

The lawyer took off his hat, and reverently replied: "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The veteran crossed himself, and said: "There niver was a thruer word shpoke or in wroitin', an' fwat does the childher, the ininents, know about Pratishtants an' Catholics, till me that now?"

As Coristine could not, the pair refilled their pipes and smoked in company, an ideal Evangelical Alliance.

Soon the waggonette came rattling along the road, and Marjorie ran to meet her Uncle John and the minister, with both of whom she was a great favourite. Mr. Nash also had a word to say to her: "You remember scolding me for not going to church when I was Mr. Chisholm? Well, I've been there this afternoon, and Mr. Errol told us we are all getting ready here for what we are to do in Heaven. Now, you're a wise little girl, and I want you to tell me what I will be able to do when I get there. It can't be to hunt up bad people, because there are no bad people in Heaven. What do you think about it?"

"I know," answered Marjorie, gravely; "play chess with dead uncles and ministers, and teach tricks to the little children that never grewed up."

"Out of the mouths of babes!" ejaculated Mr. Errol, who overheard the conversation; then continued: "Could anything be truer? The training in observation and rapid mental combinations, which has made you successful in your profession, is the foundation of your prowess on the chess-board. Your skill in every sort of make-up enables you to manipulate handkerchiefs and oranges for children's amusement. The same training and skill our Father can turn to good account in the upper sanctuary."

"Thank you, Mr. Errol, thank you, Marjorie, my dear. Perhaps the good God will be kinder than we think, and find some use for a poor, lonely, careless detective." Mr. Nash was unusually thoughtful, yet still had an eye to business. He made diligent enquiries about Rawdon, and, at last, getting on the scent through Miss Du Plessis, found out all that Coristine and Timotheus had to tell of him. The latter had watched the working geologist slinking off in the Lake Settlement direction across the fields and by bush tracks. Mr. Terry and the children, having partaken of tea, remained out in the front with Muggins, and sang some more hymns, Marjorie leading their choir. The rest of the household, reinforced by Mr. Perrowne, who, much to Wilkinson's disgust, monopolized Miss Du Plessis, sat round the ample tea-table. In a shamefaced way, as if engaged in an illegal ecclesiastical transaction, the English clergyman mumbled: "For what we are about to receive," and the evening meal proceeded. The Squire had ceded his end of the table to his sister, and had taken his post at her left, where he talked to the dominie, his next neighbour, and across the table to Mr. Errol. Perrowne flanked the hostess on the right, and Nash on the left. Miss Du Plessis sat between Perrowne and Wilkinson, a stately and elegant bone of contention; while the lawyer had the detective on one side and Miss Carmichael on the other. As that young lady had something to do with the arrangement of the table by Tryphosa, in the matter of napkin rings, it was, if Coristine only knew it, a mark of her confidence in him that she permitted his presence on her right. Nevertheless he profited little by it, as she gave all her conversation to the minister, save when the attention of that elderly admirer was taken up by her uncle. As Perrowne was compelled to be civil to Mrs. Carruthers, while Mr. Nash entertained the lawyer, an opportunity was afforded the schoolmaster of improving his acquaintance with Miss Du Plessis, of which he took joyful advantage, feeling that in so doing with all brilliant beings, whom he inwardly characterized as a clerical puppy and an ungrateful, perfidious, slanderous worm. Neither the puppy nor the worm were happy, as he joyfully perceived.

The meal was over, and they were preparing to have early evening prayers for the sake of the children, when a vehicle drove up, and a burly form, clad in navy blue broadcloth with a plentiful trimming of gilt buttons, descending from it, came along the path towards the house, accompanied by Marjorie.

"It's papa!" she cried to Carruthers and his wife, who had gone to the door to see who their visitor was, and call the children in. It was the Captain, and in the buggy, holding the reins, sat The Crew. "Don't sit grinning there, you blockhead!" shouted the ancient mariner to Sylvanus; "hev ye been so long aboard ship ye can't tell a stable when you see it? Drive on, you slabsided swab!" The Captain's combination of lumbering with nautical pursuits gave a peculiar and not always congruous flavour to his pet phrases; but Sylvanus did not mind; he drove round the lane and met Timotheus.

"We have just finished tea, Captain," said Mrs. Carruthers with her pretty touch of a cultivated Irish accent; "but Marjorie will tell Tryphosa to set yours on the table at once."

"All right, Honoria!" growled Mr. Thomas; "I'm in port here for the night, and I'm a goin' to make fast; so be I hev to belay on to the lee side of a stack of shingle bolts. Now, Marjorie, my pet, give daddy another kiss, and run away for a bit. John, I want you right away."

With the latter words, the Captain took the Squire off to the far end of the verandah, and sat down with his legs dangling over among the flowers, causing his brother-in-law to do the same. "John," said he, taking off his naval cap, and mopping his forehead, "you're all goin' to be murdered to-night in your bunks, else I wouldn't ha' quit dock o' Sunday."

"Whatever do you mean, Thomas?"

