be said. It is now ten years since this project was first talked over between us."

"Ten years!" cried Celia.

"As a project only, because it was impossible to tell where we might be after so long a time. It was first spoken of between us after an affair, a matter of business, with which I will only so far trouble you as to say that it laid me under the most lively obligations to Herr Räumer. Remember, my dear, that the gratitude you owe to this

gentleman is beyond all that any act of yours can repay. But we do not wish you to accept Herr Räumer from gratitude. I want you to feel that you have here a chance of happiness such as seldom falls to any girl."

"In my country, Miss Tyrrell," said Herr Räumer gravely, "it is considered right for the suitor to seek first the approbation of the parents. I am aware that in England the young lady is often addressed before the parents know anything of—of—of the attachment. If I have behaved after the manner of my people, you will, I doubt not, forgive me."

I ventured to look at Celia. She sat in the chair which Herr Räumer had given her at the foot of the table, upright and motionless. Her cheeks had a touch of angry red in them, and her eyes sought her father's, as if trying to read the truth in them.

"You should know, dear Celia," Mr. Tyrrell went on, "not only from my friend's wish, but also mine, I—I—I think, that we can hardly expect an answer yet."

"Not yet," he murmured; "Miss Tyrrell will give me another opportunity, alone, of pleading my own cause. It is enough to-day that she knows what her father's hopes are, and what are mine. I would ask only to say a few words, if Miss Tyrrell will allow me."

He bowed again.

"Ten years ago, when this project—call it the fancy of a man for a child as yet unformed—came into my brain, I began to watch your progress and your education. I saw with pleasure that you were not sent to those schools where girls' minds are easily imbued with worldly ideas" Good heavens! was Herr Räumer about to put on the garb of religion? "Later on I saw with greater pleasure that your chief companion and principal tutor was Mr. Ladislas Pulaski, a gentleman whose birth alone should inspire with noble thoughts. Under his care I watched you, Miss Tyrrell, growing gradually from infancy into womanhood. I saw that your natural genius was developed; that you were becoming a musician of high order, and that by the sweetness of your natural disposition you were possessing yourself of a manner which I, who have known courts, must be allowed to pronounce—perfect. It is not too much to say that I have asked a gift which any man, of whatever exalted rank, would be proud to have; that there is no position however lofty which Miss Tyrrell would not grace; and that I am deeply conscious of my own demerits. At the same time I yield to no one in the resolution to make that home happy which it is in Miss Tyrrell's power to give me. The slightest wish shall be gratified; the most trifling

want shall be anticipated. If we may, for once, claim a little superiority over the English, it is in that power of divining beforehand, of guessing from a look or a gesture, the wishes of those we love, which belongs to us Germans."

It was the first and the last time I have ever heard this mysterious power spoken of. No doubt, as Herr Räumer claimed it for his countrymen, they do possess it. Most Germans I have ever seen have struck me as being singularly cold persons, far behind the French in that subtle sympathy which makes a man divine in the manner spoken of by Herr Räumer.

The speech was lengthy and wordy; it was delivered in the softest voice, and with a certain impressiveness. Somehow—so far, at least, as I was concerned, it failed to produce a favourable effect. There was not the true ring about it. Celia made a slight acknowledgment, and looked again at her father.

Then Herr Räumer turned effusively to me.

"I have no words," he said, "to express the very great thanks which I—which we—owe to you for the watchful and brotherly care which you have given to Miss Tyrrell. It is not in the power of money——"

"There has never been any question of money," said Mr. Tyrrell quickly, "between Ladislas and us."

"I know. There are disinterested people in the world, after all," Herr Räumer said with a smile. "You are one of them, Mr. Pulaski. At the same time," he added airily, "you cannot escape our thanks. You will have to go through life laden with our gratitude."

Celia got up and gave me her hand.

"You do not want me to say anything now, papa," she said. "We will go. Come, Laddy."

We closed the door of the office behind us, and escaped into the garden, where the apple blossoms were in their pink and white beauty; through the gate at the end, to our own resort and rest, by Celia's Arbour. We leaned against the rampart and looked out, over the broad sloping bank of bright green turf, set with buttercups as with golden buttons, across the sunny expanse of the harbour. The grass of the bastion was strewn with the brown casings of the newly-born leaves, the scabbards which had kept them from the frost. We could not speak. Her hand held mine.

