

BY AND BY.

BY MARGARET I. PRESTON.

What will it matter by and by
Whether my path below was bright,
Whether it wound through dark or light,
Under a gray or a golden sky,
When I look back on it, by and by?

What will it matter by and by.
Whether, unhelped, I toiled alone,
Dashing my foot against a stone,
Missing the charge of the angel nigh,
Bidding me think of the by and by?

What will it matter by and by
Whether with laughing joy I went
Down through the years with a glad content.
Never believing, nay, not I,
Tears would be sweeter by and by.

What will it matter by and by
Whether with cheek to cheek I've lain
Close by the pallid angel, Pain,
Soothing myself through sob and sigh;
"All will be otherwise by and by?"

What will it matter? Naught, if I
Only am sure the way I've trod,
Gloomy or glad: ed, leads to God,
Questioning not of the how, the why,
If I but re-ach Him, by and by.

What will I care for the unshared sigh,
If, in my fear of slip or fall,
Closely I've clung to Christ through all,
Mindless how rough the path might lie,
Since he will smoothe it by and by.

Ah! it will matter by and by
Nothing but this: That Joy or Pain
Lifted me skyward, helped to gain,
Whether through rack, or smile, or sigh,
Heaven—home—all in all, by and by!

AT THE BAR.

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

Ere these lines see the light the system for many generations prevalent in our military polity, and known as Purchase in the Army, may appear to a young and blooming generation more as a dream of the antiquated past. But at the period to which I refer the buying and selling of commissions were very prosaic and everyday practices indeed; and if a young gentleman of ardent temperament and expensive habits was ambitious of serving his country in the tented field, or in some such substitute for the field in question as a provincial garrison town or a distant colony, the first step he took towards courting the bubble reputation of the cannon's mouth was to pay the sum of four hundred and fifty pounds into an army agent's as the price of his commission — I am assuming that he was anxious to obtain an ensigncy in the line—and then he, and his parents and guardians or any friends in possession of "influence" or "interest" at the Horse Guards he may have been lucky enough to possess, took to pestering the Commander-in-Chief, and worshipping H.R.H.'s life out, officially speaking, until the royal personage who presides over the destinies of our armies, "the soldier's friend" as he is called—every Commander-in-Chief that I ever heard of was known during his tenure of office as "the soldier's friend" — was moved some fine morning to submit the commission of Ensign Hedging to her Most Gracious Majesty for signature.

All the necessary steps exacted by the law, or rather the usage military, were taken with this intent, once upon a time, by Charles Plantagenet Saxon, Esq., a remarkably good-looking and usually good-natured young fellow, who having been educated at a country grammar-school, where he was much renowned for his proficiency at cricket and foot-ball and rowing, was esteemed by all who knew him, including the respectable Bachelor of Divinity who had flogged him through a course of the great classic writers of antiquity, to be fully competent to serve his country in any martial post to which he might be appointed, from a drummer-boy to a field-marshal upwards.

For many ages Englishmen have been renowned for doing capably the things they have never been taught to do; and it has been owing to this happily intuitive capacity that we have become so highly esteemed and so personally popular abroad. Charley Saxon — I call him that for brevity's sake—offered no exception to the glorious British rule. At eighteen years of age he really could do a vast number of things, and with respect to those of which he was ignorant, he and his relatives, friends, and acquaintances firmly believed (in accordance with another happy British rule) that it was entirely useless to learn them. Thus he was a very fair hand at making Latin verses; and if he did not remember many of the rules in the Eton Grammar, he had certainly repeated all of them, *subterfuge*, scores of times. Of the study of scriptural history he had had long and painful experience; and if he did not understand Butler's analogies he had read it through, and made copious extracts from that admirable work. He could ride, drive, swim, shoot, fish, leap, run door sports, and was an adept at all outdoor games. He was an excellent maker of salmon flies, made ground-bait splendidly, and understood so much about the management and

