

bit going back; the danger seemed to me to be all over, and I was as jolly as possible. Just as we were nearing the other bank I heard a sudden exclamation from my companion, 'Dekho, sahib, dekho!' and turning my head, caught sight of something black above the water. The next moment a shrill sharp cry of agony rang through the still night air. To my dying day I shall never forget the wild despairing face and outstretched arms which rose for a moment high above the water, and then slowly disappeared as my poor comrade was dragged down. I could do nothing to help him! his death-shriek roused the peepys, and in another moment a shower of bullets splashed in every direction around me. I pulled myself out of the ditch faint and sick at heart, and scrambled up the bank, but by this time the mutineers were fully aroused, and torches glared on every side. Suddenly the Fort batteries opened fire briskly, and were at once answered by the guns on the opposite bank; rifle, musket, and matchlock joined in the chorus; drums beat to arms throughout the rebel camp, and all was confusion. Hoping to escape unperceived in the row, I ran towards the trees where my horse was tied up, but was intercepted half-way by a lot of Sepoys. My revolver was handy, and I fired into them right and left, but the next minute a bullet hit me in the leg, and I shared the fate of the Black Mousquetaire, who, the legend tells us,—

Went down with a groan and a frown,
And a hole in his small clothes the size of a crown,

the only difference in my favour being that my small clothes escaped damage, having parted company with me a couple of hours before. I managed to stagger on to my legs, but only to be sent to grass again with a sabre cut over the head. Of what followed I have but a very vague idea. I remember as I went down a trampling of horses, and hearing the war-cry of my Sikhs, "Ah gooroo Jee, Ah gooroo Govind," a clash of sabres, pistol-shots, a whirl of horses' hoofs all round me, and then the blackness of darkness.

"When I came to myself we were riding along full speed over the open plain, and old Shere Singh and another were supporting me on either side. At daybreak we halted for a few minutes on the banks of a tank while the horses got breathed a bit, and I had my wounds washed and bound up. By the time that was done I felt pretty well again, and looking about me, missed young Runjeet Singh, and asked his father where he was.

"He is with his fathers, sahib," said the old Sikh, calmly; 'he died like a brave man, fighting for you and the great company whose salt he had eaten,'

"I was sorry for the youngster, for he was one of the best men in my corps, and old Shere Singh's only son. On we rode again, keeping our horses up to their speed, for we were being followed pretty close by a troop of Irregulars, and it was quite a toss up whether they ran us down or not. Just as the sun rose, and when we were only some three or four miles from camp, they all but overtook us, and two or three bullets came whizzing about our ears, the Sowars were gaining on us at every stride, and things looked very fishy, when suddenly a turn of the road brought us face to face with another strong party of cavalry. I thought for a moment that it was all over with us; the next instant a ringing cheer told me that we had met friends, and I found myself in the midst of a squadron of my own Sikhs; hard behind us came the enemy, yelling like fiends, and as they turned the corner, pulled up, and crowded together, undecided whether to advance or turn back. Small time had they to make up their minds; our fellows charged down on them furiously; tired men and horses had little chance against fresh ones, and the shock was irresistible. Being myself *hors de combat*, I looked on quietly, and never in my life did I see men so cut to pieces; our fellows rode through and through them, and had they been allowed to follow the fugitives, scarcely a man would have escaped. But I wanted to keep

them in hand, so sounded the recall rigorously. Back they came; old Shere Singh growling savagely, his sabre covered with blood.

"If the sahib had only let us go on, we would have followed the scoundrels to the very gates of Bharaghur, and sent all the Mussulman dogs to hell."

"In half an hour more, we were safe in camp, and I went straight to the General's tent. He had evidently been up all night, and looked worn and haggard. Colonel A. and the Adjutant-General were with him. My story was soon told, and the Brigadier's note delivered. The General was in ecstasies.

"Not a bad night's work, Llantaine," he said; 'but it's precious lucky the mugger did not swallow you, instead of that poor devil of a Pandy.'

"No mugger in his senses would attempt to 'take in' the Head of the Intelligence Department," said Colonel A., with a spasmodic attempt at a joke, and I left the tent.

"Your name shall go in for the V. C.," sung out Sir George as I was leaving; 'and it shan't be my fault if you don't get it.'

"He was as good as his word, and in due time, red tape permitting, I got my Cross.

"Within a week Shahranpore had been relieved, and the mutineers who were rash enough to show fight in front of Bharaghur got such a thrashing as they did not forget in a hurry. I was not engaged in either affair, as the cut on my head gave the doctors lots of trouble, and at last sent me home on sick certificate."

ALMOST A FAIRY TALE.

"IT all came from a hatful of beans."

"What came of a hatful of beans?"

