

BOYS AND GIRLS

We're Chums, You See.

They wonder why I run and tell
Of every little thing,
And say I'm such a baby boy,
Tied to an apron string;
But truly, I don't blame them much;
They're different from me;
My mother knows just what is what,
Because we're chums, you see!
When things are in a tangle up,
And tempers snarling, too;
When some one needs a whipping bad,
(And maybe it is you),
She never scolds nor makes a fuss,
But, sweet as sweet can be,
Will try to help a fellow out,
Because we're chums, you see!
If you've been going wrong, she knows
Just how to set you right,
And shows you how your actions look
In God's most holy sight;
While if there must be punishment,
About that we agree,
Although her heart feels sorry, too,
Because we're chums, you see!
She ciphers with me on my slate,
Then helps me read and spell,
And makes me study hard and learn
To say my lessons well.
And mother's great at games. She likes
To play as well as we;
When our side wins she's just as glad,
Because we're chums, you see!
She doesn't think her boy can go
So very far astray
If we together keep as chums
So close along the way.
We must the same dear Father love,
Obedient children be;
Then we can both His blessing win,
Because we're chums, you see!
I'm sorry for those other chaps,
I pity ev'ry one;
They'd love to have a chum like mine,
For all they're poking fun.
Some mothers are too tired, I know,
And others do not care
To bother with the little boys,
Their plays and studies share.
But mine! She's just the very best
Of loving friends to me!
And, oh! I'm such a happy son
Because we're chums, you see!

—Selected.

What It Cost.

A STORY OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.*

(In Three Chapters.)

(The Rev. Edwin Green, B.A., in the 'Alliance News'.)

CHAPTER II.

'All the while I was in agonies to know how Bertram was getting on, and what he had said. I asked to be allowed to see my companion. I said he was ill, and required attention. But the Germans were too sharp. We were kept separate.

'On the next morning, about eight o'clock, a German officer came into the room in the inn where I was being kept a prisoner. He introduced himself as Lieutenant Barf, and told me that the village was now occupied by the Germans, that we were to be court-martialled

at ten o'clock, and that he had been deputed to act as our counsel. Could I give him any information, he asked, which would be likely to be of use in our defence? My first impulse was to ask him about Bertram, but naturally I felt cautious.

"Look here," said Barf, after some little talk, "I will be quite frank with you, and you may be so with me. Tell me what you like, except that you are guilty—I had rather you did not tell me that. I wish to do the best for you that I can."

"I believe you, sir," I answered, and answered quite honestly.

"Your friend is in a terrible state; he will hardly speak to me. He seems full of self-reproach. Between ourselves, I think that last night he was drunk, and said something compromising; and that, now that he is sobered, he half suspects the truth. He begs me to save you. He is content to die, he says, if only you can be saved. I have told him that he must be careful in what he says, for you stand or fall together."

I assured Lieutenant Barf that Bertram was very drunk on the previous evening, and therefore was not responsible for anything he might have said. I felt that it was really all up with us, but I put on a bold face, and pointed out to the young officer that the trial ought to be adjourned, if possible, in order to communicate with the English Government. I suggested to him that to carry out a summary sentence upon two innocent Englishmen might entail very serious political consequences—that England was already a little alarmed at the German progress, and might, if irritated, espouse the cause of France, and rob Germany of its well-earned victory.

Lieutenant Barf listened to my arguments in glum silence.

"I'll do the best I can for you, sir," he said; "but I wish you had some stronger evidence, for I see no chance of any adjournment. And sentence will be carried out within twenty-four hours, so that will leave no time to communicate with the Ambassador at Berlin."

I could not help seeing that we were in very great danger, although I would not own it. I had very little further to urge, except the absence of any compromising despatches, and soon our interview was over.

'At ten o'clock I was taken to a large house in the village, where evidently the staff had fixed their headquarters. I was ushered into a room full of soldiers. At a table sat a captain and two subalterns, who were to try us. I could not help wishing that I had encountered a larger body of soldiers. Then I should have been tried by officers of higher rank, who always feel greater responsibility in such matters. Bertram was present in custody. He looked haggard; indeed, he seemed very ill. Beyond a salutation upon meeting, he did not speak, but ever and anon looked imploringly at me, as if to entreat my forgiveness.

I felt his painful position so much that I could not properly attend to the trial. I was so dazed that it was almost as if another person was being tried, and I was a spectator.

'The trial was short, and I was thankful for Bertram's sake. His agony was beginning to enter into my soul. I was afraid, too, that he might say something compromising, and so make matters worse. But, indeed, matters were bad enough. It was alleged that we had come secretly into the village. It was proved that the landlord had denied our presence in the inn; further, that we had tried to escape, and Bertram had violently resisted the soldiers; and, worst of all, Bertram had,

in his drunken fit, given his real name, instead of his alias. This alone was sufficient to condemn us.

Lieutenant Barf did all he could to secure an acquittal, or, failing that, an adjournment. He pleaded that Bertram was drunk, and he was therefore not responsible for his actions. He said that the attempt to escape was a mistake, caused by the attempt to arrest. He also strongly urged either an adjournment or a remission of the case to headquarters. I myself, when asked what I had to say why sentence should not be passed, protested very strongly against any haste, urging, as I had done to Barf, the serious consequences of a mistake.

'Our judges did not hesitate as to their action. They conferred with each other for a moment without leaving the room, and then the senior officer, the captain, said that the evidence was wholly against us, so much so that nothing could be gained by delay, and that therefore it was his stern, although disagreeable, duty to condemn us to be shot at six o'clock the next morning.

CHAPTER III.

It was then twelve o'clock. Oh how quickly that day seemed to fly, and yet I sometimes wished it was all over. My chief feeling of sorrow was for Bertram, who, I knew, must be in agony at the thought that, through his over fondness for wine, he had consigned his greatest friend to death. I begged to be allowed to see him, but was curtly refused. At ten o'clock I sat down and tried to write some letters to the home folk.

'Soon after, I had a farewell interview with Lieutenant Barf. I thanked him heartily for his kind services, and asked him, if possible, to procure me an interview with my friend. He promised to try. At midnight he came again, and told me that he had failed; we were not to meet until we met at the place of execution. Barf said that Bertram had been prostrated with grief on my account—almost, in fact, out of his mind. But that he had just had an interview with the parish "cure," and now seemed more reconciled to his fate; perhaps I might like to see the priest?

I eagerly assented, wishing to send a message to Bertram. The "cure" came. He must have heard something of our story. He was very sympathetic and kind.

I sent my love to Bertram, and told him that there was nothing to forgive. I asked him to bear up, for my sake.

The remainder of that night I spent in writing, but the time seemed all too short. At six o'clock the "cure" entered with a sergeant, and told me the time had come. The "cure" knelt with me in prayer for a few minutes, and the sergeant offered me a cigar, which I declined with thanks.

The morning was dark and foggy. Outside the house was the firing party, ten men all told. Bertram was already there, but beyond calling out "Courage, Bertram! All's well!" I was not allowed to speak to him, but was kept in the rear, whilst he was put in the front.

"Quick march!" and off we went through the fog.

"May I not speak to my friend?"

"In a minute, but not yet," was the answer.

The "cure" walked with Bertram. We left the village, and turned across the fields. Soon through the morning mist I saw the village church and the low wall of the graveyard. In the field outside that wall we halted. There

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