maladies of horses that, but for that plaguy question of expense, his papa would have purchased a cornetcy in the cavalry for him, instead of an ensigncy in the line. He took much interest too in the improvement of our breed of horses by means of racing, and was much more cognizant of the intricacies of the odds than he was of those of the multiplication table. He rowed gloriously, and at billiards professional players could venture to give only a very few points. And, when he was out of his nonage, what a clear, rich, baritone voice he had, and how cleverly he played on the *cornet à piston*! As to cards, there was not a game, from lan-quet to unlimited loo, from baccarat to blind-hokey, in which he was not an adept; and at the more recondite diversion of hazard his nice discrimination between nicks and mains had earned him, even before he was sixteen, the applause and admiration of his comrades; qualified, it is necessary to add, by the animadversion of his reverend preceptor. Lest you should imagine that Charley was altogether an Admirable Crichton, I must in fairness hint that there were many accomplishments which the youth did not possess. He knew scarcely any French, and of German, or any other modern language, he was wholly ignorant. He certainly could not have construed a page of Virgil into English without the aid of a dictionary. He was unable to draw; and he wrote a big, sprawling schoolboy hand, and was not very scrupulous as to the accuracy of his orthography. In his leisure hours he had read an amazing number of novels and plays, and had forgotten them nearly as soon as they were read. Then — what use can there be in farther pursuing the catalogue of his deficiencies; a list, moreover, which must be vastly counterbalanced by his surprisingly brilliant attainments? There must be spots on the sun, mustn't there? Perfection is not attainable by erring mortals, is it? Charley Saxon was, emphatically speaking, a fine young fellow—a fine young English gentleman—a brave, dashing, generous youth as ever entered the famous British army.

His father, the Reverend Harold Plantagenet Saxon, M.A., was rector of Rawley-cum-Crew, in the county of Devon, and his livings—a fat one as living went down in the part of the country—was worth about seven hundred and fifty pounds a year. His wife had a little, a very little money. He had nine children, four of them girls and grown up; and in view of these circumstances it is not perhaps to be wondered at that the Rev. H. P. Saxon was compelled to borrow from an insurance office the funds requisite to purchase his son's commission and to pay for the splendid and elaborate outfit, both in martial and in civil apparel, supplied by Messrs. Froggell and Scales, military clothiers of Savile-row. Young Charley easily passed the ridiculous mockery of an examination to which candidates for commissions were subjected in the happy time to which I refer; and was duly gazetted to a pair of colours in the Hundred and Fiftieth Foot (the Duke of York's regiment of Yorkshire Tykes). His pay as an ensign amounted to about thirty shillings a week, which scarcely covered his subscriptions to mess and band funds. All that his papa could allow him in addition was fifty pounds a year; so into Hundred and Fiftieth he went, full of high hopes and noble aspirations—into the Hundred and Fiftieth he went, with an ample wardrobe and plenty of credit, to live, as a preliminary experience, at the rate of about five hundred per annum, and to consort with a number of young English gentlemen as fine as he, some of whom had five thousand a year, while others had not fivepence of their own.

These facts remembered, the chronicler will not perhaps be considered so extravagant a narrator as the Sultana Scheherazade in the *Arabian Nights*, if he mentions that within five-and-twenty months of his entrance into the Hundred and Fiftieth Foot Charley Saxon found himself "at the Bar." There; I tell you again there is no need to be terrified. I don't mean the Bar of the Bankruptcy Court; although it must be owned that Charley had been threatened more than once with the ministrations of the grim tribunal in Bassinghall-street. It was only at the Bar of one of Messrs. Ginger and Pop's refreshment-rooms on the Underground Railway that Charles Plantagenet Saxon, late of Her Majesty's Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment of Foot, found himself one remarkably fine July morning, and without one sixpence, nay, without one penny, in his pocket.

How had the ex-ensign, or rather ex-lieutenant, come to this lamentable pass? The tale of sorrow may be very briefly told. His history had merely been that of many hundreds of fine young English gentlemen to whom the mess-room and the parade-ground only served as an antechamber to the kennel—that is to say, if those famous dogs, to which ruined spendthrifts are supposed to go, are favored with the shelter even of a kennel. It had been Charley Saxon's misfortune with a gross income of under one hundred and thirty pounds a year to live at the rate of a thousand or fifteen hundred. He was not, perhaps, more extravagant than his brother subalterns; but the Hundred and Fiftieth was a fast regiment, and the youth's pace was in accordance with the rapidity of his corps. He went very rapidly indeed, and the course was all down hill. Debts and discount, discount and debts; those were the diapason of the grand pianoforte on which he performed a remarkably brilliant concerto, which ere long came to an end with a crash, which Madam Arabella Goddard could scarcely have excelled. Then he had to sell his commission; or rather the usurers, to whom he had long since pawned it, sold it for him, appropriated the proceeds and credited

