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RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

CHAPTER IL-CONTINUED

CHAPTER II.—CONTINUED.

Mike, to whom all this had been addressed, made no response. His head had fallen on his breast, his eyes were closed, and he saw nothing but his own sweet dreams. The soothing pipe, the comfortable warmth, his hard day's work and the stranger's voice, had combined to loll him into the most tranquil of slumbers.

"Look at that fellow," said the Austra "Look at that fellow," said the Australian to me after contemplating thesleeper for a moment, "he is a practical philosopher. I wonder whether he knows how wise he is. Happy man! living where he was born, among his own people, and enjoying all his life a contentment which some of us have searched for round the world without finding."

"I don't know that I envy him much. I shouldn't like to have to smoke that tobacco of his. Throw it away and take some of mine," and I held out my pouch. Mike, to whom all this had been addressed, made no response. His head

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"No. thank'ee, I like this well enough. It reminds me of times rather pleasant to look back upon - by enough. comparison. I was horribly miserable, but I have more reason to be unhappy now than I had then. Oh, yes, I have smoked this, or something quite as bad, before. My experience of tobacco is as varied as my experience of occupa-tions. I have been sailor, porter, day-laborer, gold digger, and shopman. I know what bad tobacco is. ese scraps of self-revelation made

me look at my companion more closely. In figure he was above the middle height, broad and well-built; his talk was sometimes accompanied by a gest-ure or a motion of the head, the easy which betokened strength of body, and there was certainly strength of will in the jaw and mouth. Yet now and then when his thoughts wandered and his face relaxed, certain lines would gather in his forehead, and a look of discontent would stead into the face, weakening the expres sion. There was a recklessness in his attitude as he sat there, his clear-cut face embrowned and weather beaten his hair falling shaggily across his fore head. He must have felt my examina tion, which I remember was perfectly undisguised, for, leisurely turning his head, he looked me full in the face. Yes, those brown eyes were not merely thoughtful; there was fire in them as well as melancholy.

But the suggestion of awakening

light which I saw died out almost im mediately. His countenance relaxed, and a smile broke over it-with that pleasing effect a smile nearly always has on a face where it is seldom seen-

"I don't think there has been much He was much about my own age, and no doubt that was why I felt slight. ly piqued at having to own how very imited my experience was of any kind, and that my easy position had been gained otherwise than by my own efforts; that I had found it ready-made in fact, and had been content to take things pretty much as I found them. But I took occasion to let him know I had good reasons for supposing that should I ever be called upon to display energy or meet difficulties, I would not be found wanting, because I came of very energetic stock. And I told him

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about my father, Ambrose Shipley; how he had started in life as a navvy-on a railway, and, with hardly any education, but gifted with a cool head, shrewd sense, and sound health, had always seen his opportunities, and had clean from small successes to greater risen from small successes to greater ones; and by dint of labor, calculation, nerve, steadiness of thought, promptness in word and action throughout a long period, has become, as a contractor for the carriage of coals, as a promoter and director of several short and paying lines of railway, and as a fortunate speculator in land, one of the wealthiest men in Liverpool.

"It does nt take long to speak of all this," I concluded, "but it has been the work of a lifetime—no sudden success, no mere flash in the pan such as you have just been speaking of: but my hard-headed father's prosperity has been steady and increasing, and at this moment there is not in Liverpool a

"And his energy has not only been strong enough to carve out his own fortune, but to shape your career as well.

"Why, hang it all," said I, "I might go farther than the governor's office and fare worse. We can't all be originators: but businesses are like dy-nasties and great families, liable to die out ; and it is something to have con tinued them, though the achievemen is not perhaps so striking as to have founded them.

"Yes;" said the traveller, doubt fully. "A man is sometime born to certain duties—"

"Your son, for instance," I shot in "will naturally succeed you in the management of your store."

"If he has an aptitude for it--not otherwise. If ever I have a son, hi destiny shall not be artifically decided.
While he is young, he shall know as little as possible concerning the careers of those of his blood who have gone before him who have been in an way distinguished. His mind shall bent shall not be forced: its natura tendencies shall be observed and con sidered, but the application of its powers shall not be soon determined shall open of itself, unconsciously as the rose does; receive its seed at the hand of Nature, and produce its fruit in the maturity of time You speak as if you had though

and felt about this matter. "Aye, it is a subject I have though a lot about," saving which, he re placed his pipe between his lips, and beginning to puff vigorously, sent out volumes of smoke in quick and vehe-ment succession. Gradually the speed ened, and he returned to that reflective

