



### The Chickens' Parade.

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This is some big gun amongst them, I thought; I will address his lordship. "Good evening," I said, in my politest way, "I imagine you are the chicken."

"Excuse me, sir," the little creature said, with a lordly air, "I am not a chicken—I am a fraction."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Fraction," I said. "I imagine, Sir Fraction, that you are the—person—no—the—the—"

"The Commander-in-Chief," said the Fraction, coming to my assistance.

"Thank you," I said. "Will you be so good as to command these chickens to right-about—turn—quick—march out of this room? I have had as much of their company as I desire."

"Sir," replied the Fraction, haughtily, "I do not take my instructions from you!"

Turning round and facing the main body of his troops, he cried, "Fall in!"

At the word of command the chickens on the floor ranged themselves in lines of two deep.

"Attention! Form fours!"

The movement was not done to the satisfaction of the Fraction.

"As you were!" he shouted at the top of his voice.

"Form fours! Right turn! By the right, quick march!"

The chickens marched across the room, keeping step in the grandest style.

"Right about turn," roared the Commander. The chicken-stunned round without breaking the line a hair's breadth.

"Halt!" cried the Commander. Instantly the moving ranks came to a dead halt. Not a single chick in the whole battalion moved a muscle an instant after that halt. The Fraction was pleased. "Front!" he said, "Stand at ease!"

"Now," said the Commander-in-Chief, proudly facing me, "what do you think of that?"

"I think," said I, "that it was a sight that would do the heart of any soldier good."

The Fraction bowed, and turning to his army cried, "Attention! Number!"

Clearly and rapidly did the chickens respond to the order.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred, eight hundred, nine hundred, one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, five thousand, six thousand."

At six thousand the numbering ceased, much to my relief.

"Our main body," said the Fraction, consists of six thousand chickens. Our reserve force number a little over a thousand."

Here he turned towards the chickens on the table, the mantelpiece, the book shelves, and called, in a powerful voice, "Reserve! Number!"

Equally smartly the reserve numbered themselves, the last number being one thousand one hundred and fifteen.

"One thousand one hundred and fifteen," the Commander said to himself; "that cannot be right. Chickens of the reserve," he spoke aloud, "a mistake has been made in the numbering. Unless the two chickens who have not numbered

do so at once you shall all have half an hour's punishment drill."

One thousand one hundred and sixteen," squeaked the chick on Philo's head.

"One thousand one hundred and seventeen," piped the youngster who had concealed himself at the back of my neck.

"Six thousand of the main body," said the Fraction, bowing politely to me, "and one thousand one hundred and seventeen of the reserve, a total of seven thousand one hundred and seventeen. Adding to this your humble servant, who is reckoned as a half, you have the grand total of seven thousand one hundred and seventeen and a half."

It was the number of eggs I had eaten.

"Are you familiar with the number? Ever met with it before?" said the Commander-in-Chief, looking knowingly at me out of his one eye. "Eh?"

"Exceedingly probable," I replied, carelessly.

"Well?" said the Fraction.

"Well," I replied, "proceed."

"Impudent monster!" said he, "Apologize!"

"What! To a Fraction? Never. I defy thee and thy troops as well!"

The Commander-in-Chief was nettled. Turning quickly round, he cried in a loud voice, "Present arms!"

To my utter astonishment (for I had not the least idea the chickens were armed) each chick presented a tiny rifle of the latest and most deadly pattern.

The Fraction faced me again and repeated his former question: "Well?"



"THE YOUNG HEIR."

"Rubbish!" I replied.

The Fraction's eyes glittered with rage. "Ready!" he cried. In less time than it takes to tell, six thousand rifle barrels were placed in position.

"Present!" Six thousand rifle barrels were directed at my head.

The Commander, as though to give me a last chance to apologize, addressed me as before: "Well?"

"Yes," I said, "I have seen the well at Carisbrooke Castle and the donkey in the wheel. It is a big donkey to work that wheel all the day long, but it is not such a big donkey as you are, Sir Fraction, if you think I am afraid of you or your fledglings."

"Well?" repeated the Fraction, angrily.

"Exactly," I replied, "the wheel is attached to a rope, and the rope to a bucket, and as the wheel goes round the bucket comes up."

"Well?"

"I think a photograph will show you more clearly what I mean." I was in the act of reaching for my album when I felt a sharp prick in my check. It was from the point of the Fraction's sword, which needle-like weapon he was now flourishing in a threatening way around his head.

"Man," hissed the Fraction, in a frenzy, "do you wish to die?"

"Well, really," I replied, "that is rather an important question to settle off-hand. I will consider the matter and let you have an answer in due course, as we say in business."

"Man," said the Commander, quite furiously for half a chicken, "six thousand loaded rifles are at this instant presented at you. I have but to give the word and you are riddled through and through with six thousand bullets."

"Well?" I said, using the Fraction's word.

"Shall I give that word?"

"Please yourself, my dear sir—do not consider me in the least; besides, you do not take your instructions from me."

The Fraction, muttering "Vengeance," turned sharply round on his one leg, and I saw plainly enough that he was about to give the word that would end my fate. "Britons never shall be slaves!" I shouted. "England expects that every man and dog this day shall do his duty! Three cheers for the roast beef of Old England! On, Stanley, on! Charge, Chester, charge! Philo for ever! God save the Queen! Hurrah!"

The Fraction waited until I had finished.

"Fire!"

A noise like the pealing of thunder followed close upon the word. I started—gasped—awoke.

The fire was out, but Philo's noble head still lay upon my knee.—Canning Williams.

### "The Young Heir."

"Tantara—tantara!" We almost seem to hear the horn which "proclaims it a hunting morning," as an old song says. This beautiful picture graphically displays a stirring scene. The hunting party has just left the beautiful park seen in the background, and all are bent on royal sport. Perhaps

this is the first time the proud father and mother have taken their handsome boy to the "meet"—but he looks quite at home on his big horse, and a thorough little gentleman in the way he lifts his hat in salute to the group of man and dogs—for the dogs evidently know him, and, I dare say, he has had many a game of romps with them. This picture is so finely drawn that the interest in the principal figures is divided with admiration for the grand old trees and rich natural surroundings of the stately ancestral home of this brave "Young Heir," who looks so full of life and hope.

Mr. Isaacstein—So you think young Rosenbaum means pecuniness? Rebecca Isaacstein coyly—Yes, papa; he talks nodding but nonsense.

### MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

It always seems rather sad to watch the first falling of the leaves, and as they flutter down, gradually forming a leafy carpet, we cannot quite stifle a sigh for the sweet summer, all too brief. It only seems the other day since we were saying, "Look how beautifully the trees are budding—it will soon be summer!" Now—how different! Still, dear girls, there is much of benefit to us in all these changes of season when we regard them as not simply Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, but as symbols of God's great goodness and forethought, of how He orders all things for good and wisely ordains all these changes of season so that they work to a perfected whole for our benefit. So, although we cannot, as I say, help a sigh of regret for summer, we can try to blend our regret with thankfulness.

These falling leaves, too, bring another picture and make us think of the falling leaves amongst those dear to us. There are few homes in which there are not at some time some "falling leaves." It is a law of Nature, and, doubtless, a wise one, that age should weaken before youth, and when this happens in your homes, dear girls, a responsibility rests upon you which must not go unheeded. I don't think many of my girls need to be reminded of this, but there may be a few who sometimes get a little impatient—for who amongst us is without fault?—any duty ever seems irksome try to