

THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE.

BY JULIANA HORATIO EWING.

CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

The child was naturally brave; but the elements of excitement and uncertainty in his up-bringing were producing their natural results in a nervous and unequable temperament. It is not the least serious of the evils of being "spoilt," though, perhaps, the most seldom recognized. Many a fond parent justly fears to overdo "lessons" who is surprisingly blind to the brain-fag that comes from the strain to live at grown-up people's level; and to the nervous exhaustion produced in children, no less than in their elders, by indulged restlessness, discontent, and craving for fresh excitement, and for want of that sense of power and repose which comes with habitual obedience to righteous rules and regulations. Laws that can be set at naught are among the most demoralizing of influences which can curse a nation; and their effects are hardly less disastrous in the nursery. Moreover, an uncertain discipline is apt to take even the spoilt by surprise; and, as Leonard seldom fully understood the checks he did receive, they unnerved him. He was unnerved now; and even with his hand in that of his mother, he stammered over his story with ill-repressed sobs and much mental confusion.

"W—we met him out walking. I mean we were out walking. He was out riding. He looked like a picture in my tales from Froissart. He had a very curious kind of a helmet—not quite a helmet, and a beautiful green feather—at least, not exactly a feather, and a beautiful red waistcoat, only not a real waistcoat, but—"

"Send him to bed!" roared the master of the house. "Don't let him prevaricate any more!"

"No, Rupert, please! I wish him to try and give a straight account. Now, Leonard, don't be a baby; but go on and tell the truth, like a brave boy."

Leonard desperately proceeded, sniffing as he did so.

"He carries a spear, like an old warrior. He truthfully did. On my honor! One end was on the tip of his foot, and there was a flag at the other end—a real, fluttering pennon—there truthfully was! He does poke with his spear in battle, I do believe; but he didn't poke us. He was beautiful to hold! I asked Jemima, 'Is he another brother, for you do have such very nice brothers?' and she said, 'No, he's—'"

"Hang Jemima!" said the master of the house. "Now listen to me. You said your mother told you. What did she tell you?"

"Je—Je—Jemima said, 'No, he's a orderly'; and asked the way—I quite forget where to—I truthfully do. And next morning I asked mother what does orderly mean? And she said tidy. So I call him the tidy one. Dear mother, you truthfully did—at least," added Leonard, chivalrously, as Lady Jane's face gave no response, "at least, if you've forgotten, never mind; it's my fault."

But Lady Jane's face was blank because she was trying not to laugh. The master of the house did not try long. He bit his lip, and then burst into a peal.

"Better say no more to him," murmured Lady Jane. "I'll see Jemima now, if he may stay with you."

He nodded, and throwing himself back on the couch, held out his arms to the child.

"Well, that'll do. Put these men out of your head, and let me see your drawing."

Leonard stretched his faculties, and perceived that the storm was overpast. He clambered on to his father's knee, and their heads were soon bent lovingly together over the much-smudged sheet of paper, on which the motto from the chimney-piece was irregularly traced.

"You should have copied it from Uncle Rupert's picture. It is in plain letters there."

Leonard made no reply. His head now lay back on his father's shoulder, and his eyes were fixed on the ceiling, which was of Elizabethan date, with fantastic flowers in raised plaster-work. But Leonard did not see them at that moment. His vision was really turned inwards. Presently he said, "I am trying to think. Don't interrupt me, father, if you please."

The master of the house smiled, and gazed complacently at the face beside him. No painting, no china in his possession, was more beautiful. Suddenly the boy jumped down and stood alone, with his hands behind his back, and his eyes tightly shut.

"I am thinking very hard, father. Please tell me again what our motto means."

"*Lætus sorte mea*.—Happy in my lot.' What are you puzzling your little brains about?"

"Because I know something so like it, and I can't think what! Yes—no! Wait a minute! I've just got it! Yes, I remember now; it was my Wednesday text!"

He opened wide shining eyes, and clapped his hands, and his clear voice rang with the added note of triumph, as he cried, "The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground. Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

The master of the house held out his arms without speaking; but when Leonard had climbed back into them, he stroked

two were happy, Lady Jane was in no haste to go back to the library; but, when she did return, Leonard greeted her warmly.

He was pumping at the bellows handle of the chamber organ, before which sat the master of the house, not a ruffle on his brow, playing with "all fours," and singing as he played.

Leonard's cheeks were flushed, and he cried impatiently,—

"Mother! mother dear! I've been wanting you ever so long! Father has set my text to music, and I want you to hear it; but I want to sit by him and sing too. So you must come and blow."

"Nonsense, Leonard! Your mother must do nothing of the sort. Jane, listen to this!—In a fair ground. Bit of pure melody, that, eh? The land flowing with milk and honey seems to stretch before one's eyes—"

"No! father that is unfair. You are not to tell her bits in the middle. Begin at the beginning, and—mother dear, will you blow, and let me sing?"