"I mean what I say, and well to you and yourn. Sylvanus was down at Peskiwanchow, gettin' some things his brother left there, when he shipped for you. There's a bad crew in that whiskey mill, and, fool as he is, he was sharp enough to hear them unbeknown. Says one of 'em, 'Better get out the fire engines from town,' and he laughed. Says another, 'Guess the boys'll hev a nice bonfire waitin' for us, time we get to Flanders.' Then the low-down slab-pilers got their mutinous heads together, and says, 'The J. P. and the bailiff's got to be roasted anyway, wisht we could heave Nash in atop.' I've left the cursing and swearin' out, because it's useless ballast, and don't count in the deal any more'n sawdust. Now, John, what do you think of that?"

"It looks serious, Thomas, if your man is to be depended on."

"My man depended on? Sylvanus Pilgrim to be depended on? There's no more dependable able-bodied seaman and master mill-hand afloat nor ashore. He's true as the needle to the pole and the gang-saw to the plank. Don't you go saying wrong of Sylvanus."

"I must take Nash into confidence with us, and call up your informant," said the Squire, leading the Captain into the house and setting him carefully down at the tea table, where Mrs. Carruthers waited upon him. Then he looked up Sylvanus in the kitchen, and told him to report as soon as he had taken his supper. "We have no time to lose, Pilgrim," he added, "so let Tryphosa alone till our talk is over. She'll keep."

"I ain't agoin' ter presume ter tech Trypheeny, Square, an' I'll be along in a half tuck," replied The Crew.

Next, Nash was found smoking a cigar, and talking very earnestly with Mr. Errol about presentiments, and sudden remembrances of childhood's days. He dropped the conversation at once when business was mentioned, and, in a few minutes, the Squire's official room contained five men, with very serious faces, seeking to come to a full understanding of what seemed a diabolical plot on the part of some spiteful malefactors. Four of these have already been indicated; the fifth was the lawyer, who proved a useful addition for pumping Sylvanus dry and taking careful notes.

While the consultation was in progress, a gentle tap came to the door, and, following it, a voice that thrilled the lawyer, saying, "May I come in, uncle; I have some news for you?" Carruthers opened the door, when Miss Carmichael told him that young Hill, the girls' brother, had arrived with another man, and wanted to see him immediately on special business that would not wait, and that they seemed to have been out shooting. The Squire went out and returned with Rufus and Ben Toner. The former related how Ben had gone to afternoon meetin' to tell what he knew of the conspiracy to clean out all the scabs in Flanders, and have trade run smooth. Coristine examined his old patient, who readily responded, and Nash, who was now Chisholm in beard and moustache, helped the interrogation. Toner's information, like that of Sylvanus, came from accidentally overhearing the talk of four men in a waggon, driving Flanders way during church time, while he was fishing in the river.

"I heerd 'em say as they'd be a big blayuz afore mornin', and as Squier Cruthers, and the bailiff, and Nash, and a raivenue gaal, had got to go to kingdom come. One on 'em says he seen Mr. Nash and got a hit off his stick. He's a goin' to lay for him straight and for them two walkin' spies likeways."

"What made you look up Rufus?" asked the lawyer.

"I thort the raivenue gaal might a been one of his sisters that's here. Besides, he's got a gun, and so have I, and I'm a goin' to be true to my word, Doctor, to you and the bailiff too, ef I have to shoot aivery mother's son of them vilyins."

The Captain and Sylvanus, with Rufus and Ben, all testified to the moving of several teams, with rough-looking characters on board, along the roads that led towards Flanders, and the Lake Settlement in particular. The Squire and Mr. Nash had noticed the same.

"Ben," said the latter, taking off his disguise, "I think I can trust you. I am the detective Nash."

Toner started, but quickly recovered himself, and, rising, gave his hand to the man of aliases, saying, "You kin, Mr. Nash, s'haylp me. Old man Newcome swears he's a goin' to hev your life, but he won't ef I'm any good."

The detective shook hands warmly, and, taking Ben aside, found that he had no personal knowledge of Rawdon, the Newcome of whom he spoke being apparently the go-between. The intimacy between them, which was near ruining the young man, had come about through Toner's attention to Newcome's daughter, Sarah Eliza. "But," continued the unhappy lover, "the old man's been and had Serlizer off for more'n a year, and puts me off and off and better off, till I just up and wouldn't stand it no more. I ain't a goin' to sell his stuff, nor drink his stuff, nor hev nawthun more to do along of his gang, but I'd like to know where Serlizer's put to, and I'm here and my gun, with a lot of powder and shot and slugs, for the stummik of any gallihoot as lays a finger on you, Mr. Nash, or the doctor or the gals."