Presently she whispered,

"Laddy, is it real? Does papa mean it?"

"Yes, Celia."

"And yesterday I was so happy."

Then we were silent again, for I had no word of comfort.

"Laddy," she cried, with a start of hope, "what

is to-day? The first of June. Then in three weeks' time Leonard will be home again. I will give no answer for three weeks. Leonard will help us. All will be right for us when Leonard comes home."

CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM THE ORGAN-LOFT.

In three weeks. Leonard would be home in three weeks. We had been so long looking forward that, now the time was close at hand, the realisation of its approach came on us like a shock.

We stared at each other.

"Three weeks, Cis! How will he come home?"

"I do not know. He will come home triumphant. Laddy, a moment ago I was so wretched—now I am so hopeful. He will come home and help us. We are like shipwrecked sailors in sight of land."

We did not doubt but that he would be another Perseus to the new Andromeda. What he was to do, more than we could do ourselves, we did not know. But he would do something. And that

conviction, in the three weeks which followed, was our only stay and hope. We could not take counsel with the Captain, and even Mrs. Tyrrell was not informed of what had happened. She was to be told when Celia gave her answer. Meantime, Celia's lover made for the moment no sign of impatience. He came to the house in the evenings. He listened to Celia's playing and singing; he ventured with deference on a little criticism; he treated her with such respect as a lady might get from a *preux chevalier* of the old school; he loaded her with *petits-soins;* he never alluded in the slightest way to their interview in the office; his talk was soft, and in presence of the girl he seldom displayed any of the cynical sayings which generally garnished his conversation; and he assumed the manner of a Christian gentleman of great philanthropic experience, and some disappointment with human nature. I was a good deal amused by the change, but a little disquieted, because it showed that he was in earnest. There was to be no brutal force, no melodramatic marriage by reluctant consent to save a father from something or other indefinite. He was laying siege in due form, hoping to make the fortress surrender in due time, knowing that the defences were undermined by the influence of her father.

The Sunday after the first breaking of the

matter he astonished me by appearing in the Tyrrells' square pew. I saw him from the organ-loft, and watched him with the utmost admiration. He was certainly a well set-up man, tall and straight. His full white moustache gave him a soldier-like look. He wore a tightly-buttoned frock, which was not the fashion of the day, with a rose-bud in the button-hole, and new light lavender gloves. The general effect produced was exactly what he desired, that of a man no longer young, but still in vigorous life ; a man remarkable in appearance, and probably remarkable, did the congregation know it, for his personal history. In church he laid aside the blue spectacles which he always wore in the street. His manner was almost theatrically reverential, although he showed a little uncertainty about getting up and sitting down. I have already explained that this was leisurely among occupants of the square pews at St. Faith's, so that his hesitation was less marked than it would be in an advanced church of the more recent type. I do not know whether he sang, because my back was necessarily turned to the congregation while I played for them, and among the curious mixture of discordances which rose to the organ-loft, and together made up the hymn, I could not distinguish the German's deep bass with the unmistakable rasp in it. There was the squawk of the old ladies who

sat along the aisle—you made that out easily by reason of their being always half-a-dozen notes behind; there was the impetuous rush of those irregular cavalry, the charity children, who sat round the altar rails, and always sang a few notes in advance; there was the long-drawn hum of the congregation "joining in," which, taken in the lump, as one got it up in the organ-loft, was like the air played slowly on a barrel organ with a cold, or like a multitude attempting a tune through their noses. And there were sporadic sounds, issuing, I had reason to suppose, from individual singers, from him who tried tenor, and from her who attempted an alto. And sometimes I thought I could distinguish the sweet voice of Celia, but that was probably fancy.

The hymn over, I was free to turn round, and through an uplifted corner of the red curtain to watch Herr Räumer. The preacher on this Sunday was the Rev. John Pontifex, and it was a pretty sight to see the rapt attention with which the Teutonic proselyte followed the argument, as if it was something strange, original, and novel. As a matter of fact, it was Mr. Pontifex's one sermon. He only had one. Like Single-speech Hamilton, he concentrated all the logic at his command into one argumentative discourse. Unlike Single-speech, he went on preaching it whenever he was asked to preach at all. To be sure, he introduced

variations in the text, in the exordium, and in the peroration. But the body of the discourse was invariably the same. And it was not a cheerful sermon. On the contrary, it was condemnatory, and sent people home to their dinners with a certainty about the future which ought to have taken away all their appetites.