mood which it is the boast of smoking "You see," he resumed, "I look upon myself as the victim of quite an opposite plan. Almost before the time when I could distinctly remember anything, I was aware of a portrait which used to hang in a room of my father's house. I have never seen the picture since I was a boy, but I have a painful recollection of every feature of it -- the white hair, the ruddy beaming face, the stick on which the old man's hands rested one on the other; the high-collared body coat he wore, the neavy black neck-cloth, and the bit of white collar appearing just above it ; above all, the expression on his face, which always held me in suspense to speak. As I grew older, I loved to hear my mother talk of him-he was her father -- better than of any fairy tale or ghost story that she ever told me. And what was the fascination, think you? Simply that in his ca my mother saw the prophecy of my own; and from her I caught the same fancy. I was like him, she said; the same eyes, and the same look in them; the same temper to a T. And so I used to listen eagerly to accounts

which my mother never tired of re-peating, of the incidents of his career. "I should tell you my grandfather's history was a romantic one. When a boy, he ran away to sea -- choosing the life of all others that his friends most objected to. For years they heard nothing of him; when suddenly one day there entered a fine young man, with bronzed face, dark hair, and brown eyes, dressed in pilot cloth, as my mother never forgot to say, and a cap, round which were bands of gold braid. Many and many have been the childish tears of delight I shed, as I heard of my great grandfather feebly rising from his chair, all of a tremble, of my great-grandmother giving a cry, clapping her hands, and falling into a faint. I too jumped about with an excitement of joy as great as that of my grand aunt, then ten years old, when she heard that the handsome young stranger was her brother, whose loss she had so often heard bewailed. 'Oh!' I used to think, 'only to be the here of such a sense!'

hero of such a scene! Again the Australian put his pipe in his mouth, and smoked stoically for a

few minutes.
"That lad," he resumed with a sigh, 'lived to be an admiral, and he lies buried now in St. Paul's, in London. I was never tired of listening to my mother's stories of his battles, of his wounds, of his hair-breadth escapes. She had heard all his adventures from his own lips in his old age; and her enthusiasm infected me. I wonder

a hundred fights, fearless amidst the thunder of battle; now the white-haired kind old man crowned with fame haired kind old man crowned with lame telling the story of his life—the same who looked down upon me from the canvas—me his wondering grandchild. How I loved that good old man! And he, too, he loved me, I could see it plainly; for as I continued to look, that disposition in his lips to move grew stronger every instant until I could almost hear him say, with a halfsearching, half-pleased look, 'Is that you, my grandson? Can you follow in my steps? Will you be gallant, noble, brave, fearless of death when you are a man? I think you will ! "I: was too bad," continued the Australian bitterly. 'The idea devel-oped in me that I was destined to great

things. I was myself the her of all my boyish reading. When I wen to college I was noted for being the most silent and self absorbed boy in the place, and the most unpopular. My olation drove me more and more in upon my self, and I read and brooded and spoke little. The romantic visions of adventures, trials, and achievements my brain was full of were no languid dreamings, but fermented hotly with-in me. As I have said, I was generally disliked, not only by the boys, but by the masters. But the dislike was accompanied by a certain amount of respect, for I was a good fighter when provoked, and one or two displays o ted by the other fellows, amongst whom I was suffered thenceforth to mope unmoiested. The masters to mope unmolested. The masters too they were men of discretion. And so I passed some years at college less cuffed and knocked about on the whole than my neighbors. By the time I was fourteen I was the tallest boy in the college and had settled it in my own mind that it would no longer be con-sistent with honor to accept anything in the way of bodily chastisement. It was during the holidays I remember that I arrived at this conclusion, and it

may be that on returning to school I carried my determination in my bearing, and was even less genial than bea fellow six feet high, broad in proportion, and a good athlete. I took strong dislike to him at once. I felt I was not able for him, that was one reason; and for another he was very contemptuous in his treatment of m from the outset. As ill-luck would have it he was appointed prefect, that is to say, he presided over the playground and in the study while we were prepar ing for class. I made no attempt to con ciliate him, and he lost no opportunity of pooh poohing me. All the disfavor of which I was the object in the school gathered around him and poured into his ears stories to show I was proud and sulky and quarrelsome. One day, for what immediate reason I never quite knew, this fellow gave me a clouting with a book he had in his hand. It happened in the study. Furious at the indignity, and remembering my deter mination-all eyes were turned on me, my prestige was gone if I tamely sub mitted--I seized my slate with both hands and flung it wildly at the man's head. It missed him, and flew crash ing through the window. I looked fearlessly round. No one dared meet my look, and my soul swelled triumph

antly within me. Come of it what

might, I said to myself, I had not for-

feited my self respect.

