

A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY W. C. BUCK.

CHAPTER V.

HIS STORY.

I will not get down, if only to get rid of them, a few incidents of this day.

Trivial they are, ludicrously so, to any one but me; yet they have left me sitting with my head in my hands, stupid and idle, starting, each hour, at the boom of the bell we took at Sebastopol—starting and shivering like a nervous child.

Strange! there, in the Crimea, in the midst of danger, hardship, and misery of all kinds, I was at peace, even happy; happier than for many years. I seemed to have lived down, and nearly obliterated from thought, that one day, one hour, one moment, which was but a moment. Can it, ought it, to weigh against a whole existence? or, as some religionists would tell us, against an eternity? Yet what is time, what is eternity? Nay, rather, what is man, measuring himself, his atom of good or ill, either done or suffered, against God?

These are vain speculations, which I have gone over and over again till every link in the chain of reasoning is painfully familiar. I had better give it up and turn to ordinary things. Dear imaginary correspondent, shall I tell you the story of my day?

It began peacefully. I always rest on a Sunday, if I can. I believe, even had Heaven not hallowed one day in the seven—Saturday or Sunday matters not, let Jews and Christians battle it out—there would still be needful a day of rest; and that day would still be a blessed day. Instinct, old habit, and later conviction, always incline me to "keep the Sabbath," not, indeed, after the strict fashion of my forefathers, but as a happy, cheerful, holy time; a resting-place between week and week, in which to enjoy specially all righteous pleasures and earthly repose, and to look forward to that rest which, we are told, "remaineth for the people of God." The people of God; no other people ever do rest, even in this world.

Treherne passed my hut soon after breakfast, and popped his head in, not ever welcome, I confess, for I was giving myself the rare treat of a bit of unprofessional reading. I had not seen him for two or three days, not since we appointed to go together to the general's dinner, and he never appeared all the evening.

"I say, doctor, will you go to church?" Now I do usually attend our airy military chapel, all doors and windows, open to every kind of air except air from heaven, of which I am afraid our chaplain does not bring with him a large quantity. He leaves us to fatten upon Hebrew roots without throwing us a crumb of Christianity; prefers Moses and the prophets to the New Testament; no wonder, as some few doctrine's there, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword," etc., would sound particularly odd in a military chapel, especially with his elucidation of them, for he is the very poorest preacher I ever heard. Yet a worthy man, a most sincere man; did a word of good out in the Crimea; used to spend hours daily in teaching our men to read and write; got personally acquainted with every fellow in the regiment; knew all their private histories, wrote their letters home, sought them out in the battle-field and in the hospital, read to them, cheered them, comforted them, and closed their eyes. There was not an officer in the regiment more deservedly beloved than our chaplain. He is an admirable fellow—everywhere but in the pulpit.

Nevertheless, I attend his chapel, as I have always been in the habit of attending some Christian worship somewhere, because it is the simplest way of showing that I am not ashamed of my Master before men.

Therefore I would not smile at Treherne's astonishing fit of piety, but simply assented, at which he evidently was disappointed.

"You see, I'm turning respectable, and going to church. I wonder such an exceedingly respectable and religious fellow as you, Urquhart, has not tried to make me go sooner."

"If you go against your will and because it's respectable, you had better stop away."

"Thank you; but suppose I have my own reasons for going?"

"He is not a deep fellow; there is no deceit in the lad. All his faults are uppermost, which makes them bearable."

"Come, out with it. Better make a clean breast to me. It will not be the first time."

"Well, then—ahem!" twisting his ash and looking down with most extraordinary modesty, "the fact is, she wished it."

"Who?"

queer that I should not have wondered at even that catastrophe. "Not quite, but next door to it: Popped, and been accepted. Yes, since Friday I have been an engaged man, doctor."

Behind his foolishness was some natural feeling, mixed with a rather comical awe of his own position.

For me, I was a good deal surprised; yet he might have come to a worse end. To a rich young fellow of twenty-one, the world is full of many more rich dangerous pitfalls than matrimony. So I expressed myself in the customary congratulations, adding that I concluded the lady was the one I had seen?

Treherne nodded. "Sir William knows it."

"Not yet. Didn't I tell you I wanted you to break it to him? Though he will consent, of course. Her father is quite respectable—a clergyman, you are aware; and she is such a handsome girl—would do credit to any man's taste. Also, she likes me—a trifle."

And he pulled his moustache with a recognition of his great felicity.

I saw no reason to question it, such as it was. He was a well-looking fellow, likely to please women; and this one, though there was not much in her, appeared kindly and agreeable. The other sister, whom I talked with, was something more. They were, no doubt, a perfectly unobjectionable family; nor did I think that Sir William, who was anxious for his son to marry early, would refuse consent to any creditable choice. But decidedly he ought to be told at once—ought, indeed, to have been consulted beforehand. I said so.