Up in the organ-loft you had advantages over your fellows. The church lay at your feet, with the people in their pews sitting mute and quiet, and yet each man preserving in his attitude, in his eyes, in the pose of his head, his own individuality. Mr. Tyrrell, for instance, showed that he was ill at ease by his downcast eyes and drooping head. His daughter and I alone knew the reason of his disquietude, with that stranger who sat in the same pew with him. Behind Mr. Tyrrell was the Captain in a long pew. Years before he had sat there Sunday after Sunday with two boys. Was the old man thinking that in three more Sundays he might sit there with the wanderer back again? He entertained great respect for a sermon, as part of a chaplain's duties ashore, but it would have been difficult to discover from any subsequent remarks that he ever listened. Looking at him now, from my lofty coign of vantage, I see from his eyes that his thoughts are far away. Perhaps he is with Leonard, perhaps he is tossing on a stormbeat sea,

or slave-chasing off the West Coast, or running again into Navarino Bay on a certain eventful afternoon. There is a calm about the old man's face which speaks of peace. What are the denunciations of the Rev. John Pontifex to him?"

"——Whither you will all of you—alas!—most infallibly go unless you change your ways——"

Within the communion rails, the Rev. Mr. Broughton, his legs stretched out, his feet upon a footstool, and his hands clasped across his portly form, is sitting comfortably. His part of the morning exercises is finished. His eyes are closed and his head nodding. Happy Perpetual Curate! On the red baize cushions round the rails are twenty or thirty school children, recipients of some charity. Why do they dress the poor girls in so perfectly Awful a uniform? And why is the verger allowed to creep round during the sermon, cane in hand, to remind any erring infant that he must not sleep in church? It ought not to be allowed.

Look at the faces of the congregation as they are turned up vacantly to the roof. No one is listening —except Herr Räumer. What are they all thinking about? In this hive of a thousand people, there is not one but has his heart and brain full of his own hopes and fears. What are the terrible forebodings of the preacher—"No hope for any but the Elect. Alas! They are very few in

number. For the rest of you, my brethren——" What are these words, which ought to generate a maddening despair, to the present anxieties and troubles of the people? The fat and prosperous grocer in the square pew is worried about a bill that falls due to-morrow; his daughter is thinking that a dear friend has treacherously copied the trimmings of her bonnet; the boys are wishing it was over; and so on. Did such words as the Rev. John Pontifex is now uttering ever have any real meaning? Or did they always lose their force by being applied, as we apply them now, to our neighbours. "Elect? Well, of course, I am one. Let us hope that our friends are also in the number. But I have my fears." We are in a Dead Church, with a preacher of Dead Words; the old Calvinistic utterances drop upon hearts which have fallen away from the dogma and are no longer open to their terrors. Such a sermon as the one preached by the Rev. John Pontifex on that Sunday morning would be impossible now. Then it was only part of the regular Church business. Well, that is all changed; we have new dangers and new enemies; among them is no longer the old listlessness of service.

"Lastly, my brethren——" See, Mr. Broughton wakes up; the children nudge each other; the Captain's eyes come back to the present, and he

instinctively gathers together the "tools," and puts them back in their box; a twitter of expectancy, with a faint preliminary rustle of feminine garments, ascends to my perch.

"Remember, that you, too, are included, one and all, in the sentence upon Ca—per—na—um."

So; he has finished. Herr Räumer sits back with a long breath, as if the argument had convinced him. Mrs. Tyrrell shakes her head solemnly. The clerk gives out the final hymn.

> Oh! may our earthly Sabbaths prove
> A foretaste of the joys above.

Poor charity children! They go home to a cold collation insufficient in quantity; they have been caned for inattention; they have to attend three services like this every Sunday. And yet they pray for a continuance of these joys.

