

BOYS AND GIRLS

Rasmus, or the Making of a Man.

(By Julia McNair Wright.)

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CHAPTER X.—Continued.

But the soul of the lately communistic Rasmus was drawn to this defiant master who failed to be heard. A new man rose within him, first from the simple consciousness that he could be heard if he chose. Close to the office were two buildings, between which, at the second story, was a heavy beam. To reach this beam from the outside was a thing which no one ever thought of attempting; it was to go up the face of the wall and around a jut by the insufficient aid afforded by ends of beams and portions of iron stanchions and rods where a building had been taken down from between the two left standing. Rasmus addressed himself to this task, and the mob soon saw an athletic stranger going up these perilous ways that seemed only fit for a fly to travel. The strength and address displayed at every motion held them breathless, and when finally he had reached the beam, and stood erect and triumphant, far overhead, the crowd sent up a hearty shout. But if the muscular skill of Rasmus had carried the on-lookers by storm, yet more did his tremendous lung-force astound them as he roared at them heartily, 'Let the best fellow talk! If any man can climb higher or holler louder than me, let him; if there ain't no such a man, listen to me. Them's fine remarks that fat man has been a-makin' down on the bar!! He wants you to be all as brothers and divide up and have things common; and good it sounds. I mind in tellin' you what ought to be divided: he never mentioned what come in his line; he didn't say the whiskey and beer ought to be free to you all without pay, if the company's works ought. It's well for him to talk about wages. Does he earn wages? He lives on wages, on your wages. And if you'll cast up in your minds, them as shares their wages most with him has the raggedest clothes, the poorest victuals, the meanest-looking wives and children, and the wust houses. He told you what a brother he had been to all of you, a-buyin' of Tim Jenks' coffin and paying for his hearse. But I asks of you, what so wonderful charitable was it in a tradesman to box up and carry home his own goods? I'm told Tim Jenks died in the rum-shop so full that he was more rum than man, poor critter; and whose goods was he then, I asks? Now, that's enough for him and his views about dividing up of propperty. Then, brothers all and pardners dear, about this other little matter, I says it plain, right you was to ask for more wages when you didn't get enough, and right the company is to give it to you, and right you are to belong to a union if so be it helps you, and you does enjoy it. We're free people, and we acts accordin'; and, brothers all, seeing these is your opinions, and that every man should follow out his own ideas and have his liberty to choose for hisself, you takin' that liberty for yourself, right you are, and uncommon handsome you looks takin' ten of your workin' brothers by the neck and pitchin' of them into the gutter, demyin' of 'em work 'cause they don't feel inclined to join your league! Free workingmen is we all; we chooses our own kind of work, and we picks out our own wives, and we buys what we likes for our houses, and if we has any reasons that suits ourselves for not joining a league we gets turned into heathen paupers! O, I've heard said there's no crueller tyrant to a workingman than a workingman. I don't believe that, pardners all, for there's whiskey to the fore. I've heard say that workingmen gets more kicks from their kind than from their bosses, but I don't believe it. Don't I see your kindness and your generosity here this day? Don't I see you going back on your work and kicking up a row just to get ten honest workingmen put into the street, their wives made hungry, their babies put in tatters—not for any ill turns, not for thieving

or drinking—only 'cause being free men they chose not to join your Order, and you being free men chose to join! Brothers all, I say three cheers for the Order, and let them as ain't in stay out till they get ready to join.' Whereupon, poised high on his dizzy eminence, Rasmus executed a 'pas seul' which 'brought down his house.'

The mob cheered itself into a good humor. Then came from sheer exhaustion a lull, a silence that might be felt, and the master thought his time had come to speak.

'My men: I gave you what you asked for yourselves, because it seemed right for you to have it; but these works may stand idle till all their timbers crumble into dust before I will be guilty of the iniquity of discharging honest and faithful workmen merely on account of their opinions. I am no persecutor. You may belong to what creed you like, what political party you like, and what society or order you like, and you may refuse to belong to any, and that shall never be a reason for discharge; but what men, and what place has been a school for strife I see, and I'll rent no more stands to liquor-dealers.'

CHAPTER XI.

The Making of a Man.

