

THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS.

"Some Sikhs, and a private of the Buffs, having remained behind with the grog-carts, fell into the hands of the Chinese. On the next day they were brought before the authorities and ordered to perform kotou. The Sikhs obeyed, but Moyle, the English soldier, declared he would not prostrate himself before any Chinese man alive, and was immediately knocked upon the head, and his body thrown upon a dunghill. China correspondent of London Times.

Last night, among his fellow roughs, He jested, quaffed, and swore; A drunken private of the Buffs. Who never looked before. To-day, beneath the foeman's frown, He stands in Elgin's place, Ambassador from Britain's crown, And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught, Bewildered, and alone; A heart, with English instinct fraught, He yet can tell his own. Ay, tear his body limb from limb; Bring cord or axe, or flame; He only knows that not through him Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed, Like dreams, to come and go Bright leagues, of cherry-blossom gleamed, One sheet of living snow; The smoke above his father's door In gray soft edgings hung; Must he then watch it rise no more, Doomed by himself so young!

Yes, honor calls!—with strength like steel He put the vision by; Let dusky Indians whine and kneel, An English lad must die. And thus, with eyes that would not shrink, With knee to man unbent, Unflinching on its dreadful brink, To his red grave he went.

Vain mightiest fleets of iron framed, Vain those all-shattering guns, Unless proud England keep untamed The strong heart of her sons, So let his name through Europe ring— A man of firm as Sparta's king. Who dies, as firm as Sparta's king. Because his soul was great.

—SIR FRANCIS H. DOYLE. "The Buffs," are the East Kent regiment, formerly the 3rd foot. A corps making high in the honour list of the British army. The incident on which the above lines were written occurred during the last war between China and England, the reference to Lord Elgin being in consequence of that nobleman negotiating the treaty of peace.

MY CHUM'S STORY.

It was just when I was leaving the Australian gold-diggings to visit Old England, on a well-earned holiday, that my chum, Fitzgerald, began, all of a sudden, to grow moody. Usually he was the most light-hearted of fellows, and I could easily see that something lay heavy on his heart. Round the fire, that evening before I set out for home, he related to me the following strange story.

Five years ago, said he, I was junior partner in the London shipping firm of Sandford & Co. As you will understand, the nature of our business necessitated the employment of an accomplished linguist as foreign correspondent.

One day this gentleman, Hawksby by name, fell suddenly ill, and we were compelled to advertise for a temporary substitute.

Among the numerous applicants for the post was a slender fair haired little woman in deep mourning. I wasn't an advocate of women's right to do men's labour, but she was so pretty and modest that she aroused my interest, and, instead of the polite dismissal she seemed almost to expect, I resolved to give her a hearing.

She was a widow, she said, her husband, Captain May, having been drowned at sea, leaving her, almost penniless, to fight the battle of life alone.

She had a sweet, sad face. I learnt afterwards that her married life had been a short and unhappy one. Her husband was addicted to drink, and at times would cruelly abuse his poor young wife. She had been well educated, and I soon discovered had a remarkable knowledge of languages, which was the chief qualification we required. In fact, she appeared fully capable of taking Hawksby's place, and I could see that she was very anxious to obtain the employment, so I used my influence with Mr. Sandford, the senior partner, who did not at first approve of the innovation, and she was engaged at about one-fourth of the salary paid to Hawksby. Her quiet, methodical ways, her punctuality and cleverness, soon won old Sandford's favor; and when the time came for Hawksby to be able to resume his duties, the kind old gentleman proposed to Mrs. May that she should take up her position in his household as governess to his motherless daughters.

The offer was thankfully accepted; and from that time my visits to my partner's house became much more frequent. I was a quiet fellow; I had no relatives and was looked upon as a confirmed bachelor; but I found that Edith May had become the dearest thing in the world to me, and I longed

to ask her to be my wife. Her last venture had been so unfortunate that I was afraid she would not care to risk another, so I hesitated, until accident made me suspect that she returned my love. Then I put the question to her, and she laid her little hand in mine with a sweet, trusting look that set all my doubts at rest.