Returning to the group, the detective urged immediate defensive action, leaving the offensive till the morrow. The Squire at once looked up his armoury, consisting of a rifle, a fowling piece (double-barrelled) and a pair of heavy horse-pistols, with abundant ammunition. The Captain reported that Sylvanus had a shotgun (single-barrelled), and that he had brought the blunderbuss with which he

fired salutes off the *Susan Thomas*. Coristine answered for the revolvers carried by himself and the dominie. The clergy were called in and the situation explained, when both volunteered for service. Mr. Perrowne had a very good gun at his lodgings; and his landlady, whose father had been in the army, possessed a relic of him in the shape of an ancient carbine, which he was sure she would lend to Mr. Errol, with bayonet complete. He went for them, under escort of Rufus and Ben. When Mr. Terry was told, he begged for his son-in-law's "swate-lukin' roifle," and was as cheerful as if a wedding was in progress. Finally, Timotheus got the fowling piece and the Squire looked to the priming of his pistols. Mr. Nash, of course, had both revolver and dirk knife concealed somewhere about his person. Then Mr. Errol conducted family prayers, the children were sent to bed, the ladies briefly informed of the situation, and the garrison bidden a more than usually affectionate good-night.

## CHAPTER IX.

The Squire Posts Sentries—Sylvanus Arrests Tryphosa—Change of Watchword—Nash Leads an Advance—The Cheek of Grinstuns—The Hound—Guard-room Conversation—Incipient Fires Extinguished—The Idiot Boy—Grinstun's Awful Check—The Lawyer and the Parson Theologize—Coristine's Hands—Doctor and Miss Halbert.

THE full strength of the garrison was twelve able-bodied men, of whom five carried fowling pieces, one a blunderbuss, another a carbine, another a rifle, and four were armed with pistols. The Squire was in supreme command, and Mr. Nash was adjutant. They decided that the garrison as a whole should go on guard for the night, that is, from ten o'clock till six in the morning, a period of eight hours, making, as the Captain put it, four watches of two hours each. Thus the remaining ten were divided into two guards of five, and, as the morning guard, from four to six, would probably not be required, it was determined to put those who had most need of rest on the companion one from twelve to two. These were Captain Thomas, the veteran Terry, the two parsons, with Wilkinson, who was thrown in simply as a pistol man, the only other of the kind being the lawyer. With ammunition in their pockets, or slung round their shoulders, the first guard sallied forth under the Squire's guidance. Coristine was left to watch the front of the house behind the shrubbery bordering the fence, and keep up communication with Nash, who patrolled the road on horseback. Ben Toner's station was the path running parallel with the palings on the left of the garden, beyond which was an open field, not altogether destitute of stumps. Sylvanus was posted on the edge of the meadow, at the back of the garden and out-houses; and Timotheus, on the right of the stables and connected buildings. Just where the beats of the brothers met, there was a little clump of timber, the only point affording cover to an advancing enemy, and to that post of honour and danger Rufus was appointed. Having placed his men, the Squire returned to the guard-room, his office, and ordered Tryphosa to bring refreshments for the guard, to which he added a box of cigars. The guard discussed the cold ham, the cheese and biscuits, and, in addition, Mr. Errol indulged in some diluted sherry, Perrowne and Wilkinson in a glass of beer, and the Captain and the veteran in a drop of whiskey and water. The Squire took a cigar with those who smoked, but maintained his wakefulness on cold tea. Every half hour he was out inspecting the sentries. Coristine had suggested that the friendly answer to a challenge should be Bridesdale, but, lest the enemy should hear this and take advantage of it, all suspicious persons should be required also to give the countersign, Grinstuns. The dominie sneered at him for the latter; but, when he saw his friend sally forth with loaded pistol to the post of danger, his enmity died, and, rising, he silently shook hands with him at the door. Returning to the guard-room, he breathed a silent prayer for his friend's safety, and then fortified his inner man with the fare provided. Conversation accompanied the impromptu supper, and the subsequent cigar or pipe, at first led by the divines, but afterwards taken clean out of their mouths by the Captain and the veteran, who furnished exciting accounts of their experience in critical situations.

The Squire had gone out for the second time to inspect the sentries. It was eleven o'clock. Coristine, who was first visited, reported a sound of voices at the back of the house, and Toner confirmed the report. The commander-in-chief hastened to the gate leading into the hill meadow, and perceived a figure struggling in the strong grasp of Sylvanus. The sentinel's left arm was round the prisoner, and the gun was in his right hand. As they came towards the gate, the Squire heard piteous entreaties in a feminine voice to be let go, and the answer: "'Tain't no kind o' use, Tryphosa, even ef ye was arter Timotheus an' not me; that ain't it, at all. It's this: yer didn't say Bridesdale when I charlined yer, nor yer couldn't bar-sign Grinstuns. All suspicious carriters has got to be took up, and, ef that ain't bein' a suspicious carriter, this mate on the starn watch don't know what is. I'm rale sorry for yer, and I'm sorry for Timotheus, but juty is juty and orders is strict. Come on, now, and let us hope the Square'll be marciful."

"What is the meaning of this nonsense, Pilgrim?" asked the commander, angrily.

"It's a suspicious carriter as can't give no account of itself, Square. She might ha' been shot as like as not, ef I hadn't gone and took her pris'ner."

"Let the girl alone, and don't make a laughing stock