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BY CELIA'S ARBOUR.

A NOVEL.

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"THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY," &c.

CHAPTER XL.

Mr. Tyrrell was by no means the kind of man to make a mean show on this auspicious occasion. He had a marquee erected in his garden, where two tables were laid; he invited to breakfast his whole staff of clerks with their families, including all who bore the name of Brambler—they had the second table; he would have invited all the regiment if Leonard had allowed him. As it was, there appeared a great gathering of his brother officers. No nobler wedding breakfast, Ferdinand Brambler reported, had ever been witnessed in the town, and it reflected, he said, the greatest credit on Mr. Honeybun, the eminent local confectioner and pastry-cook, who evinced on this occasion talents of an order inferior to none, not even Fortnum and Mason, the purveyors of princes. It may be mentioned that the occasion was one of which Ferdinand made four columns and a-half. The wedding report ran to the butcher's bill for three whole weeks, and included a small outstanding account with the greengrocer, as Augustus himself told me. It was headed, "Wedding of the Mayor's only Daughter," in large type, and was divided into headed sections. Thus: "The Churchyard," "Decorations of the Church," "The Organist," of whom he spoke with some reticence, for Ferdinand had feeling for my long friendship with bride and bridegroom; "The Bridegroom and his Gallant Supporters," the "Arrival of the Bride," "The Wedding," in which he gave the rein to religious feelings, and spoke of the impressive reading of Mr. Broughton, the reverent attention of those war-stained heroes, the officers of the regiment, and the tears of the bridesmaids; "The Departure," in which my own rendering of the Wedding March was gracefully alluded to; and finally, the "Wedding Breakfast," in the description of which he surpassed himself, so that those who read of that magnificent feed went hungry immediately. I do not know what reward he received of Mr. Honeybun, the confectioner, but he ought to have had free run among the tarts for life. It was not at all a solemn or a fearful meal. Mr. John Pontifex, seated well out of his wife's sight, was between two young officers, to whom he communicated recollections of his early life at Oxford and the reckless profligacy which he had witnessed, and even—"Oh!" I heard him say, "it is a most awful event to look back upon"—participated in and encouraged. He told them the Goose story, he told how he had once fallen in love with a young person—in fact, of the opposite sex—in Oxford, and how, excepting that single experience, "Love," as he said, "has never yet, I regret to say, reached this poor—cold—heart of mine." All this was very delightful to his two hearers, and I observed the rapture with which they pined him with champagne, of which he drank immense quantities, becoming frightfully pale, and listened to his reminiscences. No doubt Mrs. Pontifex would have been greatly pleased had she been present that evening in the mess-room, and heard the reproduction of these anecdotes. It was in the ponderous manner peculiar of his standing and scholarship that Mr. Broughton proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom. He had known them both, he said, from infancy. There were no words at his command strong enough to express his affection for the bride, or, if he might say so as a Christian man, his envy of the bridegroom. On the other hand, for such a bride, there was none fitter than such a bridegroom. This young Achilles, having obtained from the gods a better fate than the hero to whom he likened him, had returned victorious from the wars, and won the fairest prize. They all knew Leonard Coplestone's history, how the young gentleman, the son of a long line of gallant gentlemen, met adverse fortune with a resolute front, and conquered her, not with a sword, but with a bayonet; what they did not know, perhaps, was that he could tell them, as Leonard was his pupil, that he had always as a boy looked on the gallant soldier as the noblest type of manhood. "We all," said Mr. Broughton, "envy the man who fights; even the most popular priest is the priest militant; the glory of a poet or a painter is pale compared with the glory of a general; let us wish for Leonard Coplestone a long career of honour and distinction, and for them both, my friends, for Leonard and Celia Coplestone, let us wish that their love may endure beyond the brief mood of passion, and grow in depth as the years run on; that, in fact, like the finest port, age may develop its colour, bring out its bouquet, and mature its character."

The old Captain would not speak, though they drank his health. He had been sitting opposite to Celia, and when they said kind things about him—it was Leonard's Colonel who said them—he only got up, and with a breaking voice said that he thanked God for the happiest day in all his life.

CHAPTER XL.

"Draw the curtains, Mrs. Jeram; we will shut out the night. I will light the candles."

It is nearly twenty years later than Celia's wedding. Mrs. Jeram is an old woman now, and blind, but it pleases her to do little things, and to fancy that she is still housekeeper.