"He does poke with his spear in battle, I do believe; but he didn't poke us."

the child's hair slowly and said, "Is that your Wednesday text?"

"Last Wednesday's. I learn a text every day. Jemima sets them. She says her grandmother made her learn texts when she was a little girl. Now, father dear, I'll tell you what I wish you would do; and do it at once—this very minute."

"That is generally the date of your desires. What is it?"

"I don't know what you are talking about, but I know what I want. Now you and I are all alone to our very selves, I want you to come to the organ, and put that text to music like the anthem you made out of those texts mother chose for you for the harvest festival. I'll tell you the words for fear you don't quite remember them, and I'll blow the bellows. You may play on all-fours with both your feet and hands; you may pull out trumpet handle; you may make as much noise as ever you like—you'll see how I'll blow!"

Satisfied by the sounds of music that the

"Certainly. Yes, Rupert, please. I've done it before; and my back isn't aching to-day. Do let me?"

"Yes, do let her," said Leonard, conclusively; and he swung himself up into the seat beside his father without more ado.

"Now, father, begin! Mother, listen! And when it comes to 'Yea,' and I pull trumpet handle out, blow as hard as ever you can. This first bit—when he plays, is very gentle, and quite easy to blow."

Deep breathing of the organ filled a brief silence, then a prelude stole about the room. Leonard's eyes devoured his father's face, and the master of the house looking down on him, with the double complacency of father and composer, began to sing:

"The lot—the lot is fallen un-to me;" and, his mouth wide-parted with smiles, Leonard sang also: "The lot—the lot is fallen—fallen un-to me."

"In a fair ground."

"Yea!" (Now, mother dear, blow! and fancy you hear trumpets.)

"Yea! YEA! I have a good-ly heritage!"

And after Lady Jane had ceased to blow, and the musician to make music, Leonard still danced and sang wildly about the room.

"Isn't it splendid, mother? Father and I made it together out of my Wednesday text. Uncle Rupert, can you hear it? I don't think you can. I believe you are dead and deaf, though you seem to see."

And standing face to face with the young cavalier, Leonard sang his Wednesday text all through.

"The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground: yea, I have a goodly heritage."

But Uncle Rupert spoke no word to his young kinsman, though he still "seemed to see" through eyes drowned in tears.

(To be Continued.)

A BOY'S COVENANT.

Do you know what a covenant means? It is an agreement between two persons. Now the agreement we are going to speak about was made by a little boy named Zinzendorf, who was born nearly two hundred years ago.

Zinzendorf was the son of rich and noble parents, who would have had many temptations, but when he was only four or five years old he began to love to talk with God.

He was only a little fellow when he made this covenant with Jesus: "Be Thou mine, dear Saviour, and I will be Thine."

What a sweet agreement that is, children! Will you not make such a one with Jesus now?

But Zinzendorf was not content to make the agreement only; he lived daily as a child of God should live, thinking much of his Heavenly Father, and spending time in prayer.

The window is still shown in an old castle where little Zinzendorf dropped out letters, addressed to the Lord Jesus; in those little notes he told his Saviour how much he loved Him, and he never doubted that Jesus saw them.

One day, when he was only six years old, he was praying aloud in his room. A party of soldiers, belonging to an invading army, forced their way into the castle, and entered the little count's room. When they saw how earnestly he was praying, they stood quietly aside, and watched him, and then went away without touching him. Does not this remind you of the text, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways?"

As Zinzendorf grew older, he worked more for God, and was noted at school for his earnest piety. He was not content to know that his own soul was saved, but he worked hard amongst his school-fellows to make them too feel their need of a Saviour.

You must not imagine that because Zinzendorf loved God he was backward in his lessons. He was a hard-working boy; at sixteen was far ahead of those of his own age in Latin and Greek. When he became a man he was a poet, preacher, and missionary.

We cannot all be Zinzendorfs, but we can all make a covenant with Jesus. He begs you all earnestly, "My son, give me thine heart." Do not turn a deaf ear to him, but answer quickly, "I am thine; oh, save me!"—Christian.

BAND OF MERCY BOYS.

A short time ago, as I was crossing Market street, near Twenty-second street, a boy not over ten years old, who had been walking just before me, ran into the street and picked up a broken glass pitcher. I supposed he intended the pieces as missiles, since the desire to throw something seems instinct in every boy. Consequently I was much surprised when he tossed the pieces into a vacant lot on the corner and walked quietly on. As he passed me whistling, I said:

"Why did you pick up that pitcher?"

"I was afraid it might cut some horse's foot," he replied.

My next question was a natural one:

"Are you a Band of Mercy boy?"

He smiled as he said:

"Oh, yes; that's why I did it."

The bands of mercy were drawn very closely around the dear little fellow's heart, I assure you.—School and Home.