

John looked down to Arthur and was kind, and Arthur accepted the position and looked up to John. His sole inheritance from his mother was an inclination to think that all was for the best in this best of possible worlds. That the treatment he received in it was different from that awarded to his brother did not affect his finding.

In spite of the great gulf fixed between them by their mother's injudicious hand, the twins had taken each progressive step in their existence side by side. They had gone to Harrow together, and had entered and had left Sandhurst at the same time. That John's name appeared near the top of the list and his brother's not far from the other end surprised no one.

Only one person among all Mrs. Rilington's friends had the temerity to remark that it was astonishing. Mrs. Rilington's reply was a self-revelation:

"Poor little Arthur, he hasn't done badly for him! He must have worked hard to have got through at all. We didn't expect he would. I fancy John's example influenced him more than any of us know. Oh, no! There is not the least fear that he has overworked himself. He is perfectly strong and never complains. He has not given me an hour's anxiety since he was born."

The rash friend smiled, and agreed with the last remark more emphatically than was, perhaps, quite polite. Arthur, she was certain, had never cost his mother a moment's uneasiness since he was born.

So life—the easy, pleasant life of the rich—passed happily enough for the young Rilingtons, with plenty of pastime and very few troubles until the year after they left Sandhurst. Even at this point where, in the natural course of events, there should have been the parting of the ways, the strange inter-blending of their fates interfered.

They were both gazetted to the same regiment. Then the Boer war was declared, and with the down hardly formed on their faces, and in company with most that was young

and eager and strenuous in the Empire, John and Arthur Rilington set sail for the front.

At John's express wish their mother consented that the farewells should be said at home instead of on the crowded transport. Dry-eyed, haggard and intense, she followed the young men's movements, and hung on their words during the brief hours they could pass with her. When the moment of parting came she watched them, in an agony too great for words, mount the dog-cart that was to take them to the station and out of her sight, perhaps, for ever. The reins were in John's hands when her white lips parted in a supreme effort to speak. Then she put out her hand and pulled her youngest son by the arm till her lips were at his ear.

"Take care of John," she whispered.

"Our bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lower'd  
And the sentinel stars set their watch  
in the sky."

To-night the lines recurred incessantly to Arthur. "The sentinel stars," he repeated to himself, lingering on the expression. He loved to think of them as such, for he, too, was on "sentry go," and had been ever since his mother's last injunction fell on his ear.

The campaign had lasted eighteen months, and for most of the time the regiment to which the Rilingtons belonged—the Light Defencibles—had been in the thick of the fray. In the Orange Free State, in the Transvaal, in Cape Colony, they had followed the trend of the fighting; and, although many a brave soldier had fallen out of the ranks, never to rise again, the Rilington brothers, the *Gemini*, as they were commonly called, had escaped unhurt. Among their brother officers it was said that Arthur's anxiety formed an invisible protective armour round John that turned both shot and shell. As there was no such shield for Arthur, his immunity, they agreed, must be ascribed to luck. John himself