he continued drawing a long breath and beating his foot quietly upon the ground, "what a merciless thrashing I got to be sure! and three solitary confinement after it on bread and water: I must have been strong, I must have had a strong will not to have been conquered. I never received one word or sign of sympathy from any one. All the world was against me, and I hardened myself against all the world. Once in those long dark hours there flashed out of he blackness the figure of my white haired grandfather sitting, as was his wont, with his hands upon his stick-handle, and the eager look of inquiry in his face. I opened my eyes wide. The vision was gone. But a new purpose was in my mind. The time had come when, like him, I must act. School was no longer the place for me.
Within twenty four hours of my release I carried out a plan I had formed during my imprisonment. In the middle of the night I climbed out of the window of my cell and let myself to the ground by a water spout. A thrill of prophetic joy ran through me as my feet touched the ground; but it was a moment so full of terrible import to me that I never think of it now without running cold. The night was black and so quiet I thought my footfall must awaken the sleeping house; but I fled across the grass, and leaving the school bounds behind me, began life."

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGER'S STORY. "I was fourteen years old. I had been dreeming all my life, and now I began to awaken. My passion for the sea was purely imaginative, it did not survive the first voyage. Before the end of it I had caught a fever; and at the survive the first work and talken to Sydney I was discharged and taken to the hospital, where I lay for many weeks between life and death. But my youth carried me through, and the day came when I was pronounced convales-cent, and found myself in Sydney alone beneath his picture looking up at his face which would vary with my thought, and losing its age become that of a child intent on high designs, of a boy friendless and alone combating difficulties, winning his way, and achieving success. Now he was the sunburnt youth returning to home and kindred, rejoicing their hearts and filling them with pride; now the here of

"If I found it impossible to return within a few months of taking my first last false step, you may imagine it was not an easier thing to do as months went by and lengthened into years, and the time passed when, in the ordinary ence course of things at home, I would have been choosing and qualifying myself turn been choosing and qualifying myself for a profession. And, moreover, my life had for a time a certain fascination; it was new, it was wild and adventuresome. I grew rapidly in height and breadth and strength. Sometimes my hopes were high that I should retrieve myself. Sometimes for months together I was infected with the spirit of happy indifference I saw in others around me. My companions were rough fellows mostly, some of them likeable enough. But my ac-quaintanceships were always short-lived. No friendliness, no candor on the part of others could induce me to be open about myself. I could never lose the consciousness of my fallen estate and unsuccessful ambi tion. My misfortune was always present, sometimes dully, sometimes with an acute pain; and I could hope for no sympathy from men unable to understand discontent such as mine with a condition to which they had been all their lives accustomed. over, I was never long in any one I could not settle down content for any length of time to accept a position in which to the end of my days I could only hope to live from hand to

"For a time I worked at the docks at Sydney. Then, having saved a shillings, I tramped some hundreds of miles, living from farm to farm, to see what luck there might be in land. Then I heard that gold was found at Moolwammo, and rushed off there. After that I was in clover for a time, and got some land assigned me and bought sheep; but disease came among them, and that undertaking came to nought. So one way or an other I was always beginning. Seven years passed, and at the end of them I was no better off than at first. I used to look ahead with sensations of terror.

"Still I could not lie down and give up the struggle. Wherever there seemed a chance there went I. When first gold was found at Polycarrya was among those who followed the run to that place. No one at that time anticipated the full extent of treasure which lay in that district, and when I reached Polycarrya the first flush of the first find was over, and many were going away wishing they hadn't come. I had often heard it said that the traders in the neigborhood of a gold field, and not the gold diggers, were the people who benefitted most by the sudden access of wealth. And seeing as I passed down the main street

Polycarrya a bill in a shop window saying a hand was wanted, something urged me to go in and offer myself It was a sleepy little shop-a cross be tween a slop shop and a grocer's kept by an elderly Quaker and his wife. But the gold had lately brought them more custom than they could manage without help, and so they wanted a hand. Somehow we suited each other. They were kind—the childless pair. Perhaps they were pleased at my dis n lination to make acquaintance out of doors or at my willingness; for in return for their kindness I threw myself heart and soul into the work such as it was, and in doing so succeeded for long intervals in forgetting that i was beneath me. But ever and again the old feeling of degradation came

uppermost. " What ails thee, lad,' said the tude one night after I i shop. 'Thou workest hard in the day, but these three nights past hast tha' sat silent and moping, thou who hast sometimes enough to say for thyself. Hast done anything wrong?'