"Can't help that. It happened unexpectedly. I had, when I entered Rockmount, no more idea of such a thing than your cat, doctor. Upon my soul 'tis the fact! Well, well, marriage is a man's fate. He can no more help himself in the matter than a stone can help rolling down hill. All's over, and I'm glad of it. So, will you write, and tell my father?"

"Certainly not. Do it yourself, and you had better do it now. 'No time like the present,' always."

I pushed toward him pens, ink, and paper; and returned to my book again; but it was not quite absorbing; and occasional glimpses of Treherne's troubled and puzzled face amused me, as well as made me thoughtful.

It was natural that having been in some slight way concerned in it, this matter, foreign as it was to the general tenor of my busy life, should interest me a little. Though I viewed it, not from the younger, but from the elder side, I myself never knew either father or mother; they died when I was a child, but I think, whether or not we possess it in youth, we rarely come to my time of life without having a strong instinctive feeling of the rights of parents, being worthy parents. Rights, of course modified in their extent by the higher claims of the Father of all; but second to none other, except, perhaps, those which He has himself made superior—the rights of husband and wife.

I felt, when I came to consider it, exceedingly sorry that Treherne had made a proposal of marriage without consulting his father. But it was no concern of mine. Even his "taking my advice," was, he knew well, his own exaggeration of an abstract remark which I could not but make; otherwise, I had not meddled in his courting, which, in my opinion, no third party has a right to do.

So I washed my hands of the whole affair, except consenting to Treherne's earnest request that I would go with him, this morning, to the little village church of which the young lady's father was the clergyman, and be introduced.

"A tough old gentleman, too, as sharp as a needle, as hard as a rock—walking into his study, yesterday morning, was no joke, I assure you."

"But you said he had consented."

"Ah! yes, all's right. That is, it will be when I hear from the governor."

All this while, by a curious amatory eccentricity, he had never mentioned the lady's name. Nor had I asked, because I knew it. Also, because that surname, common as it is, is still extremely painful to me, either to utter or to hear.

We came late into church, and sat by the door. It was a pleasant September forenoon; there was sunshine outside far away across the moors. I had never been to this village before; it seemed a pretty one, and the church old and picturesque. The congregation consisted almost entirely of poor people, except one family, which I concluded to be the clergyman's. He was in the reading-desk.

"That's her father," whispered Treherne.

"Oh, indeed." But I did not look at him for a minute or so; I could not. Such moments will come, despite of reasoning, belief, conviction, when I see a person bearing any name resembling that name.

At last I lifted my head to observe him.

A calm hard regular face; well-shaped features; high, narrow forehead, aquiline nose—a totally different type from one which I so well remember that any accidental likeness thereto impresses me

as startlingly and vividly as, I have heard, men of tenuous, fervent memory will have impressed on them, through life, as their favorite type of beauty, the countenance of their first love.

I could sit down now, at ease, and listen to this gentleman's reading of the prayers. His reading was what might have been expected from his face—classical, accurate, intelligent, gentlemanly. And the congregation listened with respect, as to a clever exposition of things quite beyond their comprehension. Except the gabble-gabble of the Sunday school, and the clerk's loud "A-men!" the minister had the service entirely to himself.

A beautiful service; as I, though at heart a Presbyterian, still must avow; especially when heard—as I have heard it—at sea, in hospital, at the camp. Not this camp, but ours in the Crimea, where all through the prayers, guns kept booming, and shells kept flying, sometimes within a short distance of the chapel itself. I mind of one Sunday, little more than a year ago, for it must have been on the ninth of September, when I stopped on my way from Balacava hospital, to hear service read in the open air, on a hill-side. It was a cloudy day, I remember; below, brown with the long drought, stretched the Balacava plains; opposite, gray and still, rose the high mountains on the other side of the Tchernez; while far away to the right, toward our camp, one could just trace the white tents of the Highland regiments; and to the left, hidden by the Col de Balacava, a dull, perpetual rumble, and clouds of smoke hanging in the air, showed where, six miles off, was being enacted the fall of Sebastopol—though at the time we did not know it; this little congregation, mustered just outside a hospital tent, where, I remember, not a stone's throw from where we, the living knelt, lay a row of those straight, still formless forms, the more awful because from familiarity they had ceased to be felt as such—each sewn up in the blanket, its only coffin, waiting for burial—waiting also, we believe and hope, for the resurrection from the dead.

What a sermon our chaplain might have preached! what words I, or any man, could surely have found to say at such a time on such a spot! Yet what we did hear were the merest platitudes—so utterly trivial and out of place, that I do not now recall a single sentence. Strange that people—good Christian men as I knew that man to be—should go on droning out "words, words, words," when bodies and souls perish in thousands around them; or splitting theological hairs to poor fellows, who, except in an oath, are ignorant even of the Divine name; or thundering anathemas at them for going down to the pit of perdition without even so much as pointing out to them the bright but narrow way.

