

WINNING THE PRIZE.

"Going to try for the prize, Jessie!"
 "Why, certainly!"
 "And you, Cad?"
 "Of course."
 "No need of asking you, Maggie; your work will probably throw the rest of us in the shade; hardly an equal contest with your deft fingers in the field, or rather on the canvas."

"I wish," continued the speaker, fair Susie Peckham, "that some one else had offered the prize, rather than that old Colonel Warwick. Being able to command a regiment is one thing and, possessing sufficient sagacity to judge fairly the comparative merits of young ladies is quite another."

"Oh, ho," chimed in Cad Wellington. "You let Colonel Warwick alone on the fancy-work question, my dear; there never was a gentleman better able to decide what is truly tasteful and ornamental, than this same Col. Warwick. But did you notice, by the way, that he did not specify fancy work at all in making his offer?"

"And the Colonel is so peculiar," said Maggie Luscomb. "We might do our very prettiest, and then likely as not he would take some queer freak and decide in favor of some out-of-the-way article no one else would ever see any beauty in whatever, until he pointed it out."

"All the better I should think," added Jessie Neale. "You know my patterns are apt to be what Balsom of the wool Bazaar calls unique; so I should hope for some consideration on that ground." And the speaker, a stately girl, carried something of a suggestion of the "unique" in manner and voice both so well-toned and slightly conscious.

"What are you going to do?" asked Maggie Luscomb of Cad Wellington.

"I don't know," was the evasive reply. "Probably something in the worsted."

"Wouldn't it be better for us not to tell each other our plans?" suggested Susie Pinkham.

"Well, yes," replied Jessie thoughtfully. "It wouldn't be quite agreeable to find we had produced duplicates when the time comes, at least none of us four cronies."

"Then suppose we tell enough to prevent any risk of that?" said Maggie. "I might crochet another work on canvas, you know."

"Yes, that would be the best way," broke in Cad Wellington, "but, girls," she added, in a different tone, half laughing, "what do you imagine Poppy will try her hand at? Suppose she'll try at all?"

"Poor little Pauline," said Maggie Luscomb, pityingly, "it's a shame the way she has to dig and delve the livelong time? I declare I should give up in despair if I had to work as she does; proud little piece she is too, and by good rights, what's more. Her family was as high-toned as any people in the place once. But since her father died poor Poppy has literally spent her time popping from the kitchen to the dining-room, and vice versa, drudging for those everlasting boarders."

"H'm! she's one of the happiest girls I know," remarked Jessie Neale.
 "And one of the smartest that ever lived," added Cad Wellington, "only the idea of her working for the fair and for the prize! Well, it's just a trifle too-too for my risibles," and Cad's dupes came and went with such a ludicrous attempt at gravity, the effort resulted in a good laugh all round, and soon afterward the friends parted.

"Old Colonel Warwick," as he was generally known, was greatly interested in the fair soon to be in progress in his native town, in aid of a soldier's home. He was an old soldier himself, and carried about in his wise old head a vivid recollection of sufferings and dangers once encountered by a certain class of men, whose service he never meant to depreciate or forget not he! although it was part of his policy not to say much about what he termed a simple duty. Being, moreover, very much interested and as was also his charming wife, in young people, and holding in common with her certain firm opinions as to what their capabilities should be in several directions, he had offered a liberal prize to the young lady who should send to the fair, as he quaintly expressed it "the most beautiful, useful and well-made article on exhibition."

Many others than the few already mentioned entered the long list of competitors, but the abilities of these particular ones on this occasion being in advance of most others, we deal with them chiefly.

"What's matter, Poppy?" asked a soft voice full of gentle solicitude, of a young girl who sat wearily skimming the local paper late in the evening.

"Oh, nothing; why?"
 "Because, child, you had a kind of disappointed look, and I thought perhaps something met your eye that tired or grieved you."

"Guess I'm too sleepy for grief to-night," and the next moment very cheerfully, "well, I'm sure the best thing I could do for Poppy Penrose would be to put her to bed, so good night, mamma."

But once in her quiet room she soliloquized regretfully:

"So good old Colonel Warwick offers a prize, does he, to the young lady producing the most beautiful, useful and well-made article on exhibition at the coming fair? Well, the time was I might have entered, but what could I do now I wonder?" and she looked ruefully down at her well-shaped, but little hands, somewhat stiffened by toil.