"A sudden impulse seized me to confide in him. Bit by bit I suffered him to elicit all my foolish history. What a relief it was to be disburdened! " 'I told thee Jonathan, a' was of no common stock,' said Mrs. Peace tri-

'Look'ee, young man,' said my master, when I had finished, 'the sooner thou get'st clear of those ideas out o' thy head, the better for thy success in life. Thou'rt cram full of

of a real live baronet; aye, and none the worse for working at an honest trade. An' lock'ee, thou dost a wicked thing in not writing to thy friends, lad. Dost think it's nothing to them whether thou'rt alive or dead?'
"I don't know how it happened,
but this conversation was a kind of
turning point in my life. You would
hardly believe how much I was encouraged by hearing that about the
haronet's son opposite. And what the baronet's son opposite. And what the old Quaker had said was quite true. It placed my position in a new and more dignified light in my own eyes.

My master soon after raised my wages; but though in doing so he added further words of encouragment and repeated his advice about writing home, I held to my own determination on that

was and had been for the
t seven (r eight years — I
three-and-twenty by now —
12 It would be to confess my fail-And I couldn't do that in presence of that memory branded into my mind, of how my grandfather had re turned after his adventures, coming fresh from a successful war, just dubbed a captain - the youngest in the navy; of his entering the room where his old parents sat, with his gold-braided cap, his handsome uniform, his bright and manly beauty; and how the honorable position he had achieved added pride to the joy his people felt at his return. Self-reproach made me hate to think of home. How could I face father or mother or the sister growing up, no longer a child of seven as when I had seen her last? How could I stand before the portrait of my grandfather, who from his canvas had een wont to look at me curiously and say, 'Are you my grandchild?' be noble, brave and true?' and with eyes still fixed on me would search me through and add at last, 'I think you

"It was only at odd times that these thoughts sat brooding on me like a cloud. Month after month would pass without my ever being troubled with the thought of home. For I was work-ing now with more of hope than I had known for years. It was not for nothing that the Peaces had wanted help.
The finding of gold at Polycarrya had already more than doubled the business they had when I took service with them. Nothing was more likely than that the vein would be soon exhausted. It often happens so, and then the enervated township sinks into something worse than its old insignificance. Signs of this fate were soon perceptible at Polycarrya. The rush of adventur-ers outran the occasion, and men began to turn away to other fields of labor. At the same time fresh veins were continually coming to light, so that the standing population remained considerably above its ordinary level, and our business continued to increase say it without boasting, Jonathan

Peace owes his present good fortune

in great measure to me. He would have remained to the end of his days in his old groove. He never would have seen the opening that there was. He wouldn't have met the requirements of the place. Some millionaire from another settlement would have seized the golden opportunity, would have at Polycarrya, and in the course of a very short time my master, as he was then, would have found himself no-where. It was my advice that led him to extend his operations, and to add department after department to his business. The premises grew too small for our trade, and had to be added to till the little mongrel shop became gradually transformed into a store. My position had advanced with the fortunes of the business. The old man, trusting me implicitly, made me his right hand. I was no longer a 'hand,' but had many such under me, when the second great find was made, and gold was found to exist at Polycarrya to an extent the limits of which are even yet unknown. The former dis-covery had been nothing to this. My luck in gold digging had not been hitherto encouraging. I had always come in at the tag end of a rush-just too late. But here was I now on the spot before the news had yet got wind. There was hardly a shop keeper in the place and few of their employes unhit by the gold mania, and who did not run to try their luck, the baronet's son among them. I was bitten like the rest. I had saved money. I would old Quaker, breaking in on my soli embark it in this chance, and in a few months my fortune would be mad went to my master, told him I was going to leave him, and the reason why.

" 'Art mad?' said Jonathan Peace, thou'rt quitting a sure gold mine for one at which men seldom get rich. Sit thee down, and let us talk this matter quietly: and then he took away my breath. He said he couldn't do without me. He was getting old, he was childless, unambitious of much money; had never in his life dreamed of being so rich. I, he said, had urged him on : my young blood had supplied the energy without which he would have moved torpidly. It would not be fair, he said, to leave him with this big old world notions that won't do out there in this land. Hey! Look across the street at you butcher's shop. Dost know what young Belmont is? He's as good as thee any day, though he is but a butcher. I tell thee he's the son be his partner in the labor, I should be thing on his shoulders-to leave him his partner in the profit, too; and w would share and share alike in all that

the concern might bring in.
"The gold hunger had taken pos-session of me for a few hours only, but that I could scarcely shake it off; and I wavered a good deal before accepting my Quaker-master's offer. my Quaker-master's offer. Even when at last I yielded it was with something like regret. But I did well in stick-ing to the store; I believe there are only a few of the gold diggers who did better. Many of the shops in the town shut up altogether during the gold fever, the butcher's opposite amongst the number ; and the lion's share of the custom of Polycarrya fell to our store. The town itself swelled rapidly to four times its original size, and we thought point. For I had pride left, and it well to establish branches in differ-though I had no longer the idea that ent parts of the town. I don't believe ent parts of the town. I don't believe any man in the gold-fields worked as

