

THE KING OF NO-LAND.

BY B. L. FARREON.

Many men grow blind by looking at the sun, and never see the beauty of the stars.

Between Coltfoot and Sasasfas an intimacy sprang up which ripened into friendship. Coltfoot was attracted by the bright wit and lively fancy of Sasasfas, and Sasasfas was not long in discovering that there was a man of a higher order than those among whom he was accustomed to move.

"You know a great deal," said Sasasfas; "and yet you are not very old."

"I am more than thirty years of age," replied Coltfoot, with a smile.

"How did you learn all you know?"

"I taught myself chiefly, I think," said Coltfoot, with a smile.

"Surely; and if you read the history of men, you will find that that kind of teaching seems to bear the best kind of fruit."

He said this candidly, not as a boast, for he was not vainglorious, but as the sober truth.

"Then to be born great—" murmured Sasasfas.

"Do you mean, to be born rich and in a high position?"

"Yes. To be born great, in that way, does not make one great."

"Unfortunately, no."

"Why unfortunately?" pursued Sasasfas.

"Because those who are born thus have so much power for good in their hands that, if they were really great, the world would be better than it is."

"It is not a good world, then?" sighed Sasasfas.

He was young; his mind was pliable and amenable to kindly influence, his nature was susceptible and tender; and he would be wonderful at the thought that his regard and admiration for Coltfoot, who was ready to accept Coltfoot's views without question; ready, indeed, to accept them in a more exaggerated sense than Coltfoot intended.

Coltfoot laid his hand kindly on Sasasfas's head. "It is a good world," he said, with somewhat of seriousness in his tone, as though he wished to impress Sasasfas; "a good world, in every sense; but there are many wrongs and injustices in it which are allowed to exist, and which might with ease be removed by those who are born to greatness."

His words sank into Sasasfas's heart. "But in the mean time," Coltfoot continued, with a sweet and serious smile, "we will go on and work, and not lose heart because things are not as we wish them to be."

"You are never idle," said Sasasfas. "Do you think that man was born to be idle? Have you not heard that work is God's heritage to man?"

"It is; and the best and sweetest heritage. The idle man is like a weed in a field."

"Then one who does not work—"

"Falls not in his station. The world would benefit by his absence."

Thought Sasasfas: "I wonder what some of my time-wasters would say to this? Read the Act, perhaps."

Such conversations as these were not uncommon between Sasasfas and Coltfoot; and they led the Prince into new fields of thought. What he saw, also, in his wanderings with Coltfoot stirred him strangely. He had been taught to believe—directly, not in plain words, but insidiously and by a false inference—that the poor were of a different order from that of which he was the chief ornament. He expressed this to Coltfoot, not as his own opinion, but as his heart felt.

"Come with me," said Coltfoot. And the Prince and the poor schoolmaster went together into the houses of the poor, and Coltfoot showed Sasasfas the virtues and the good that were in their lives. And the Prince became of Coltfoot's views, Coltfoot would probably have shown him more of their virtues, so that whatever judgment he formed might have been formed upon thoroughly correct basis; but Sasasfas was a boy, and Coltfoot (part from his consideration for Sasasfas's tender years) was anxious to show the best side of those he loved and compassionated. Yet he did not utterly conceal their vices; he spoke of them with gentle words of commiseration, saying how, in many instances, the poor were like creatures walking in the dark, being, in most instances, judged by a higher standard than that up to which they were educated, or were like helpless flies attracted by the glare of lights. It was while the Prince and Coltfoot were filled with the thought that he said to his time-servers:

"What do you think of the poor?"

"They are an ungrateful class. They abused their shoulders as they were wont to do to any subject that was indifferent to them, and answered, carelessly."

"They are an ungrateful class. They are not for your Royal Highnesses," he said. "For being allowed to live?"

"Your Royal Highness is too young to understand these matters."

With this he was forced to be satisfied, for they would return him no other answer. In truth, they were puzzled and perplexed by his whims and whams, as they termed them; strive as they might to educate him in the right way, he refused to think as they bade him. To them it was inexplicable that he would follow them blindly through the path of roses, but would blotter his head about the nettles. This suggestion concerning the roses came from the Court poet, and was highly praised by all but the Prince. "You have forgotten the thorns," he said.

"They are not for your Royal Highnesses," he said. "For being allowed to live?"

"If words and thorns exist," he remarked sagely, "they must be retained."

"It will be our pleasure and duty," they said, "to clear them from your Royal Highness's life. They shall not touch your sacred person."

"My sacred person!" he repeated under his breath, and trembled at the words. To him they sounded like profanity. Still he persisted, and was then told that it was not seemly in him to allow his mind to be thus distributed.

"These things are not for princes," they said.

After his usual fashion, he flew from one to another for counsel and assistance. In some rare way there had come to this young Prince an intense and earnest desire to know the rights and wrongs of things, and he found himself battling in a sea of doubt because of the conflicting views that were presented to him. He asked Coltfoot about the "divine right," which he said he had heard was the special attribute of kings, and Coltfoot allowed him, first, not only the folly but the blasphemy of the term, if taken (as it is too often taken) in its literal sense; and next, to what great ends it might be used, if rightly understood. Having some up, and bringing some down, Coltfoot brought all persons down on a level, so far as regards the laws and principles of humanity and morality and the proper living of life. Coltfoot saw that Sasasfas was in doubt as to his opinion, and without in the least suspecting the lad's exalted station, he opened his heart and mind to the lad whom he had learned to love. He implanted in the lad's soul the purest

seeds of honor and religion, and did his best to lay the foundation for a good life. To be continued.

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