

which I sailed glided out from the granite quays of Cronstadt harbor.

I often hear from them. Little children have come to them to bless their lives; but they tell me that, amongst all the gifts which Providence has given them, they still cherish most the Silver Rouble.

A Hero's Reward.

(By Eglanton Thorne, in 'Sunday-School Times,' London.)

'Is it not rather a long time since you had a visit from Hilda Bishop?' asked Cyril Ashton, putting the question with an appearance of indifference that did not in the least deceive his sister.

'It is five weeks,' replied Mabel, coolly, 'and I should not wonder if it is three times five before she comes again; indeed, to put it plainly, I doubt if she will visit me any more.'

'Whatever is the meaning of that?' he demanded, and there could be no mistake now as to his interest in the answer.

'It means,' said his sister, with irritating calmness, 'that Hilda and I have ceased to be friends.'

'You have quarrelled with her?' said Cyril. 'Then I don't think much of you, Mabel. Why, you used to profess the greatest friendship for Hilda. You thought no girl like her at one time.'

'I know I did,' said Mabel, rather sulkily, 'but I suppose I am not the only person who has been disappointed in a friend. I did not know then how obstinate Hilda can be.'

'Obstinate! She is not obstinate,' said Cyril, emphatically, 'she has a strong will, and knows her own mind on most subjects, that is all. What did you say to annoy her?'

'Oh, of course, you think it was all my fault,' replied Mabel, angrily. 'I know that Hilda is perfection in your eyes, yet I think even you would have been vexed if you had heard what she said. Indeed, it was because of you that I—that we disagreed.'

'Indeed! I feel flattered,' said her brother. 'Do explain what you mean.'

'Well, we were talking about the war,' said Mabel; 'and Hilda made me so angry. She would have it that it was an unjust war, and that we ought never to have gone into it, although, as I reminded her, the Boers began it. She said the most unreasonable things, and declared that if we were better Christians war would become impossible. As if there were no such thing as a war to defend the right!'

'My dear girl! she is not the only one who talks in that way. How absurd of you to quarrel with her on that account!' said Cyril, with masculine superiority; 'but that is just like women. They never can argue without losing their tempers. At least, very few can. I don't suppose Hilda got out of her temper.'

'She did not fly into a passion, I admit,' said Mabel; 'but she was very aggravating.'

'I expect you were more so,' said her brother, frankly. 'Why could you not let her have her own opinion with regard to the war? I don't wonder she thinks as she does. Her father belongs to a Quaker family, and no doubt he has taught her to think of all war as sinful. What of that? We men never break with our friends because they differ from us in opinion. Why, Robson and I disagree upon almost every subject under the sun. We argue tremendously sometimes, and he is never convinced by my cogent argument as he ought to be, yet we remain as good friends as ever. I advise you, Mab, to go and see Hilda, and make it up with her.'

'Thank you,' said Mabel, drily; 'I am not likely to take your advice. Hilda has such



CHINESE NEW YEAR'S MODE OF SALUTATION.

a horror of militarism that I am sure she cannot wish to remain friendly with a soldier's sister. I told her that I was proud to think that my brother was a soldier, and she said that she was thankful that none of her brothers were likely to make it their profession to destroy life.'

'Did she say that?' exclaimed Cyril. 'She forgets that a soldier often saves human lives.'

'So I told her, Cyril; but she would not see it,' said Mabel. 'I knew you would be vexed to hear it.'

'Not at all,' he said, loftily. 'I think Hilda is mistaken, but, as I told you, I do not quarrel with my friends because they differ from me in opinion.'

Yet his face had fallen as his sister repeated Hilda's words. It was strange how it hurt him to hear how she looked upon a soldier's career. Cyril was so wholly and truly a soldier that it was difficult for him to have patience with those who talk as if a soldier's duty was akin to the work of an assassin. He gloried in his profession, and was eager for his regiment to be ordered to the front, that he might fight for his Queen and country. Yet he was not moved to impatience towards Hilda. He was stabbed with a pain so deep and poignant that it revealed to him the secret of his heart. Since Hilda Bishop rejoiced that none of her brothers would ever be soldiers, it was not to be supposed that she would consent to be the wife of a soldier. And as he recognized this fact, Cyril knew that he loved her with all the strength of his true and manly nature, and could never wed any other woman.

A week later came the news that Cyril's regiment was ordered to the front. Mabel burst into tears when she heard it; but Cyril exulted as one who had won his heart's desire. Mabel, too, was proud in the midst of her sorrow. Not for the world would she have held him back. She was glad that he should go to fight his country's foes, though her heart was torn by anxiety as she looked forward to his departure. She longed to run to her old friend, Hilda, and pour into her ear the mingled joy and sorrow of her heart. But she remembered that she could not expect Hilda to sympathize with her. She would probably regard Cyril as a wrongdoer, the would-be slayer of his brethren, and with the thought Mabel's heart hardened towards her old friend.

Amid the bustle of preparing for his departure, which left him hardly a moment's leisure, Cyril feared that he would have to depart without seeing Hilda. He longed for a word with her, and yet what could he hope to gain by it? But Fortune favored his wish. On the day before he departed for Southampton, as he walked from his barracks to his father's house, he met Hilda Bishop.

'Do you know that I am off to the war to-

morrow?' he asked, as they shook hands, though he felt sure as soon as his eyes fell on her that she had heard the news.

'Yes, I know,' Hilda answered gravely, and her face grew a shade paler as she spoke. 'I am very sorry; but you, I suppose, are glad.'

'Certainly I am glad,' he replied. 'I have been longing to bear my part in this great action. Why are you sorry, Miss Bishop? Is it because you think all war unjustifiable?'

Hilda's large, frank, fearless eyes looked straight into his for a moment ere she spoke.

'Not only on that account,' she replied, 'though it is true that I think with my father that war is a great evil, and that, if we were more truly a Christian nation, we should find other means of settling our differences. I made your sister very angry by telling her that some weeks ago.'

'I know,' he replied, 'it was very silly of Mabel to take offence. I hope you will forget what she said, and be friendly with her again when I am gone.'

'With all my heart,' said Hilda, smiling; 'but I am afraid it is Mabel who will find it hard to forget what I said. She is proud of her soldier-brother that she cannot bear to hear a word adverse to his profession.'

'Oh, she will get over that,' said her brother, lightly. 'I agree with you, Miss Bishop, that war is a great evil, though, in the present condition of the world, it seems to be a necessary evil. And this being so, I am glad and proud to be called to fight for my Queen and country. Do you blame me?'

'Blame you?' The girl's eyes gleamed, and her voice trembled as she spoke; 'I admire your courage and self-devotion. How could any one blame the brave, heroic men at the front who are doing their duty at such a cost? The best thing I know about war is that it makes such heroes.'

'Thank you for saying that.' There was a fervent gleam in 'his' eyes now, and his voice grew husky. 'Will you be my friend, and pray that I may never fail in a soldier's duty, never count my life dear unto me?'

She promised, and they shook hands. Hilda went quickly homewards, keeping back her tears by a strong effort, and quite forgetful of the business which had brought her out. Cyril carried with him a light, glad heart. It did not much matter what Hilda thought about war in general as long as she followed him with a friend's prayers and sympathy.

On the day after Cyril's departure Hilda went to see Mabel, and expressed such sympathy with her and such admiration of her brother's courage, that Mabel readily forgave the words that had annoyed her, and the friends were reconciled. Mabel leaned upon Hilda's sympathy in the weeks that followed, when the news from the front was dark and gloomy, and the lists of casualties were terribly long. Mabel made much of her