AUGUST 19, 1899 ing. Your story is profoundly interesting. The old saying is quite true esting. The old saying is quite true after all—' Tis a long lane that has no turning.' I suppose I am mercenary, coming as I do of a money-making family; but you make me feel as if I would sooner have been you than your grandfather. I wish our host could have heard you, it might have stirred his lazy placidity. But the fellow sleeps as soundly, sitting on that bench with his back against the wooden parti tion, as if he had no need of more comfort. Go on, if you please, I am all Well, to cut a long story short, a the end of two years I found myself in a small way a capitalist. All thit time new comers had been pouring in to the town. Ordinary labor became

at length so plentiful that our stor was more adequately manned, and began to have some leisure in which began to have some leasure in white to contemplate the extraordinar change that had taken place in m fortunes. Now my thoughts could gout without let or hindrance toward home. Now I was not ashamed to let nome. Now I was not ashamed to it them know that I still lived. I wrote pouring into my letter all I had to tell relating all the despondency, th struggles, the hardships and privation I had endured. Now that these thing were surmounted, I was more proud of were surmounted, I was more proud of them than ashamed. My letter gone I felt a new life in my veins. Wit what renewed vigor did I not thromyself into my work during the months that followed, urged on by the prospect of hastening the day when could finally throw up work and as could finally throw up work, and return home for good. I had calculate the mails to a nicety, and at the end three months began to look out for letter. From week to week for man weeks I was disappointed; but length a letter bearing the Engli post-mark was placed in my hand The words 'On Her Mejesty's Service were printed outside, and in the a dress I could not recognize the han writing of either my father or mother. But the letter was from En land! I tore it open in a state of gre excitement. It contained an enclosu on which, to my horror, I beheld nown hand writing. It was my own lett some back. It had been opened, a on the cover were the words 'N

"A crowd of tormenting explar tions rushed upon my mind. It was less to try to get back into my croutine. The blessed days of indiffer ence were gone. I must go to Enland at once. And the end of it w that, promising my partner to be w him again in six month's time, if was well, I travelled to Sydney, sail by the next mail, and in course of ti was to go to our old house. I ask for my father, but his name was known. I asked to see the master the house. From him I learned the my father had become bankrupt so years before, and that nothing v known of his present whereabouts. hurried to our parish church, wh was within a stone's throw, and ask for the vicar. I had expected to he seen the vicar I had known as a b but a younger man entered the roo The new comer was a stranger to and what I had just heard about father made me hesitate to tell him once who I was. So I asked after

vicar.
"'I am the vicar,' said the revere gentleman, with dignity and astoni Then Dr. Paul is-?'

" 'Dad !' said the new vicar, 'd these six years.'

'I expressed surprise and sorr I had known him so well as a boy, had looked forward to seeing again. Could my informant tell anything of a very old and intin friend of the late vicar—Mr. Chalm who used to live close by? I had ca at the house, and had only just he

at the house, and had only just he of his misfortune.
""Well, you know,' said the vishrugging his shoulders, 'he ne really was as well off as people sposed. From what I can make now, his life must, it seems to have been one long struggle to the necessities of his position. Lailly of courses, he was gesting old.

ly, of course, he was getting old, things somehow had gone wrong every way. His only son, a wild governable boy, ran away to sea, was never heard of again. It w sorrow that preyed upon the poor man more and more as years cam him, and his powers failed. The might have been different had his lived and been by him to act as a to his declining years. As it was could not but feel that death w happy release to the poor old man.
"' My God! What do you tell!
"' 'Are you a relation?' he aske

"'I am his son.' I cried, 'My old father !" "As soon as I could speak I s

after my mother. "'You have taken me unaw sir,' said the vicar. 'I wish you given me some idea of how me stood. I would have tried to brea

sad news to you more gently. Yo me about your mother. I am afr I am afraid I can tell you nothi her that you will be glad to hear. "Tell me the worst," I cried 'I know what your meaning is, I never see my mother again.'
'And the vicar told me that

guessed aright." The young man stopped, his was slightly averted. I believe t cital of what had passed at that view revived something of the freshness of the grief which the must have caused him. Several utes passed and still he did not s and in the intense silence all the noises in the room were audible falling in of the decaying fire, the breathing of the sleeping laborer 1 became aware by the rumbling