I was sitting thus, absorbed in the heavy thoughts that often come to me when thus quiet in church, hearing often some man, who is supposed to be one of the Church's teachers, delivering the message of the Church's Great Head, when, looking up, I saw two eyes fixed on me.

It was one of the clergyman's three daughters; the youngest, probably, for her seat was in the most uncomfortable corner of the pew, apparently the same I had talked with Mrs. Granton's, though I was not sure—ladies look so different in their bonnets. Hers was close, I noticed, and decently covering the head, not dropping off on her shoulders like those I see ladies wearing, which will assuredly multiply ophthalmic cases, with all sorts of head and face complaints as the winter winds come on. Such exposure must be painful, too, these blinding sunny days. How can women stand the torments they have to undergo in matters of dress? If I had any woman-kind belonging to me—pshaw! what an idle speculation.

Those two eyes, steadfastly inquiring, with a touch of compassion in them, started me. Many a pair of eager eyes, I had to meet, but it was always their own fate, or that of some one dear to them, which they were anxious to learn; they never sought to know anything of me or mine. Now these did.

I am nervously sensitive of even kindly scrutiny. Involuntarily I moved so that one of the pillars came between me and those eyes. When we stood up to sing she kept them steadily upon her hymn-book, nor did they wander again during church-time, either toward me or in any other direction.

The face being just opposite in the line of the pulpit, I could not help seeing it during the whole of the discourse, which was, as I expected, classical, belabored, elegant, and interesting, after the pattern of the preacher's countenance.

His daughter is not like him. In repose, her features are ordinary; nor did they for one moment recall to me the flashing, youthful face, full of action and energy, which had amused me that night at the Cedars. Some faces catch the reflection of the moment so vividly that you never see them twice alike. Others, solidly and comely handsome, scarcely vary at all, and I think it is of those last that one would soonest weary. Irregular features have generally most character. The Venus di Medici would have made a very stupid friend-side con-

panion, nor would I venture to enter her Oxford honors a son who had the profile of the Apollo Belvidere.

Treherne is evidently of a different opinion. He set beaming out admiration upon that large, fair statuesque woman who had turned so that her pure Greek profile was distinctly visible against the red cloth of the high pew. She might have known what a pretty picture she was making. She will please Sir William who admires beauty, and she seems refined enough even for Lady Augusta Treherne. I thought to myself the lad might have gone farther and fared worse. His marriage was sure to have been one of pure accident, he is not a young man either to have had the decision to choose, or the firmness to win and keep.

Service ended, he asked me what I thought of her, and I said much as I have written here. He appeared satisfied.

"You must stay and be introduced to the family; the father remains in church. I shall walk home with them. Ah! she sees us."

The lad was all eagerness and excitement. He must be considerably in earnest.

"Now, doctor, come—nay, pray do." For I hesitated.

Hesitation was too late, however; the intrusion took place; Treherne hurried it over; though I listened acutely I could not be certain of the name. It seemed to be, as I already believed, Johnson.

Treherne's beauty met him, all smiles, and he marched off by her side in a most determined manner, the elder sister following and joining the pair, doubtless to the displeasure of one or both. She, whom I did not remember seeing before, is a little sharp-speaking woman, pretty, but faded-looking, with very black eyes.

The other sister, left behind, fell in with me. We walked side by side through the church-yard, and into the road. As I held the wicket-gate open for her to pass, she looked up, smiled, and said:

"I suppose you do not remember me, Doctor Urquhart?"

I replied, "Yes, I did," that she was the young lady who "hated soldiers."

She blushed extremely, glanced at Treherne, and said, not without dignity, "It would be a pity to remember all the foolish things I have uttered; especially on that evening."

"I was not aware they were foolish; the impression left on me was that we had had a very pleasant conversation, which included far more sensible topics than are usually discussed at balls."

"You do not often go to balls?"

"No."

"Do you dislike them?"

"Not always."

"Do you think they are wrong?"

I smiled at her cross-questioning, which had something fresh and unsophisticated about it, like the inquisitiveness of a child.

"Really, I have never very deeply considered the question; my going or not going, is purely a matter of individual choice. I went to the Cedars that night because Mrs. Granton was so kind to wish it, and I was only too happy to please her. I like her extremely, and owe her much."

"She is a very good woman," was the earnest answer. "And Colin has the kindest heart in the world."

I assented, though amused at the superlatives in which very young people delight; but, in this case, not so far away from truth as ordinarily happens.