"This," said he, pointing to a jolly black-timbered farm-house, of such pretension that it earned for its owner the title of Squire Bligh; though, to tell the truth, he had no more right to it than any of his neighbours.

But there was such a wealth of treasure in that house that it guaranteed respectability; and no one ever entered the doors without feeling, as Miss Matilda Tomkin, a lady who read all the periodicals of the day, observed, that you had caught a glimpse of the luxuries and appliances of Oriental life.

"Who is Squire Bligh?" I asked.

"Who was Squire Bligh, you mean," returned my friend. "Sit down, and I will tell you the story."

So I sat down, and he told me as follows:

"Nigh forty years ago, there was a widow living in this place who had an only son named Jack."

"Yes," I interrupted; "and he was an idle good-for-nothing lad, always in mischief, and an anxiety to his mother."

"Who told you so?" asked my friend.

"No one," said I; "go on with the story."

"He went on doing little or nothing, until he was a great fellow of seventeen or eighteen, his chief work being to take the horses down to water for the farmers round—this he did not object to, as he could ride down to the river, and ride up again. One fine evening in the spring he was returning with the horses as usual, when, as he passed a certain stile, he heard some one call to him,—

"Jack!"

"Here I be," said Jack, stopping the horses, and looking in the direction from whence the voice came. 'Hoy!' he ejaculated, in a tone expressive of astonishment and gratification, as his eye fell upon the neat little figure of the girl who had been taken to help in the dairy.

"What be you doing here, Nelly?"

"Waiting to see you, Jack."

"That's kind, at any rate, and it's not many would do it; but I'm a ne'er-do-well, and no one need trouble about me," said he, somewhat bitterly.

"That's just what I came to tell you," returned the little maiden.

"Then you don't care about me?" said he, with a little vexation in his tone.

"Care! why should I, for a lazy fellow like you? I should think not."

"But you might, Nelly."

"Might, indeed! I mightn't do anything of the sort. At any rate, I don't."

"Then what did you come here for?"

"To tell you you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"There's plenty to do that," returned the lad.

"Yes; but you don't heed them, and you might heed me, Jack. Won't you begin to work a bit?"

"I don't know what to begin at."

"Your mother's a nice bit of garden, Jack."

"I've nothing to put in it," answered Jack, despondingly.

"Nonsense," said Nelly; 'what a faint heart you have. I'll give you a lot of beans to begin with. You put up the horses, and I'll be back in a minute.'

"So Jack put up the horses, and waited for Nelly. Presently she came tripping along, with her apron full of something.

"Here," said she, 'hold your hat.' She poured the beans into it; and he went home.

"Next day Jack took a spade, and worked away diligently for two hours.

"What's come to thee, lad?" said the widow, as he came in, all flushed and hungry, to his dinner.

"Nelly Giles is a good lass," quoth Jack; 'and if ever I get rich I'll marry her.'

"Thee get rich!" said the Widow Bligh, and she held up her hands deprecatingly.

"Strange things happen sometimes," returned Jack; and he resumed his digging with renewed energy. All that afternoon he dug away as though his life depended on it.

"The next day he planted his beans. He had evidently turned over a new leaf, and the widow and her neighbours thought the lad was bewitched, as perhaps he might have been. At any rate he had set to work in earnest, and he soon found plenty to do, the farmers being nothing loth to give employment to one who, despite his idleness, was a general favourite.

"Nelly alone held aloof. Jack was getting beyond her patronage; he had suddenly become more manly, and seemed as if he had grown half a head taller all at once; and Nelly turned shy, and it was all he could do to get a stray word from her now and then.

"It was clear that she would have nothing to say to him, which Jack thought rather hard after all the trouble he had taken to please her; and the more he pondered over it the less he could understand it, Nelly used to be so friendly. 'Perhaps if I were a rich man she might give a thought to me,' said Jack; and so he determined to go elsewhere, to seek his fortune, and return and make Nelly his wife.

"When he went to say 'Good-bye' to her, he did it in rather a blundering way.

"Maybe I shall find you married when I come home again, Nelly," said the poor lad, looking wistfully at her.

"Maybe you will," retorted Nelly, 'if I find any one I like whilst you are away.'

"And so they parted, and both repented their speeches when it was too late to recall them.

"Well, what is to be is to be," soliloquised Jack, endeavouring to find consolation therein; 'but Nelly's the only woman that shall ever be my wife.'

"When Jack was gone, Nelly went very often to see the Widow Bligh, and was a great comfort to her; and their conversation always turned upon Jack.

"A year passed away, and no tidings came of him. Then another, and the two women did not talk so much now, but they sat quietly at their work when Nelly could spare time from the dairy, and it was a consolation to them to be together.

"At the beginning of the next year Nelly was summoned to her home in a distant county. Her mother was dying, and as she did not come back, the Widow Bligh was left to bear her trouble alone; and through the spring and into the