"Oh! Ladislas," cries Mrs. Tyrrell, with a sigh of rapture, when I came up with the party after playing them out. "What a sermon! What Gospel truth! What force of expression! It is astonishing to me that Uncle Pontifex has never been made a bishop. He is coming to dinner on Tuesday," she resumes, with an entirely secular change of voice, "with Aunt Jane. Come, too Ladislas, and talk to aunt. There will be the loveliest pair of ducks."

Herr Räumer is walking beside Celia. She is

pale, and from the manner in which she carries her parasol, I should say that she is a little afraid lest her suitor should say something. But he does not. He is content to hover round her; to be seen with her; to accustom people to the association of himself with Celia Tyrrell. It is easy to divine his purpose. Suddenly to announce an engagement between an elderly man of sixty and a girl of less than twenty would be to make a nine days' wonder. Let them be seen together, so that when the right moment shall arrive to make the announcement there shall seem nothing strange about it.

One thing let me say. I have, least of all men, reason to love this German. That will be presently apparent. But I wish to be just to him. And I think he loved Celia honestly.

I am, indeed, sure he did. I saw it in the way he followed her about with his eyes, in the softened tone of his voice; in the way in which he sought me out, and tried to learn from me what were her favourite books, her music, her tastes, so that he might anticipate them. The jealousy of my own affection for Celia sharpened my senses. What I saw in him I recognised as my own. I wonder how much that strange passion of love might have done to softening the man. For as regards the rest of the world he remained the same as before, cold, cynical, emotionless, without affections or pity. A

man turned out by a machine could not have been more devoid of human sympathy. For instance, he was lodged in Augustus Brambler's first floor, and he was waited on by the best and prettiest of all Augustus's numerous olive branches, little Forty-Four. She was like her father, inasmuch as she was unceasingly active, always cheerful and brave, always patient and hopeful, always happy in herself. Unlike her father, the work she did was good work. She kept her lodger in luxuriant comfort, cooked his dinner as he loved it, and left him nothing to desire.

Yet he never spoke a word to her that was not a command, never thanked her, never took the slightest notice of her presence. This bright-eyed, pleasant-faced, obliging girl, who did a hundred things for him which were not in the bond, was, in fact, no more to him than a mere machine. Sometimes, observing this strange disregard of all human creatures, it occurred to me that he might have learned it by a long continuance in military service. A soldier is a creature who carries out orders—among other things. Perhaps the soldiers in Herr Räumer's corps were nothing else. That would be a delightful world where all the men were drilled soldiers, and military manœuvres the principal occupation, the art of war the only study, and victory the only glory. And yet to this we are tending. When-

ever I tried to interest him in his landlord's family he would listen patiently and change the subject.

"The Brambler people?" he asked with no show of interest. "Yes—I have seen them—father who runs messages." Poor Augustus! This all the majesty of the Law? "Uncle who reports for paper—children who fall down the stairs. What have I to do with these *canaille?*"

I ventured to suggest that they were poor and deserving—that, &c.

"Bah!" he said. "That is the cant of English charity, my young friend. You will tell me next that men are all brothers. Do not, I beg, fall into that trap set for the benevolent."

"I will not, with you," I said. "I suppose you think that men are all enemies."

I said this with my most withering and sarcastic smile.

"I do," he replied, solemnly. "All men are enemies. For our own advantage, and for no other reason, we do not kill each other, but unite in societies and kill our neighbours. Come, you want me to pretend benevolent sympathy with the people in this house, because the father is a fool and they are poor. There are an infinite number of poor people in the world. Some of them, even, are starving. Well, it is not my fault. Let them starve. It is my business to live, and get the most out of life."

"Do all your countrymen think like you?" I asked.

"All," he replied. "In Berlin we are a clear-sighted people. We put self-preservation first. That means everything. I do not say that we have no delusions. Machinery called charitable exists: not to so extensive and ruinous a degree as in England: still there is hope for the weakest when he goes to the wall that some one will take care of him."

"You would let him die."

"I do not actively wish him to die. If I saw that his life would be of the slightest use to me, I should help him to live. Let us talk of more agreeable things. Let us talk of Celia. Take a glass of hock. So."

He lit another cigar and lay back in his chair, murmuring enjoyable words.

"You told me, a little while ago, that the man you admired most in the world, the noblest and the best, I think you said, after the Captain, was Mr. Tyrrell. Do you think so now?"

I was silent.