Everything is changed in the town. They have pulled down the old walls and levelled the moats; the dockyard has spread itself over the place where from Celia's Arbour we looked across the harbour. All the romance went out of the place when they swept away the walls and filled up the moats; it was a cruel thing to do, but no one seemed to remonstrate, and it is done now. The Government wanted the ground, they said. There was plenty of other ground lying about, which they might have had. The milldam is filled up, and a soldiers' hospital has been built upon it; of course, the King's Mill has gone, too. All the old guard-houses have been taken down; the gates are no longer shut at night; in fact, there are no more gates to shut. The harbour, too, is not what it was; they have wantonly broken up and destroyed nearly all the old historic ships, save the one where Nelson died, and she is as naked and as empty as when she first came out of dock; only a few of the venerable hulks remain, and I dare say, while I am writing these very lines, some economic Lord of the Admiralty is issuing orders for the destruction of the rest. The veterans with their wooden legs have all left the bench upon the Harb, and gone to the churchyard. The very bench is gone; steam launches run about the harbour to the detriment and loss of the boatmen; and a railway runs down to the edge of the water. No doubt the improvements were wanted, but still one regrets the past. Of course, the sailor of the present is not like the sailor of the past; that we all know, and there is little room for sorrow on that score. A new suburb has grown up behind our old wild and desolate seashore; it is a fine place, and we are proud of it. We are all changed together with our surroundings, and the *vie de province* is no longer what it was in the days of Mr. Broughton and the Captain. As for me, I have not changed. I am still a music master. As I said at the beginning, you may read on my brass plate the name of "L. Pulaski, Teacher of Music and Singing." And people have quite left off the little whisper, "a Pole of illustrious family—might enjoy a title if he wished." I have made a little name, not much, by certain things I have written, especially the Symphony I wrote for Celia—the best piece I have ever done. Mrs. Jeram, as I have said, lives with me still, and talks about the old days. She is sitting before me now as I write. See—I leave the table, and open the piano. The tears come into her darkened eyes.

"It is the tune the Captain liked," she says. "To be sure it is."

The wind that blows, and the ship that goes,
And the lass that loves a sailor.

Almost needless to say that all the actors in the drama of my life are all dead.

The first to go was Mrs. Pontifex. She was, in her way, fond of me, and I should have been guilty of ingratitude if, in return, I had not conceived a respect for her. As I think of her, so gaunt, so unbending in principles and shoulders, so upright in morals and in backbone, so unyielding in doctrine and in mien, I wonder if I am already only forty, since she has left no one like her, and her race is extinct. She died of a cold caught through her adherence to one of her Christian privileges—never to light the fire in her sitting rooms till November.

It was in 1860, a year about which I remember nothing except that it rained from June to October without stopping, and a wag announced in *Punch* that there would be no summer that year because the Zodiac was taken up for repairs. We all laughed at that, and then some of us began to reflect with shame, and especially those who had been educated by the Rev. Verney Broughton, that very likely it was true, and that certainly we had no sort of idea what the Zodiac was.

At the end of that continuous rain, Mrs. Pontifex died, and was gathered to her forefathers. A fortnight after I called on her husband. He was gardening, looking, as he stooped with his long thin figure over the plants, very much like a letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

He was weeding the strawberry bed—the strawberries that year, by reason of the long rains, had been like turnips for size and taste. He rose when he heard my footsteps, and shook his head solemnly. In either hand he held an apple. It struck me that this was the first proof of recovered liberty, as in his wife's time he had never been allowed to eat any fruit at all. The prohibition, based on hygienic reasons, always appeared to me to have been issued because John Pontifex was particularly fond of fruit.

"I mourn not, Johnnie," he said, taking a bite out of the right hand apple; "I mourn not for her who is departed. Rather," he added with emphasis, biting into the left hand apple, "I rejoice—ahem—with exceeding great joy." Whether he rejoiced because she was gone, or because of an assurance of her future, did not appear on the face of his statement. What he

added was more obscure still. "Next year," he said, with a noise which might have been a sob and might have been a chuckle, "next year I shall have all those—ahem—those apples and strawberries to myself, Johnnie."

