

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 would 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 whitened sepulchral 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 top-sided 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 militia man, but the drunker he got the stiffer he grew, so that when he was quite helpless he felt like a lamp-post, with uncomproising legs. And we, who knew by experience how a soldier should feel, remarked with sorrow rather than anger that the militiaman fell in a heap like a plough-boy, and so betrayed his customary pursuits.

CHAPTER XII.

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 return 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 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 employees. 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, beside Herr Rämmer, 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; 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 the notes with certain descriptions of events which regularly appeared in the local *Mercure*. 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 benignant Sol;" a crowded gathering gave an opportunity for the admirer of beauty to congratulate his fellow-townsmen on the beauty 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 groined 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 of hearts.

Ferdinand did not report a 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 Vosty twaddle." He lived on his *manuscriptes*, 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 common-place. 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 encyclopedic Ferdinand; and whatever he treated, it must be owned, was treated with the same hackneyed similes, the same well-worn metaphors, and the same pleasantness: for, while Augustus looked on life through the rose 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 outside, 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 is 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 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, being 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, Inkerman, and Balaklava, were carried out again to get the names of Lucknow and Delhi; but the men who marched out in '54 with the starchy 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 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 preparation 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 the 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 who 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 woman 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 foolish 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—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 is 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 not 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 Rämmer 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 sometime 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, that 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 further 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 *gracious* 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."

(To be continued.)

AS OTHERS SEE US.—Dr. Lyman Abbott of the N. Y. *Christian Union* writes: "I think Montreal is the handsomest city on the continent. There are individual finer buildings in Boston, New York and Chicago, perhaps in other cities; but I know of no city which is so uniformly fine. The great stone wharves, how ugly our rotting wooden piers seem in comparison; the substantial mercantile structures, less ornate but more enduring than those of our own Broadway; the trim lawns and great shade trees, which make Sherbrooke street more than the peer of Fifth Avenue; the magnificent churches both Roman Catholic and Protestant looking as though they were built to last till the day of judgment; the numberless public buildings, increased by Roman Catholic institutions—monasteries, nunneries, hospitals, asylums; the cleanliness of even the poorer quarters of the city; the seemingly entire absence of a Fourth Ward or a Baxter street; and last, but not least, the incomparable view from Mount Royal—the city at your feet, the St. Lawrence in the background, and the steamer in the distance making that plunge down the rapids that you took a day or two ago—this is the glimpse I got of Montreal, and it is only glimpses I tried to get."

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