"You do not. You cannot. That is a lesson for you, Ladislas Pulaski. Remember that there is no man noblest and best. Think of yourself at your worst, and then persuade yourself that all other men are like that."

I said nothing to that, because there was nothing to say. It is one way of looking at the world; the

best way, it seems to me, to drag yourself down and to keep down everybody round you.

"I said then, but you were too indignant to accept the doctrine, that every man had his price. You may guess Mr. Tyrrell's. Every woman has hers. Celia's price is—her father: I have bought her at that price, which I was fortunately able to command."

"You do not know yet."

"Yes, I do know. All in good time. I can wait. Now, Ladislas Pulaski, I will be frank with you. I intended this *coup* all along, and have prepared the way for it. I admire the young lady extremely. Let me, even, say that I love her. She is I am sure, as good and virtuous as she is pretty. Of all girls I have ever seen, I think Celia Tyrrell is the best. It is, I know, partly due to your training. She is the pearl of your pupils. Her manner is perfect: her face is perfect; her conversation is admirable; her general cultivation is good."

"She is all that you say," I replied.

"You love her, I believe, like a brother. At least, Celia says so. When I was your age, if I did not love a young lady like a brother I made it a rule always to tell her so at the earliest opportunity. That inability to love a girl after the brotherly fashion has more than once endangered my life. Like a brother, is it not?"

"Like a brother," I murmured, passing over the covert sneer.

"Very well, then. It is a weakness on my part, but I am willing to make sacrifices for this girl. I will study her wishes. She shall be treated with the greatest forbearance and patience. I do not expect that she will love me as I love her. That would be absurd. But I hope that, in a little while, a month or two,"—I breathed freely, because I feared he was going to say a day or two,—"she will receive my attention with pleasure, and learn to give me the esteem which young wives may feel for elderly husbands. I am not going to be ridiculous; I am not a Blue Beard; I know that women can be coaxed when they cannot be forced *J'ai conté fleurettes*—it is not for the first time in life that one makes love at sixty.

"After all," he went on, cheerfully, "Celia ought to be a happy girl. I shall die in ten years, I suppose. She will be a widow at eight-and-twenty. Just the age to enjoy life. Just the time when a woman wants her full liberty. What a thing—to be eight-and-twenty, to bury an old husband, and to have his money!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PONTIFEX COLLECTION.

In the days that followed things went on externally as if nothing had happened. Celia's suitor walked with her in the town, was seen with her in public places, appeared in church morning and evening—the second function must have exercised his soul heavily—and said no word. Mr. Tyrrell, deceived by this appearance of peace, resumed his wonted aspect, and was self-reliant, and sometimes as blusterous as ever. Celia alone seemed to remember the subject. For some days she tried to read and talk as usual, but her cheek was paler, and her manner *distraite.* Yet I could say nothing. The wound was too fresh, the anxiety was still there, it was one of those blows which, though their worst effects may be averted, leave scars behind which cannot be eradicated. The scar in Celia's

soul was that for the first time in her life a suspicion had been forced upon her that her father was not —had not been—— Let us not put it into words.

To speak of such a suspicion would have been an agony too bitter for her, and even too bitter for me. Yet I knew, by the manner of the man, by the words of the German, that he was, in some way, for some conduct unknown, of which he was now ashamed, under this man's power. I could not tell Celia what I knew. How was she to tell me the dreadful suspicion that rose like a spectre in the night unbidden, awful? We were only more silent, we sat together without speaking; sometimes I caught her eye resting for a moment on her father with a pained wonder, sometimes she would break off the music, and say with a sigh that she could play no more.

One afternoon, three or four days after the first opening of the business, I found her in the library, a small room on the first floor dignified by that title, where Mr. Tyrrell kept the few books of general literature he owned, and Celia kept all hers. She had gathered on the table all the books which we were so fond of reading together—chiefly the poets—and was taking them up one after the other, turning over their pages with loving regretful looks.

She greeted me with her sweet smile.

"I am thinking, Laddy, what to do with these

books if—if—I have to say what papa wants me to say."

"Do with them, Cis ?"

"Yes," she replied, "it would be foolish to keep things which are not very ornamental and would no longer be useful."

"Our poor poets are a good deal knocked about," I said, taking up the volumes in hope of diverting her thoughts ; "I always told you that Keats wasn't made for laying in the grass," and indeed that poor bard showed signs of many dews upon his scarlet cloth bound back.