him therewith—less costs and charges in part payment of the multitudinous bills and I O U's decorated with his sign manual in their possession. His tradesmen proper—his tailors, boot-makers, hatters, jewellers, *que sais-je?*—were furious. Why, they asked passionately, had all the money accruing from the sale of his rank gone to the Jews? Why had he not disposed of the commission for their, the tailors' and bootmakers', benefit? So they sued him. So got judgments and executions against him by the score. Whitecross-street and the Bench were existent goals for debt in those days, and sponging-houses flourished in the purlieus of Chancery-lane. The fateful *captas ad satisfaciendum* was taken out against Charles Plantagenet Saxon, wherever the Sheriff of Middlesex should find him running up and down in his bailliwick, over and over again; and penitent letters, wretched letters, despairing letters had to be written by the incarcerated prodigal from Mr. Melphoboseth's in Cursto-street and Messrs. Bildae and Shubite's (officers to the Sheriff's) in Bream's-buildings to the poor old parson down in Devonshire, imploring the means of release. The rector of Rawley-cum-Crew did what he could, which was not much. Then Charley was entitled to a share in a reversionary property on the death of an aunt who was sixty, but the female branches of whose family had from time immemorial been renowned—in despite of the dicta of Sir George Cornwall Lewis and Mr. Thoms—for living until a hundred and three. Charley was glad to get a hundred and fifty pounds for the contingent eight or nine hundred which were to come to him on the demise of this descendant of a long line of centenarians. The hundred and fifty went to satisfy two or three of the most pressing tailors and boot-makers, and six weeks afterwards the old aunt who ought—if the Northampton tables were to be trusted—to have lived till a hundred and three, died of a quinsy. Mr Barabbas Dunas, financial agent, of 302A Pall Mall, was the gentleman who purchased Charley's reversion; and Mr. Lyppy, officer to the Sheriff of Middlesex, arrested Charley as he came down the Pall Mall chambers' stairs with Mr. Dunas' cheque in his pocket, at the suit of Messrs. Pulpel and Linninger, hosiers, of the Burlington-arcade. It was very provoking.

Yes; but it was a good deal more provoking to find oneself at the bar of Messrs. Ginger and Pop's refreshment-room at the Charing-cross station of the Underground Railway without one single coin of the realm in one's possession. It was most provoking of all to be in debt to a tall young lady with a towering chignon, a bright blonde in hue, in the sum of one shilling, for a glass of soda-water-and-brandy just supplied, and which one had swallowed in the hurry in the moment without in the least reflecting that one hadn't the money to pay for one's refreshment. "One" was Charles Plantagenet Saxon, Esq., late of Her Majesty's Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment of Foot, and this is how he had got into his last and most awkward dilemma. He had been for some months now "loafing," to use the inelegant but expressive locution, about London—a kind of decayed dandy Mr. Micawber, waiting for something to turn up. He had gone home for a time to Rawley-cum-Crew, but he had not found much felicity in the bosom of his family; the domestic hearth did not throw out a very genial heat, the fact being that most of the Wallsend, which should have kindled the cheerful blaze, had been burnt by Charley's extravagance. His father, who had been obliged to borrow a good deal more money to help pay the young spendthrift's debts—and they were not paid yet—looked somewhat wrathfully at him; and Charley could not help fancying that his papa grudged him the meat he ate and the wine he drank at his table. At least he heard a good many cursory but unpleasant allusions to having "so many mouths to feed." He was very sorry, now, for his felly and extravagance; but where was the use of his sorrow? It would not bring back the money which should have furnished his sisters—four tall young women, desperately anxious to be married to four pale-faced curates—with dowries. He felt, uneasily, that everybody in the house, down to the page-boy in buttons, was under the impression that he was a robber and a swindler. His little brother Jack told him plainly that, in consequence of his, Charley's, having made such an "awful mess of it" he, Jack, was debarred from receiving the education of a gentleman at a public school, and was doomed to receive his classical learning under the eye and the verbal rod of his papa at home. Charley had not the heart to box the boy's ears for his impertinence. The reproach stung him to the quick, but he could not but own that he had deserved it. And can there be a situation more deplorable than that of the bankrupt prodigal, who is so very willing to come home, and say "Father, I have sinned," but who finds that there is no nice hot roast fillet of veal, with stuffing, waiting for him at the paternal domicile—nay, more, that his family have not the slightest objection to his staying away, minding swine, and feeding on draff and husks for so long a period as ever he pleased?

Wearied with perpetual repetitions of platitudes regarding the expediency of not eating the bread of idleness, but by earning it by the sweat of one's brow, and disgusted with the frequency of allusions to Queensland or the diamond fields as a field for emigration, Charley came to London with as much money as he could borrow from his outraged sire—I don't think the advance exceeded ten-pound note—to see if anything would turn up. Something indeed did turn up nearly every other day in the shape of a dun,