Shortly after this conversation he entertained at dinner the Rev. Mr. Broughton, the Captain and myself. It is noteworthy that the "beverage" of which the wife would never allow him to partake was on this occasion, and many subsequent occasions, freely produced. In fact, I should say, from recollection only, that he and his brother clergyman despatched a bottle and a-half each. It was orthodox port, but indubitably inferior to that possessed by the perpetual curate of St. Faith's.

One thing pleased Mr. Pontifex mightily to relate at that dinner. An unfortunate curate, enthusiastic but young, had the Sunday before preached a discourse in which his rev. senior fancied he saw glimpses of Tractarianism. So he waited till the misguided youth came out of the vestry, and then said to him, before the churchwardens and a small gathering of friends, "Well, that was—ahem—a most infamous sermon of yours."

And then he walked away, leaving the poor young man to seek such explanations and apologies as he pleased.

"The Tractarians," he said to-night, after the first bottle had brought up the natural pallor of his cheek to a ghastly whiteness, "the Tractarians may use their arguments as they please, but to me they fall off as water from the back of the—ahem—the proverbial duck, though I have never yet, I confess, poured anything but gravy on the back of that—toothsome delicacy, and therefore am not in a position to assert that water actually does run off their backs."

"The Tractarians," said the perpetual curate, whose face was quite purple, "are they Tractarians? They are up and doing. They will make a clean sweep of pastors like me and idle shepherds like you, Brother Pontifex."

And now they are both gone, and the perpetual curate's prophecy has come true, and the Church has been reformed, with, of course, a small gathering of the foolish who want to go on beyond the bounds of reason. Such a service as I knew at St. Faith's would be impossible now even in the steepest city church. The duet between the parson and the clerk has ceased, the choir is trained, the hymns are improved, and the people are attentive. Speaking as a musician, I do not find the change altogether for the best. I miss the old melancholy hymns of Wesleyan origin which we used to sing. It seems to me that life is sad, the note of rapture at which we strike so many of the new hymns is strained and unreal. We are still too much like the poor little charity children of my youth, when, after the three long services of the day, through which they had been culled and caned into attention, they had to sing as a concluding or parting hymn.

Oh! may our earthly Sabbaths prove
A foretaste of our joys above

I find, but then I am only an humble organist in a country town, and never go about in the world, but for myself I find too much elation, too much joy, to suit the grey tints and sombre colours of the working and sorrowing world.

Mr. Pontifex, the type of the old high-and-dry Calvinist, whose life was as straightened as his doctrine, with whom laughter was a sin, and every innocent recreation an occasion for repentance, is gone, and his place knows him no more.

Mr. Broughton, the jolly old parson of the high-and-dry church type, who enjoyed all that can be enjoyed by a scholar and a Christian in the world, strong in his firm and unshakable belief that the doctrines of the Church, faithfully held, avail unto justification, has gone, too. We have none like him now. I am not a theologian, and, in church matters, doubtless a fool. Nevertheless, I venture to say that I regret and mourn his loss. He was not only a gentleman—there are plenty of gentlemen still in the church—he was not only a man of pure life and benevolent conduct, but he was a scholar. And I look in vain for scholars—*vari noster in quibus vixit*—in these later days. He is one, there is one; but—ah! the old Greek scholar, massive and critical, is no longer to be found even among the sleeves of the lawn; such scholars as we have mostly run to history—a study which Mr. Broughton held to be vain and illusory, except when it was the History of the Chosen People—and as regards all but modern history, fruitless, because history, he thought, repents itself, and everything new has all been done before.

"We have Hume," he used to say, "we have Gibbon; we have Robertson; and we have the grand histories in Greek and Latin of the days when men were great. What more can one want? Let us sit down and read them; let us teach the boys how to read them; and let us leave to restless wittlings the task of labouring in a worn-out field."

Restless wittlings! Dear me! Suppose Mr. Broughton had lived to the present day!

Others have passed away who twenty years ago took part in the drama that I have tried, with pen unpractised, to relate. The two brothers Brambler sleep side by side in the new cemetery, cut off in their vigour, Ferdinand from a cold caught while in the excess of his zeal noting the incidents of a review during a hailstorm; Augustus from a sort of grief consumption which seized him at the death of his brother. He "never joyed after;" and though on Sunday afternoons he still maintained the imaginary state and splendour of a "gentleman

sitting over his wine" at the front window, it was a performance which brought him no pleasure but that of mournful reminiscence. And so he drooped and died, trusting that he would be remembered by posterity for his services in the Legal.