We were married soon afterwards and old Sandford gave away the bride, for, like myself she was alone in the world, and I believe we were the two happiest people in London. She always the same, as gentle and sweet as on our wedding day, and quiet and stupid though I was, I know that I possessed her heart's best love.

A year passed away; then our little one came, and filled the whole house with life. His mother was devoted to him; she could not leave him for a moment; it was the prettiest sight in the world to see them together, while it would be her delight to examine his features one by one, and pronounce them just like mine. But something went wrong with our boy; he fell ill, and medical skill appeared to be of no avail.

He had been lying in my arms one day—he seemed to like me to hold him—and I was wild with grief as I watched the little face grow paler and more wan, when, just at sunset, as the last dying glow fell upon him and lit up his golden hair, he suddenly opened his eyes and gave me a long and farewell look, then with a little smile he closed his eyes for ever.

I had grown so fond of the little chap that I would have given in completely if it had not been for my dear girl. She put her own trouble away when she saw mine, and would say so bravely though her eyes would fill with tears, "Love, we do wrong to grieve, for God has taken him away from all pain and trouble!"

But we little thought we should ever have cause to be glad he was gone!

A few weeks had passed when a foreign letter arrived for my wife. It was covered with strange postmarks, and had been more than once re-directed.

The moment Edith beheld the handwriting she turned deathly pale, and fell into a chair.

She could not speak, so I picked up the letter and read it through. Can you imagine the tidings it contained? Her former husband, Captain May, was alive! When his ship went down he alone was rescued, and carried to an island in the Pacific, where he had been living amongst natives ever since. It appeared that they had invited him to choose a wife and remain with them, but, said the writer, on the whole he preferred a white wife to a "darkey," and had decided to return home to his "old women," and he bade her prepare to receive him with a loving welcome.

I could judge the man's character by his letter which was both coarse and brutal. It seemed as if he had some premonition of the change that had taken place, for it was written in a half threatening tone; and I stamped it under my feet as I turned to my poor girl, who was trembling like a leaf. "Let him come," I said, fiercely "and, if he attempts to claim you, I'll shoot him dead before he shall touch a hair of your head!"

I suppose their was murder in my face, for the poor thing fell on her knees with clasped hands, and her pale lips tried to utter a prayer for Heaven to pity and pardon us.

It makes me feel desperate when I think of it and the scene which followed; but there's no use of going over it again. I pleaded with her to let me take her to some distant country, where she would be out of reach of the villain who had already done the utmost to spoil her life; but no! "it would not be right," she moaned; she was no longer my wife we must part," and though I knew it was breaking her heart I could not persuade her to do otherwise. She only wept, and implored me on her knees to say goodbye to her and go away before the man who called himself her husband made his appearance. Mr. Sandford added his entreaties to hers for they were both afraid that murder would be done if we met. So after I had placed my poor Edith under the care of the kind old man, who welcomed her as another daughter, I bade farewell to England, to all I loved and came out to Australia.

I cherished a hope that God would in some way restore us to happiness; but the good news I longed for never came; neither word nor message had reached me so I now know that she is dead; and I am left with nothing to or live for.

His voice faltered, and he covered his face again. I could not speak, to offer my comfort, for I felt that he had good grounds for his belief. His wife was surely dead; else why this long

silence? But I mentally resolved that my first business on reaching England should be to look up Mr. Sandford and ask him to throw some light on the mystery.

I was astir next morning as the first roseate hues of dawn were tinting the sky. I looked at my chum rather curiously, for his face appeared brighter and more cheerful than I had seen him for sometime. "I'm going back with you, old boy," he said, with a new ring in his voice. I had a dream last night—or a vision—I don't know which, that called me home, and I must return with you."