'And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies.

The movement for the dismissal of the non-union workmen had not proceeded freely from the whole body of employees, and their natural sense of justice had in many instances revolted from it. The current of opinion was now setting strongly against this piece of social tyranny. The mob broke up into little knots for discussion; the leaders of the movement retired to their headquarters for further consideration, and it was generally considered that peace would be restored, and the men return to their work, on the basis of the terms which they had at first proposed, and which the company had accepted.

Mr. Llewellyn and Rodney, having nothing more to see or hear, moved out of the crowd, and up the road that led from the town. They were soon joined by Rasmus in a state of happy unconsciousness that he had made himself conspicuous. But they had not gone far, when a 'Ho! there!' stayed their steps, and they saw a robust and gray-haired workman following them. He held out his hand to Rasmus, and gavn him a wrm shake. 'You spoke my views exactly. That is the way workingmen should feel. I'm one of the bosses here. I've come up from a little ragged, bare-foot orphan, making my pennies by bringing water and dinner-pails from the men. We men who have always worked ought to know what we are talking about. Where are you going so fast?'

'We're trotting along 'bout our general gait,' said Rasmus; 'we're going to New York!'

'To New York!'

'Yes,' said Rasmus, blandly. 'This here boy is going to find his uncle, and get sent to college to load up his head. This old gentleman is a science-man, and is going to New York to print a book, all along of flowers and birds; and then, you see, they ain't neither

of 'em so very big, and I'm a man of muscle, so I goes along to warn off dogs and loafers, and any such wild animals that comes by.'

The 'boss' looked as if he found this a queer company, but he persisted in his friendly communications.

'Come, come; it's four o'clock. I consider you've done us good service to-day. We want to know more of you. So does the company. I've got a trig little house down yonder, and a smart wife, and a pretty family. Come back, all of you, till to-morrow morning, and let us be friendly.'

Rasmus heard the invitation, and with a longing eye turned to his comrades. He was a social soul, and, like the old Athenians, always ready to hear or tell some new thing.

'By all means, if you wish,' said the naturalist.

'I'm agreed,' said Rodney.

So they all followed the 'boss' to his little white cottage.

'Here you are!' cried the house-mistress, who had topped her gray hair with a new pink-ribboned cap, and tied a white apron over her check gown. 'Hearty welcome you are! come in, come in! Bless my life, what a pretty boy this is; like a picter. There, Thomas'll put by all your things. Take chairs. I've got a glass of lemonade ready. You, sir, must be tired of speaking! Such a shouting as you made I never heard, and your ideas did me good! O you spoke most beautiful!'

Rasmus was the hero of the hour. He was called 'sir;' had the best chair and the first glass of lemonade. He swelled with gratified pride, until he seemed a third as large again as usual, which was needless, for he was one of the sons of Anak at his most humble times.

'You gave our notions exactly about whiskey,' said the garrulous house-mistress. 'O we've seen it, him and me,' with a side nod at her Thomas. 'Wasn't he left a poor orphan along of it? His first wife, dear soul, died of a great overdose, give her by a nurse, which same brought on fever, and died she did. My first husband died in an awful way from drink, heaven help him, and left me with a baby only a week old. Thomas had a girl of only eight, and a bit of a small baby. Well, next year, when he asked me to undertake the care of him and the children, I says, "Thomas, married folks should be agreed in their views, I sez, and we agree as to whiskey." 'Right you are, Mary Jane," says he, being no great of a talker. But, law! I've never wanted for anything with Thomas—here's his daughter Sally coming in. She's a milliner.'

In came Sally, a bouncing, rosy lass, in a 'gown of sprinkled pink,' a pair of smiling gray eyes, and a row of the whitest of teeth, shown in the frankest of smiles.

'My girl,' says boss Thomas Crew, simply and Sally smiled all around, and shook hands with Rod, as offering the safest investment for that courtesy. But Rasmus rose up to Sally, and eclipsed himself in a bow.

'O, it's you, is it?' says the laughing Sally. 'My, I thought sure you'd break your neck. I saw you climb, and it brought my heart way up in my mouth.'

'I wouldn't have climbed a step if I'd

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