"I suppose," she went on, "Cad Wellington will embroider something in her fine style, and what she makes is often 'beautiful, useful' and always well made; and Jessie Neale will do some of her wonderful worsted work; Maggie Luscomb will crochet something so perfectly it would take a dozen pairs of Colonel's spectacles to detect a flaw; and as for Sue Pinkham, she will probably paint something true to life or nature, flowers perhaps, one could almost snatch them from the canvas, it would seem. And even then without taking the prize, such a worthy object for which to spend one's time and talent. But never Poppy Penrose," she added, patting her round sweet cheek, "your time may come yet for prizes—here or there," she added thoughtfully, with a glance out of her window toward the sky; and a few moments later she was sleeping the sweet sleep her faithful efforts had fairly earned.

Next day the four friends went with mysterious, interested faces to the neighboring city and in different directions accomplished a good deal of shopping, all very pleasant and inspiring.

Popping as usual from kitchen to dining-room, vice versa went Pauline Penrose, "cooking and delving and waiting upon those everlasting boarders," yet smiling and cheery as ever. But although the noble little thing had resolved her mother should know nothing of what absorbed her, nevertheless continually in her mind was the harrowing tempting query, "now what could I do! But there was no money with which to buy Berlin wools with their aspiring prices; and was not masaging every penny possible with which to buy farmer Adams' splendid cow, and wouldn't her sixteen quarts of milk a day help her out, though, in more ways than one? So there was no money for materials from which she could produce either the useful, beautiful or well-made, and no time to spend even in winning a nice prize; for Colonel Warwick would offer nothing short of nice; not he."

"Well, whatever has come over Pauline the dear child, I can't imagine," remarked Mrs. Penrose to one of her boarders, "but she just dances and sings ten times gayer than ever, from morning till night; something's up I do believe," and the mother looked pleased and puzzled.

Something was up—simply that Poppy had decided to enter as a competitor for the prize offered by old Colonel Warwick.

The opening evening of the fair had arrived. The articles were all in, and with expectation on tip-toe the friends arrayed themselves in their most becoming attire. All the towns-people who could walk seemed to be present, when at length the time came for inspecting a long table in the middle of the hall. Colonel Warwick advanced towards the spot, as notice was given that the articles presented by the young ladies who were candidates for his offered prize were ready. It was a charming array. At first the kindly old gentleman declared it was all too much for him; but requesting—"in his old way," Cad Wellington afterward remarked—that the crowd meander away from the table a while, and leave him to recall his bewildered senses, he shortly found himself an examining committee of one, and set himself vigorously to the work before him. At length after nearly two hours of faithful scrutiny, he had reduced the number of articles from which to choose

to four, and those were the offers of our four friends.

Cad Wellington's, as Poppy had predicted, was a pair of gentleman's slippers embroidered on velvet, with silk and chenille, and the Colonel with his fine eye for the beautiful, looked long and admiringly at the lovely pattern.

The next was Jessie Neale's work; a sofa pillow, in style "unique" indeed! A most enticing article, and such a useful present for his wife, the Colonel reflected.

Then came the wonderfully intricate wrap for a baby, all floss and ribbons it appeared, and the Colonel loved little babies so much as to "like all their belongings," and a very marvel of beauty was this wrap, the work of Maggie Luscomb's skilful fingers.

And true enough a bunch of pansies, moss-buds, and trailing vines, glowed clear and true to nature; Sue Pinkham's faultless contribution, as a card in the corner showed.

The Colonel was somehow inclining toward that baby wrap, when he noticed an object, which, from its plainness in contrast, perhaps, had before escaped his notice. It was a tray evidently containing something covered with a snowy napkin. Carefully removing the cloth, he gazed intently for a moment on the objects beneath; then he thrust his thumbs with a satisfied air in the arm-holes of his vest, and gave a low whistle; and Mrs. Warwick, hearing the sound, and observing the movement, remarked to a lady beside her:

"There! the Colonel is pleased now. I know that whistle and that contented attitude."

What he looked upon was a loaf cut in the middle, showing bread white as snow, light as foam, and tender as sponge cake, yet thoroughly well baked. Beside it was a brown loaf, cut in the same way, showing the perfect baking, and necessarily careful mixing. A couple of tartis showed puff paste in perfection. Across a well-cooked slice of turkey lay a slice of savory dressing, and a tiny block of apple jelly; a small plate of harlequin cake completing the tempting array. A card on the tray bore the name "Pauline Penrose," and it took up less room than either Jessie Neale's sofa pillow, or Maggie Luscomb's baby wrap, so deftly had the little hands disposed of her delicate wares.

Now, good bread had always been a favorite hobby with Colonel Warwick, and suddenly taking a large knife lying on the tray, he cut a large slice from the white loaf, and never paused a moment until every crumb had disappeared. Then he cut a similar slice from the brown bread, eating that also; and a tart followed; then a bite or two of cake; then part of the slice of turkey, all of the dressing, and the little block of apple jelly.