"You know Colin Granton—have you seen him lately—yesterday I mean? Did Captain Treherne see him yesterday?"

about "my youngest sister," which proved I had been mistaken in her age. It was easier to talk to a young girl sitting forlorn by herself in a ball-room, than to a grown-up lady, walking in broad daylight, accompanied by two other stylish fashionables as overrated my sober vision. She did not, I must confess; she seemed to be the plain one of the family; unnoticed—one might almost guess, neglected. Nor was there any flightiness or coquettishness in her manner, which, though abrupt and original, was quiet even to demureness.

Pursuing my hobby of anatomizing character, I studied her a good deal during the pauses of conversation, of which there was not a few. Compared with Treherne, whom I heard in advance, laughing and talking with his usual light-heartedness, she must have found me uncommonly sombre and dull.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Leoburn.

COMPLIMENTARY SUPPER.—On Friday evening last the Leoburn Temple I. O. G. T., gave a complimentary supper and presentation to one of their members (Bro. Lawrason) on the eve of his departure from that point. The evening's entertainment consisted of a supper, speeches, vocal and instrumental music, and recitations, the programme being as follows: Bro. Cummings in the chair; Quartette, "God old Friends;" solo, Bro. H. Horton; speech, on agricultural interests, Bro. A. H. Clutton; duet, "Beautiful Gates;" Sisters McManus; reading, "The Leap Year Proposal," Bro. S. B. Williams; "Our Lodge," Bro. W. H. Aborn; duet, Sisters McManus; reading, "The Yorkshireman," Bro. H. H. Clutton. One of the most popular bachelors of the section, was then called on to sing, but he had the proverbial "cold," owing to having travelled north during the recent cold spell with his cold-water friend, the chairman. On pressure he gave in good style, "Home Again from a Foreign Shore," and being encored, brought down the house in "The Lone Starry Hours." The chairman said that he and the "Bachelor," had gone north together; that on one occasion there was only one bed for both of them, that he (the chairman) took the outside, and the "Bachelor," being a man of weight in the community, was afraid the headstead was too frail to support both, and decided to lay on the lounge, lengthened out with half a dozen chairs, to suit his elongated form. There were blankets and buffalo robes in profusion, but this fact did not hinder the sensitive bachelor from getting the cold he complained of. This explanation by the chairman caused roars of merriment from the audience. A handsome walking staff was then presented to Bro. Lawrason, by Sister M. McManus, and Sister M. A. Clutton read the following address:

DEAR BROTHER LAWRASON.—As you are about to leave us, we, the members of Leoburn Lodge, have met here to bid you farewell. Ever since you have been a member of this lodge you have been a most active worker for the cause of temperance, and also for the maintenance of this lodge. As a slight evidence of the appreciation the members have had for your labors, we may say that you have been kept in office since the first quarter and during seven of the eleven quarters of which you have been a member, you have filled the highest office, viz: that of W. G. T. While you have been connected with our little band, you have always been very regular and punctual, and we feel that a blank is now being made which can never be filled. We hope the esteem in which you have been held while connected with the cause of temperance in this neighborhood will be an additional motive to you for continuing in the noble work, where ever you may be situated, and hope you will merit the same approbation. We feel in losing you we are being deprived of one of our mainstays, but hope your gain will overbalance our loss. Hoping that the remainder of your journey through life may be as pleasant and as prosperous as the few short years you have spent with us, we beg your acceptance of this cane which may serve to remind you of the happy evenings you spent at Leoburn Lodge No. 213, I. O. G. T.

Bro. Lawrason thanked the brothers and sisters for their kindness in presenting with such a feeling address, and such a good and ornamental staff, which he would ever keep in remembrance of the many pleasant associations which he had had with the brothers and sisters of the Leoburn Lodge. He said he had not merited such favors. Any thing he had done had been done with pleasure. He could never compensate this Lodge for the good he had received from being a member of it. In the providence of God, it had been the means of making a turning point in his life, lifting him from the depths to the stature of a man, in which, in God's strength, he would remain and perform his vows until the end. He again with the deepest feeling thanked them for the gift and honor conferred, and hoped that, although far severed, we may always remain close in heart. J. Linklater and W. H. Horton rendered some select pieces on the violin during the evening. A few closing remarks by brother Linklater and the chairman were very amusing, the party then dispersed after singing "Old Lang Syne," and "God Save the Queen."

The wife is the sun of the social system. Unless she attracts, there is nothing to keep heavy bodies like husbands, from flying off into space.

"You Don't Know their Value." They cured me of Ague, Biliousness and Kidney Complaint, as recommended. I had a half bottle left which I used for my two little girls, whom the doctors and neighbors said could not be cured. I am confident I should have lost both of them one night if I had not had the Hop Bitters in my house to use. I found they did them so much good I continued with them, and they are now well. That is why I say you do not know half the value of Hop Bitters, and do not recommend them highly enough.—B. N. Rochester, N. Y.

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