"He is best for reading on the grass, Laddy. Think of the many hours of joy we have had with Hyperion under the elms. And now, I suppose, we shall never have any more. Life is very short, for some of us."

"But—Cis—why no more hours of pleasure and poetry !"

"I do not know when that man may desire an answer. And I know that if he claims it at once —to-morrow—next day—what answer I am to give. I watch my father, Laddy, and I read the answer in his face. Whatever happens, I must do what is best for him."

"Put off the answer, Cis, till Leonard comes home."

"If we can," she sighed—"if we can. Promise

me one thing, Laddy—promise me faithfully. If I have—if I must consent—never let Leonard know the reason: never let any one know; let all the world think that I have accepted—him—because I loved him. As if any woman could ever love him!"

Then he had not deceived her with his smooth and plausible manner.

"I promise you so much at least," I said. "No one shall know, poor Cis, the reason. It shall be a secret between us. But you have not said 'Yes' to him yet."

"I may very soon have to say it, Laddy. I shall give you all this poetry. We have read it together so much that I should always think of you if I ever try and read it alone. And it would make me too wretched. I shall have nothing more to do with the noble thoughts and divine longings of these great men: they will all be dead in my bosom; I shall try to forget that they ever existed. Herr Räumer—my husband," she shuddered—"would not understand them. I shall learn to disbelieve everything: I shall find a base motive in every action. I shall cease to hope: I shall lose my faith and my charity."

"Celia—my poor Celia—do not talk like that."

"Here is Keats." She opened him at random, turned over the leaves, and read aloud:

"'Ah! would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passèd joy?'

"Passèd joy! We shall not be able to go out together, you and I, Laddy, any more, nor to read under the elms, nor to look out over the ramparts up the Harbour at high tide, and you will leave off giving me music lessons—and when Leonard comes home he will not be my Leonard any more. Only let him never know, dear Laddy."

"He shall never know, Cis. But the word is not spoken yet, and I think it never will be."

She shook her head.

"There is our Wordsworth. Of course he must be given up too. When the whole life is of the earth, earthy, what room could there be there for Wordsworth! Why," she looked among the sonnets, "this must have been written especially for me. Listen:

"'O Friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest
To think that now our life is only dressed
For show . . . .

. . . .

The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone: our peace, our fearful innocence
And pure religion breathing household laws.'

"Fancy the household laws of Herr Räumer," she added, bitterly.

She was in sad and despairing mood that morning.

I took the book from her hand—what great things there are in Wordsworth, and what rubbish! —and found another passage.

> "Those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which be they what they may
> Are yet the fountain light ot all our days
> Are yet a masterlight of all our seeing,
> Uphold us—cherish—and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence : truths that wake
> To perish never :
> Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour,
> Nor man nor boy,
> Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
> Can utterly abolish or destroy."

"Do you think, you silly Celia, if things came to the very worst—if you were—let me say it out for once—if you were tied for life to this man, with whom you have no sympathy, that you would forget the beautiful things which you have read and dreamed? They can never be forgotten. Why, they lie all about your heart, the great thoughts of God and heaven, what this beautiful earth might be and what you yourself would wish to be; they are your guardian angels, who stand like Ithuriel

to ward off evil dreams and basenesses. They cannot be driven away because you have placed them there, sentinels of your life. If—if he—were ten times as cold, ten times as unworthy of you as he seems, he could but touch your inner life. He could only make your outer life unhappy. And then, Celia, I think—I think—I think that Leonard would kill him."

"If Leonard will care any more about me," she murmured through her tears. "But he will not. I shall be degraded in his eyes. He will come home with happier recollections of brighter scenes and women far better and more beautiful than I can be, even in his memory."

"Celia," I cried hotly, "that is unkind of you. You cannot mean it. Leonard can never forget you. There will be no scenes so happy in his recollection as the scenes of the boyhood; no one whom he will more long to see than little Celia—little no longer now, and—oh! Cis—Cis, how beautiful you are!"

"Laddy, you are the best brother in all the world. But do not flatter me. You know I like to think myself pretty. I am so vain."