I stared a moment in surprise, then, catching his hand, I ejaculated fervently, "God grant they may be happiness in store for you yet, my friend!" I quickly decided that my own affairs should wait; that I would stick to Fitzgerald until we knew what tidings awaited him, whether of weal or woe.

On our arrival in London, we lost no time in repairing to Mr. Sandford's house, an old-fashioned comfortable-looking building, situated in one of the quietest and most respectable of London streets.

As we rattled up to the house, I noticed that my companion was as pale as death and trembling like a leaf. I whispered a word of cheer, but he only pressed my hand without speaking. A neatly dressed maid-servant appeared at the door, and in answer to my inquiry for Mr. Sandford, demurely ushered us into a cosy sitting-room near the entrance, and departed, taking my card with her. A few minutes passed in silence.

There was no light in the room except the cheerful glow of the bright coal fire; but Fitzgerald had with drawn himself still further into the shadow, and I could only distinguish his tall form, which looked unusually big and broad in his long fur-trimmed overcoat. Then the door opened slowly, and a slender, graceful, figure appeared, the wearing sweetest, saddest face I had ever seen.

"Mr. Sandford is not—," she began; then her eyes travelled past me to the dark figure behind. There was a startled pause; then, with a low, glad cry, she dropped the card she was holding and sprang forward. I had just time to see her disappear in the embrace of the big fur coat before I stepped outside the room. As I did so a stout benevolent-looking old gentleman, whom I knew by instinct to be Mr. Sandford, entered the hall.

I introduced myself, and explained the situation as well as I could. He seized my hand and warmly bade me welcome, while his fine old face positively beamed at my intelligence.

"But—bless me?" he exclaimed, where has the boy been all the time? We have written—cabled—advertised for him in all the Australian Newspapers, without receiving any reply. What could we think? I had given him up for dead, but the poor little woman in there would not hear of it; she declared he would come back."

"It is just possible that the letters may be lying at some up-country post-office," I remarked, thoughtfully. As for newspapers we haven't seen many of them during the last two years we've been roughing it."

"Then—he doesn't know yet!" gasped the old gentleman.

"He knows nothing, sir," I answered quickly; "is it good news or bad?" "Why, that villain never turned up, after all," said Mr Sandford. "He got as far as Plymouth, and there he was killed accidentally in a drunken brawl, and my first feeling on hearing of it, was not sorrow I can assure you; and the old gentleman used his handkerchief vigorously. I looked as I felt delighted at Fitzgerald's good fortune; and we sat for an hour or so while Mr. Sandford related some of the incidents in my chum's love-story, which was so nearly ending in a tragedy.

I scarcely recognized Fitzgerald when at last the long-divided pair appeared—he with his handsome face all lighted up with love and gladness, she with her blue eyes shining through a mist of happy tears.

I only waited to offer my sincere congratulations, and then with a fervent wish that Heaven would grant them a future full of peace and happiness, I went forth, my heart beating high with joy and hope, and was soon speeding on my way towards the bright eyes that I knew were eagerly watching for my return.

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A WORD TO THE BOYS.

If you have anything to do, do it at once. Don't sit down in the rocking chair and lose three-quarters of an hour in dreading the job. Be sure that it will seem ten times harder than it did at first. Keep this motto: Be on time, in small things as well as great. Habit is everything. The boy who is behind time at breakfast and school will be sure to get 'left' in the important things of life. If you have a chronic habit of dreading and putting off things, make a great effort to cure yourself. Brace up! Make up your mind that you will have some backbone. Don't be a limp, jelly-fish kind of person. Depend upon it, that life is very much as you make it. The first thing to decide is what are you going to make it. The next thing is to take off your coat and go to work. Make yourself necessary somewhere. There are thousands of boys and young men in the world who would not be missed if they were to drop out of it to-morrow. Don't be one of this sort. Be a power in your own little world, and depend upon it, then the big world will hear from you some day.

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