



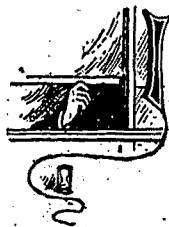
IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?—From Painting by W. Woodhouse.

THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE.

BY JULIANA HORATIA EWING.

CHAPTER XI.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith: Henceforth—"*2 Tim. iv. 7.*



It was Sunday. Sunday, the tenth of November—St. Martin's day.

Thought it was in November, a summer day. A day of that little summer which alternately claims St. Luke and St. Martin as its patrons, and is apt to shine its brightest when

it can claim both—on the Feast of All Saints.

Sunday in camp. With curious points of likeness and unlikeness to English Sundays elsewhere. Like in that general aspect of tidiness and quiet, of gravity and pause, which betrays that a hard-working and very practical people have thought good to keep much of the Sabbath with its Sunday. Like, too, in the little groups of children, gay in Sunday best, and grave with Sunday books, trotting to Sunday-school.

Unlike, in that to see all the men about the place washed and shaved is not, among soldiers, peculiar to Sunday. Unlike,

also, in a more festal feeling produced by the gay gatherings of men and officers on church parade (far distant be the day when parade services shall be abolished!), and by the exhilarating sounds of the bands with which each regiment marched from its parade-ground to the church.

Here and there small detachments might be met making their way to the Roman Catholic church in camp, or to places of worship of various denominations in the neighboring town; and on Blind Baby's parade (where he was prematurely crushing his Sunday frock with his drum-basket in ecstatic sympathy with the bands), a corporal of exceptional views was parading himself and two privates of the same denominations, before marching the three of them to their own peculiar prayer-meeting.

The brigade for the iron church paraded early (the sunshine and sweet air seemed to promote alacrity). And after the men were seated their officers still lingered outside, chatting with the ladies and the staff, as these assembled by degrees, and sunning themselves in the genial warmth of St. Martin's little summer.

The V. C. was talking with the little boys in sailor suits and their mother, when the officer who played the organ came towards them.

"Good-morning, kapellmeister!" said two or three voices.

Nicknames were common in the camp, and this one had been rapidly adopted.

"Ye look cloudy this fine morning, kapellmeister!" cried the Irish officer. "Got the toothache?"

The kapellmeister shook his head, and forced a smile which rather intensified than diminished the gloom of a countenance which did not naturally lend itself to lines of levity. Was he not a Scotchman, and also a musician? His lips smiled in answer to the chaff, but his sombre eyes were fixed on the V. C. They had—as some eyes have—an odd summoning power, and the V. C. went to meet him.

When he said, "I was in there this morning," the V. C.'s eyes followed the kapellmeister's to the barrack-master's hut, and his own face fell.

"He wants the 'Tug-of-War Hymn,'" said the kapellmeister.

"He's not coming to church?"

"Oh, no; but he's set his heart on hearing the 'Tug-of-War Hymn' through his bedroom window; and it seems the chaplain has promised we shall have it to-day. It's a most amazing thing," added the kapellmeister, shooting out one arm with a gesture common to him when oppressed by an idea,—"it's a most amazing thing! For I think, if I were in my grave that hymn—as these men bolt with it—might make me turn in my place of rest; but it's the last thing I should care to hear if I

were ill in bed. However, he wants it, poor lad, and he asked me to ask you if you would turn outside when it begins, and sing so that he can hear your voice and the words."

"Oh, he can never hear me over there!"

"He can hear you fast enough! It's quite close. He begged me to ask you, and I was to say it's his last Sunday."

There was a pause. The V. C. looked at the little "officers' door," which was close to his usual seat, which always stood open in summer weather, and half in half out of which men often stood in the crush of a parade service. There was no difficulty in the matter except his own intense dislike to anything approaching to display. Also he had become more attached than he could have believed possible to the gallant-hearted child whose worship of him had been flattery as delicate as it was sincere. It was no small pain to know that the boy lay dying—a pain he would have preferred to bear in silence.

"Is he very much set upon it?"

"Absolutely."

"Is she—is Lady Jane there?"

"All of them. He can't last the day out."

"When will it be sung—that hymn, I mean?"

"I've put it on after the third Collect."

"All right."

The V. C. took up his sword and went to his seat, and the kapellmeister took up his and went to the organ.

In the barrack-master's hut my hero lay dying. His mind was now absolutely clear, but during the night it had wandered—wandered in a delirium that was perhaps some solace of his sufferings, for he had believed himself to be a soldier on active service, bearing the brunt of battle and the pain of wounds; and when fever consumed him, he thought it was the heat of India that parched his throat and scorched his skin; and called again and again in noble raving to imaginary comrades to keep up heart and press forward.

About four o'clock he sank into stupor, and the doctor forced Lady Jane to go and lie down, and the colonel took his wife away to rest also.

At gun-fire Leonard opened his eyes. For some minutes he gazed straight ahead of him, and the master of the house, who sat by his bedside, could not be sure whether he were still delirious or no; but when their eyes met he saw that Leonard's senses had returned to him, and kissed the wan little hand that was feeling about for The Sweep's head in silence that he almost feared to break.

Leonard broke in by saying, "When did you bring Uncle Rupert to camp, father dear?"

"Uncle Rupert is at home, my darling; and you are in Uncle Henry's hut."

"I know I am; and so is Uncle Rupert. He is at the end of the room there. Can't you see him?"

"No, Len; I only see the wall, with your text on it that poor old father did for you."

"My 'goodly heritage,' you mean? I can't see that now. Uncle Rupert is in front of it. I thought you put him there. Only he's out of his frame, and—it's very odd!"

"What's odd, my darling?"

"Some one has wiped away all the tears from his eyes."

"Hymn two hundred and sixty-three; 'Fight the good fight of faith.'"

(To be Continued.)

FEAR.

Some celebrated man, who saw a little clearer than others, once said, "The fear of looking like a fool has prevented many a man acting like a hero!"

This unworthy fear, which consists largely of self-conceit and self-consciousness, is the great vice to be eliminated in growing from the heart, out. There is nothing but love which can utterly overpower it. It is that love which is a love to God and a love to our fellow-men, and which, growing greater and greater in the heart, finally casts out self-conscious fear as well as every other baser thing. Where love grows perfect there is room for nothing else.