"I am not flattering you, my dear. Of course, I think you are the most beautiful girl in all the world. Ah! if I could only draw you and put all your soul into your eyes as a great painter would.

If I were Raphael I would make you St. Catharine —no, St. Cecilia—sitting at the organ, looking up as you do sometimes when we read together, as when I play Beethoven, and your soul opens like a flower."

"Laddy—Laddy."

"I would make your lips trembling, and your head a little bent back, so as to show the sweet outlines, and make all the world fall in love with you. . . . Don't cry, my own dear sister. See, Leonard will be home again soon triumphant, bringing joy to all of us. Our brave Leonard—and all will be well. I know all will go well. And this monstrous thing shall not be done."

She put her arms round my neck, and laid her cheek against mine. "Thank God," she said simply, "for my brother."

By this time I had mastered my vain and selfish passion. Celia was my sister, and could never be anything else. As if in the time when companionship is as necessary as light and air, it was not a great thing to have such a companion as Celia! In youth we cling to one another, and find encouragement in confession and confidence. David was young when he loved Jonathan. It is when we grow older that we shrink into ourselves and forget the sweet old friendships.

This little talk finished, Celia became more

cheerful, and we presently stole out at the garden gate for fear of being intercepted by the suitor, who was as ubiquitous as a Prussian Uhlan, and went for a ramble along the beach, where a light breeze was crisping the water into tiny ruffles of wavelets, and driving about the white-sailed yachts like butterflies. The fresh sea air brightened her cheek, and gave elasticity to her limbs. She forgot her anxieties, laughed, sang little snatches, and was as merry as a child again.

"Let us go and call at Aunt Jane's," she cried, when we left the beach, and were striking across the furze-covered common.

To call upon Mrs. Pontifex was never an inspiriting thing to do. She had a way of picking out texts to suit your case and hurling them at your head, which sent you away far more despondent about the future than her husband's sermons. There is always this difference between a woman of Aunt Jane's persuasion and a man of the same school; that the woman really believes it all, and the man has by birth, by accident, by mental twist, for reasons of self-interest, talked himself into a creed which he does not hold at heart, so far as he has power of self-examination. Mr. Pontifex had lost that power, I believe.

They lived in a villa over-looking the common. Mrs. Pontifex liked the situation principally because

it enabled her to watch the "Sabbath-breakers," viz., the people who walked on Sunday afternoon, and the unthinking sinner, who strolled arm in arm upon the breezy common on summer evenings. The villa had formerly possessed a certain beauty of its own, being covered over with creepers, but Mrs. Pontifex removed them all, and it now stood in naked ugliness, square and flat-roofed. There was a garden in front, of rigid and austere appearance, planted with the less showy shrubs, and never allowed to put on the holiday garb of summer flowers. Within, the house was like a place of tombs, so cold, so full of monumental mahogany, so bristling with chairs of little ease.

To our great joy, Mrs. Pontifex was out. Her husband, the servant said, with a little hesitation, was at home.

"Then we will go in," said Celia. "Where is he, Ann?"

"Well, Miss," she said, in apology, "at present master's in the front kitchen."

In fact, there we found the unhappy Mr. Pontifex. He was standing at the table, with a most gloomy expression on his severe features. Before him stood a half-cut, cold boiled leg of mutton. He had a knife in one hand and a piece of bread in another.

"This is all," he said sorrowfully, "that I shall get to-day. Mrs. Pontifex said that there was to

be no dinner. She has gone to a Dorcas meeting ——No, thank you, Anne, I cannot eat any more—ahem—any more boiled mutton. The human palate —alas! that we poor mortals should think of such things—does not accept boiled mutton with pleasure. But what is man that he should turn away from his food? A single glass of beer, if you please, Anne."

"Do have another slice of mutton, sir," said the servant, in sympathising tones.

"No, Anne,"—there was an infinite sadness in his voice. "No, I thank you."

"There's some cold roly-poly in the cupboard, sir. Try a bit of that."

She brought it out. It was a piece of the inner portion, that part which contains most jam.

Mr. Pontifex shook his head in deep despondency.

"That is not for ME, Anne," he said; "I always have to eat the ends."

"Then why do you stand it?" I said. "You are a man, and ought to be master in your own house."

"You think so, Johnny?" he replied. "You are young. You are not again, like St. Peter—ahem—a married man. Let us go upstairs."