Then the Colonel thrust his thumbs into the armholes of his vest, and gave a long and loud whistle. This was followed by quite a little round of applause from the interested spectators.

After another careful survey of the articles in general, a small bell was rung to produce quiet, and Colonel Warwick at once had the floor.

"My young friends," he said, "you have so out-vided each other in the beauty and variety of your generous offering to our fair, that at one time I feared it would be impossible for me to satisfactorily decide who, according to the conditions specified, would be most deserving of the prize it is my intention to forward to-morrow to one of your number. To each and all of you, let me tender my hearty thanks for the deserving efforts put forth, and remember that having failed to win the prize is no proof that your work is not, in most instances, entirely acceptable."

"Comfortable, elegant slippers," he went on "are beautiful, useful, and well made; so are rich sofa pillows and other pretty things in worsted; also paintings, cushions, needle-books and the baby's wrap—bless it's little heart,—but what, after all, my friends, is more beautiful to look upon, so eminently useful and well made as good bread; light, wholesome pastry, palatable meat, in short, all nice culinary achievements in general! I was a farmer's boy, and my dear mother a thoroughly domestic woman, and I remember much about the toil and discipline required in perfecting one's self in those matters."

"So my conscientious verdict must be in favor of the youthful hands which furnished so deliciously the excellent sample of cookery so keenly relished just now. I shall,

therefore, take great pleasure in sending, to-morrow, my compliments to Miss Pauline Penrose; and may her example in sending samples of culinary skill be followed another year by all our young people, and the Lord willing, another prize shall then be awarded for the best productions in this department."

As the men did the applauding, it was loud and hearty, as the brief speech was finished. But gathered in one corner of the room, an hour later, sat the five friends, for Poppy was, as ever, a favorite with them all, and, to their credit be it said, the first shock of disappointment over, the other four were heartily glad that Poppy had won the prize.

"But, really, Poppy dear," Jessie Neale was saying—she of the stately carriage and "unique" patterns—"I didn't suppose any great practice was needed in bread to make good bread and pies; true, I never made them, and true too, father often worries over heavy loaves; but I supposed it was easy enough, one tried."

And Poppy answered rather tearfully, for her:

"Oh, you little know the cries I've had over poor bread and heavy pastry and slack cake; all the failures I've had to discourage me, and the pitiful wastes I sometimes made. But ma was always so patient and encouraging, and used often to say it would pay me well to persevere. But I never dreamed," she added slowly, "that all the time I was winning a prize."

But when the bell rang next day, and Colonel Warwick left with Mrs. Penrose a sealed envelope for Miss Pauline, it seemed as if Poppy's nervous fingers were very long in opening it. And when at last she held in her fingers simply a slip of paper with a few printed and written words on it, she was utterly unable to speak for a few minutes; but when the over-considerate mother said inquiringly:

"Well, Poppy, child?" she choked back a great sob, and burst out:

"Ma, darling! I'm going this very afternoon to farmer Adams' for that young cow, and you shall have that velvet bonnet I saw at Dresser's, for that blessed old Colonel Warwick has sent me a check for one hundred dollars, and all the result of that nine shillings' worth of material you allowed me to send fractions of to the fair." What a lucky hit it was to be sure.—*Golden Rule.*

GORDON AT GRAVESEND.

BY ARTHUR STANNARD.

A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE.

"Warrior of God, man's friend; not here below, But somewhere dead in the far waste Southland. Thou livest in all hearts; for all men know Thy certain path borne no simpler, nobler man."

Doubtless there will be more, as there have already been many, accounts given to the world of the life and doings of that brave and gallant soldier—that true and Christian gentleman—whose name, during the last twelve months or more, has been upon the lips of all mankind, whose deeds have been shouted aloud or whispered low, according as the scales of his fate were buoyant with victory or heavy with failure.

I am neither author nor journalist, but I had the advantage of working under General Gordon for nearly two years at a time when he was perhaps less conspicuous to the world but better known as a man than at any other period of his eventful life; and, therefore, I hope to be able to give a fair account of the man himself as he appeared apart from the glare of fame through which he was commonly viewed.

And a very real and human man he was—as great, as good, and as true as any have described him; not a colorless saint without a flaw or fault to retrieve his goodness from monotony—as some would apparently have us conceive him—but a man whose genius was too brilliant and whose parts were too strong to be without corresponding weaknesses and prejudices almost as marked as his talents. If I describe his peculiarities as well as his goodness it will not be to detract from his reputation but rather to enhance it, for who could have loved Gordon as we did if he had been nothing more than a model of all the virtues?

When I first stood face to face with the St. Paul of the nineteenth century—for surely no other man of modern times has united in his person so many points of resemblance to the great apostle, in career as well as in character—I was a long slip of a