Friends there were who took charge of the little ones, from Forty-four to Fifty-three. And they all did well. My especial friend, Forty-four, is married, and has a row of children like herself, as apple-faced, as cheery, and as sanguine. I hope they will do better than their grandfather. She is good enough to maintain her old friendship towards myself, undiminished by the love she bears her husband and her offspring, and confides to me all her joys and sorrows.

Let me pass to the last scene of my story. After Celia married, and the regiment went away, the good old Captain began to droop. He was nearly seventy years of age, it is true, but I thought he was hale and hearty—good for ten years more.

That was not so. Age crept upon him with stealth, but with swiftness. He still went out every morning, but his afternoon walks were gradually shortened, and finally had to be dropped altogether.

Then his friends began to call in the evening to talk to, and cheer up, the old man. Mr. Broughton would come with a story and anecdote of bygone days; one or two old naval men, chums of his youth, would drop in for a glass of grog and a yarn; we became hospitable, and kept open house. And all went well, in spite of increasing weakness, until one day it became apparent that the old man could not go out to make his morning round.

Then, for the first time, I learned from him, though I had long known it, what the morning round had been, for more than twenty years.

He sat feebly in his arm-chair, patient, under the inevitable. Nothing was wrong with him, but the weakness of extreme old age. His mind was bright and clear, as the last runnings of a cask of some noble vintage, but on this morning he realized that he must not think of going out any more, as he had been wont, in fair weather and foul. A cold east wind blew down the street, and a bright sun shone without warmth from a steel-blue sky.

"The end is growing near, Laddy," he said. "They will miss me when I am gone."

"Who, sir?" I asked.

He was silent for a space, thinking.

"To all of us," he said, "the Lord giveth His gifts in trust. To me he gave, besides Her Majesty's pension of two hundred pounds a year, a private fortune. No need to talk about it to you, Laddy, or to Leonard. It was not a great fortune, only this house and a hundred pounds a year, which my father saved up out of his pay. It was in the old prize days."

I began to understand.

"So long as you and Leonard were boys," the Captain went on, "we had the pension to live upon. Plenty for us all. And there was the hundred a year for which I was a trustee, you know. When you began to make an income the pension became part of the Trust."

"Of course, sir, I quite see that."

"That made three hundred a year. A good deal ought to be done with such a sum. I doubt whether I have done the best—but I have tried—I have tried. If a man tries to do his duty—he may be stupid—but if he tries, the Chief knows. You will find out, when I am gone, how far I have done the best, Laddy. It will be yours, the hundred a year and the house; you will use it, my boy, as you think best—not to follow up my lines, unless you think that the best way, but as a Trust from the Lord, unless your income fails, when it will keep you from want. No, Laddy, no need to promise. We have not lived together for five and twenty years for me to begin distrusting. But, if you can, look after them, my boy. They are ignorant, they have no friends; they are degraded; you will meet at first with all sorts of snarl and disappointment; but go on, never leave them, and you will end, as I have done, by winning their confidence."

I did not ask him who "they" were, partly because I guessed. The old seaport town had dens of wickedness in it of which I have said nothing. Indeed, as children, though we went daily through the streets which reeked with every abominable thing, we saw and knew nothing—how should we? It is the blessed prerogative of innocence that it plays unobtrusively in the den of wild beasts, rides upon the horn, and walks scatheless among the rabble rout of Connaught.

All that morning the Captain sat in disquiet. The current of his daily thoughts was interrupted. After our mid-day dinner, he refused his pipe of tobacco and sat in the window, gazing silently upon the Milldam pool, crisped by the cold east wind. His work was over; nothing more for him to do but to sit in the chair and wait for the end. That must be a solemn moment in a man's life, when he realizes that everything is finished. The record complete, the book of work shut up, and after all attempted and achieved, the inevitable feeling of unprofitable service.

Two days passed; the east wind continued, and grew colder; there was no hint at any possibility of going out; and on the third day there came, creeping stealthily, a deputation consisting of two women, to ask after the Captain. They stood shame-faced at the door, and when I asked them to enter and see him, they hesitated and looked at each other. Then they came in, looking strange and abashed. I took them to the Captain, where he sat in his arm-chair, and