He led us into his study, which was a large room, decorated with an immense quantity of pictures. The house, indeed, was full of pictures, newly arrived, the collection of a brother, lately deceased,

of the Rev. John Pontifex. I am not learned in paintings, but I am pretty sure that the collection on the walls were copies as flagrant as anything ever put up at Christy's. But Mr. Pontifex thought differently.

"You have not yet seen my picture gallery, Johnny," he said. "The collection was once the property of my brother, the Rev. Joseph Pontifex, now, alas!—in the bosom of Abraham. He was formerly my coadjutor when I was in sole charge at Dillmington. It was commonly said by the Puseyites, at the time, that there was a Thief in the Pulpit and a Liar in the Reading-Desk. So great —ahem!—was our pulpit power that it drew forth these Fearful denunciations. I rejoice to say that I was the—ahem!—the—Liar."

It was hard to see where the rejoicing ought properly to come in. But no doubt he knew.

"They are beautiful pictures, some of them," said Celia kindly.

Mr. Pontifex took a walking-stick, and began to go round like a long-necked, very solemn showman at a circus.

"These are 'Nymphs about—ahem—to Bathe.' A masterpiece by Caracci. The laughter of those young persons has probably long since been turned into mourning.

"'The death of St. Chrysostom," supposed to

be by Leonardo da Vinci. The Puseyites go to Chrysostom as to a father. Well ; they may go to the muddy streams if they please. I go to the pure —the pure fountain, Johnny.

"'Pope Leo the Tenth,' by one Dosso Dossi, of whom, I confess, I had never heard. I suppose that there are more Popes than any other class of persons now in misery."

He shook his head, as he said this, with a smile of peculiar satisfaction, and went on to the next picture.

"A soldier, by Wouvermans, on a white horse. Probably the original of this portrait was in his day an extremely profligate person. But he has long since gone to his long—no doubt his very long —account.

"That is 'The Daughter of Herodias Dancing.' I have always considered dancing a most immoral pastime, and in the days of my youth found it so, I regret to say.

"'The Mission of Xavier.' He was, alas! a Papist, and is now, I believe, what they are pleased to call a saint. In other respects he was, perhaps, a good man, as goodness shows to the world. That is, a poor gilded exterior, hiding corruption. How different from our good Bishop Heber, the author of that sweet miss—i—o—na—ry poem which we all know by heart, and can never forget.

"'From Greenland's icy mountains—
From Greenland's icy mountains—
From Greenland's—ahem !—icy—'

—but my memory fails me. That is, perhaps, the result of an imperfect meal."

"Sit down, my dear uncle," said Celia. "You must be fatigued. What was Aunt Jane thinking of to have no dinner?"

"Your great-aunt, Celia," said Mr. Pontifex, with a very long sigh, "is a woman of very remarkable Christian graces and virtues. She excels in what I may call the—the—ahem—the very rare art of compelling others to go along with her. To-day we fast, and to-morrow we may be called upon to subdue the natural man in some other, perhaps—at least I hope—in a less trying method."

We both laughed, but Mr. Pontifex shook his head.

"Let me point out one or two more pictures of my collection," he said. "There are nearly one thousand altogether, collected by my brother Joseph, who resided in Rome, the very heart of the Papacy—you never knew Joseph, Celia—during the last ten years of his life. That landscape, the trees of which, I confess, appear to me unlike any trees with which I am personally acquainted—is by Salvator Rosa; that Madonna and Child—whom the Papists ignorantly worship—is by Sasso Ferrato;

that group" (it was a sprawling mass of intertwisted limbs) "is by Michael Angelo, the celebrated master; the waterfall which you are admiring, Celia, is a Ruysdael, and supposed to be priceless; the pig—alas! that men should waste their talents in delineating such animals—is by Teniers; the cow by Berghem; that—ahem—that infamous female" (it was a wood nymph, and a bad copy) "is a Rubens. The Latin *rubeo* or *rubesco* is—unless my memory again fails me—to blush. Rightly is that painter so named. No doubt he has long since—but I refrain."

"Do you think, Celia," I asked on the way home, "that Mr. Pontifex dwells with pleasure in the imagination of the things which are always on his lips?"

END OF VOL. I.

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