a writ, a county-court summons, or a sheriff's officer; but these were not precisely the chances which our postulant was anxious to win. He advertised in the newspapers for an appointment in connection with a public office, and he sent in an application to the Justices of Blankshire when the post of Governor of the Quodford County Gaol became vacant, being given to understand that positions of that nature were quite in the way of gentlemen retired from the army; but none of his efforts succeeded, and days and weeks passed by without anything turning up by means of which that grand desideratum, a bellyfull of bread and meat every day, might be earned. Fortunately he had still a very good wardrobe—the relics of his once monumental tick with the West-end-tailors—remaining. He was still able to look like a gentleman, and even like a "swell;" and there even remained a considerable surplus of well-cut garments, on which sundry accommodating tradesmen in St. Martin's-lane and about Leicester-square, and who transacted business under the familiar yet mystic sign of Three Golden Balls, were not unwilling to make advances. It was a most melancholy thing, of course, to pawn the coats and pantaloons for which one hadn't paid; but still, under the painfully provoking circumstances, what was a fellow to do?

Thoroughly "hard up" then, and as it seemed, hopelessly, "down on his back," was Charley Saxon one bright July morning, as, after a before-breakfast visit to an accommodating tradesman who made advances on tangible securities at the corner of Cecil-court, St. Martin's-lane he strolled through the Lowther-arcade and emerged into the Strand, opposite the South Eastern terminus. He stood for some minutes looking wistfully enough at Mr. Barry's beautiful restoration of Charing-cross in the station courtyard, as though expecting something to turn up from the interior of that highly florid monument. Nothing, however, came out of the cross; and then Charley thought that about the best course to pursue would be to go and breakfast in the refreshment-room of the station. Stay, he thought, there was more than one execution against him; Charing-cross railway terminus was a very public place, and it would be an awful bore to be arrested on such a fine summer morning. Wasn't there a place, under an arch at the bottom of Villiers-street, and close to the Embankment station of the Underground Railway, called Gatti's? Egad, he'd go and breakfast there, even although he could get nothing better than coffee and penny ices.

He reached the bottom of Villiers-street, entered one of Mr. Gatti's spacious saloons, and discovering that ham and eggs or chops and steaks were as attainable as penny ices in that comfortable café, ordered some breakfast and installed himself at one of the marble tables. To his horror he had scarcely got through the first leading article of that deservedly popular journal, the *Daily Diatribe*, when raising his eyes he saw sitting at a table, right over against him) and withering him with baleful glances, little Moss Abrahams, whom he knew to be one of the chief retainers of Messrs. Bildad and Shubite, officers to the Sheriff of Middlesex, Bream's-buildings, E. C. In extreme perturbation Charley Saxon rose, and sought for his hat; but simultaneously Mr. Moss Abrahams, whose *couvre chef* was already on his head, rose likewise. "Ere, Capturing!" cried Mr. Abrahams, producing a slip of paper from a huge leather pocket-book. Charley Saxon waited to hear no more; but, to use another vulgar but nervous term, "bolted." Who ate the breakfast he had ordered, none shall say. Perhaps Giacomo Pifferedoli from Turin, the waiter, was responsible for the meal, and choked himself with it to be revenged on the false Englishman. At all events Charley Saxon showed the sheriff's officer the cleanest pair of heels imaginable out of a footrace between Deerfoot and Captain Patten Saunders. He contrived to give Mr. Abrahams the slip completely. Fortunately there is always a crowd at the bottom of Villiers-street, composed of railway and steamboat passengers, roughs, ragged boys on their way to their favourite recreation ground on the Thames embankment, orange-vendors, and barefooted girls who pick pockets under the pretence of selling flowers and cigar-lights. In the midst of this motley throng Charley Saxon was satisfactorily lost, but he could hear the Hebrew's melodious voice shouting after him, "Capturing! Capturing!" It was by fate, however, that the luckless ex-subaltern's footsteps were conducted, and fate led him right into the station of the Underground Railway. He could see through a grove of girders and trusses beneath him that there was a train drawn up to the platform and obviously on the point of starting. He rushed, with a crowd of descending passengers, to the wicket leading to the staircase of descent. "Ticket, sir, show your ticket!" cried the collector, barring the passage with his arm, as Charley essayed to hurry by. Alas, he had no ticket! The man was perfectly civil but firm; he pointed out the pigeon-hole where the necessary pasteboard was procurable, observing that the gentleman would miss this train, but that another would be up in five minutes. As Charley fell back ruefully in obedience to his inflexible mandate, he caught a glimpse of Mr. Moss Abrahams rushing by him in red-hot haste. The Caucasian alghazil did not see him, and evidently thought that his intended prey had passed through the wicket, and so down to the platform. "Ticket!" again cried the collector, in stern performance of his bounden duty; but wary Mr. Moss Abrahams was prepared for that as for any other possible emergency; "Sheason!" he cried triumphantly, flourishing a square of very greasy leather in