



THESE ARE MY BABIES.

From a Photograph.

## THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE.

BY JULIANA HORATIA EWING.

## CHAPTER IX.

"St. George! a stirring life they lead,  
That have such neighbors near."

—Marmion.



H, Jemima! Jemima! I know you are very kind, and I do mean not to be impatient; but either you're telling stories or you're talking nonsense, and that's a fact. How can you say that that blue stuff is a beautiful match and will wash the exact color, and that you're sure I shall like it when it's made up with a cord and tassels, when it's not the blue I want, and when you know the men in hospital haven't any tassels to their dressing-gowns at all! You're as bad as that horrid shopman who made me so angry. If I had not been obliged to be good, I should have liked to hit him hard with my crutch, when he kept on saying he knew I should prefer a shawl-one. Oh, here comes father! Now, that's right; he'll know. Father dear, is this blue pattern the same color as that?"

"Certainly not. But what's the matter, my child?"

"It's about my dressing-gown; and I do get so tired about it, because people will talk nonsense, and won't speak the truth, and won't believe I know what I want myself. Now, I'll tell you what I want. Do you know the hospital lines?"

"In the camp? Yes."

"And you've seen all the invalids walking about in blue dressing-gowns and little red ties?"

"Yes. Charming bits of color."

"Hurrah! that's just it! Now, father, dear, if you wanted a dressing-gown exactly like that, would you have one made of this?"

"Not if I knew it! Crude, coarse, staring—please don't wave it in front of my eyes, unless you want to make me feel like a bull with a red rag before him!"

"Oh, father dear, you are sensible! (Jemima, throw this pattern away please!) But you'd have felt far worse if you'd seen the shawl-pattern lined with crimson. Oh, I do wish I could have seen a bull that wasn't obliged to be *latus* for half a minute, to give that shopman just one toss! But I believe the best way to do will be as O'Reilly says—get Uncle Henry to buy me a real one out of store, and have it made smaller for me. And I should like it 'out of store.'"

From this conversation it will be seen that Leonard's military bias knew no change. Had it been less strong he could only have served to intensify the pain of the heart-breaking associations which anything connected with the troops now naturally raised in his parents' minds.

But it was a sore subject that fairly healed itself.

The camp had proved a more cruel neighbor than the master of the house had ever imagined in his forebodings: but it also proved a friend. For if the high, ambitious spirit, the ardent imagination, the vigorous will, which fired the boy's fancy for soldiers and soldier-life, had thus led to his calamity, they found in that sympathy with men of hardihood and lives of discipline, not only an interest that never failed and that lifted the sufferer out of himself, but a constant incentive to those virtues of courage and patience for which he struggled with touching conscientiousness.

Then, without disparagement to the earnestness of his efforts to be good, it will be well believed that his parents did their best to make goodness easy to him. His vigorous individuality still swayed the plans of the household, and these came to be regulated by those of the camp to a degree which half annoyed and half amused its master.

The "Asholt Gazette" was delivered as regularly as the "Times;" but on special occasions, the arrangements for which were only known the night before, O'Reilly or some other orderly might be seen wending his way up the Elm avenue by breakfast-time, "with Colonel Jones' compliments, and the orders of the day for the young gentleman." And so many were the military displays at which Leonard contrived to be present, that the associations of pleasure and alleviation with parades and manoeuvres came at last almost to blot out the associations of pain connected with that fatal field-day.

He drove about a great deal, either among air-cushions in the big carriage or in a sort of perambulator of his own, which was all too easily pushed by any one, and by the side of which The Sweep walked slowly and contentedly, stopping when Leonard stopped, wagging his tail when Leonard spoke, and keeping sympathetic step to the invalid's pace with four sinewy black legs, which were young enough and strong enough to have ranged for miles over the heather hills and never felt fatigue. A true dog friend.

What the master of the house pleasantly called "our military mania," seemed to have reached its climax during certain July manoeuvres of the regiments stationed at Asholt, and of additional troops who lay out under canvas in the surrounding country.

Into this mimic campaign Leonard threw himself heart and soul. His camp friends furnished him with early information of the plans for each day, so far as the generals of the respective forces allowed them to get wind, and with an energy that defied his disabilities he drove about after "the armies," and then scrambled on his crutches to points of vantage where the carriage could not go.

And the master of the house went with him.

The house itself, seemed soldier-bewitched. Orderlies were as plentiful as

rooks among the elm-trees. The staff clattered in and out, and had luncheon at unusual hours, and strewed the cedar-wood hall with swords and cocked hats, and made low bows over Lady Jane's hand, and rode away among the trees.

These were weeks of pleasure and enthusiasm for Leonard, and of not less delight for The Sweep; but they were followed by an illness.

That Leonard bore his sufferings better helped to conceal the fact that they undoubtedly increased; and he over-fatigued himself and got a chill, and had to go to bed, and took The Sweep to bed with him.

And it was when he could play at no "soldier-game," except that of "being in hospital," that he made up his mind to have a blue dressing-gown of regulation color and pattern, and met with the difficulties aforesaid in carrying out his whim.

## CHAPTER X.

"Fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remember me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuff out his vacant garments with his form."  
—King John, Act iii.



LONG years after they were written, a bundle of letters lay in the drawer of a cabinet in Lady Jane's morning-room, carefully kept, each in its own envelope, and every envelope stamped with the post-mark of Asholt Camp.

They were in Leonard's handwriting. A childish and clear as his own speech.

After much coaxing and considering, and after consulting with the doctors, Leonard had been allowed to visit the barrack-master and his wife. After his illness he was taken to the seaside, which he liked so little that he was bribed to stay there by the promise that, if the doctor would allow it, he should, on his return, have the desire of his heart, and be permitted to live for a time "in camp," and sleep in a hut.

The doctor gave leave. Small quarters would neither mar nor mend an injured spine; and if he felt the lack of space and luxuries to which he was accustomed, he would then be content to return home.

The barrack-master's hut only boasted one spare bed-chamber for visitors, and when Leonard and his dog were in it there was not much elbow-room. A sort of cupboard was appropriated for the use of Jemima, and Lady Jane drove constantly into camp to see her son. Meanwhile he proved a very good correspondent, as his letters will show for themselves.

## LETTER I.

"Barrack-Master's Hut,  
The Camp, Asholt.

"My dear, dear mother: I hope you are quite well, and father also. I am very happy, and so is The Sweep. He tried sleeping on my bed last night, but there was not room, though I gave him as much as ever I could. So he slept on the floor. It is a camp bed, and folds up if you want it to. We have nothing like it. It belonged to a real general. The general is dead. Uncle Henry bought it at his sale. You always have a sale if you die, and your brother-officers buy your things to pay your debts. Sometimes you get them very cheap. I mean the things.

"The drawers fold up, too. I mean the chest of drawers, and so does the wash-hand stand. It goes into the corner, and takes up very little room. There couldn't be a bigger one, or the door would not open—the one that leads into the kitchen. The other door leads into a passage. I like having the kitchen next me. You can hear everything. You can hear O'Reilly come in in the morning, and I call to him to open my door, and he says, 'Yes, sir,' and opens it, and lets The Sweep out for a run, and takes my boots. And you can hear the tap of the boiler running with your hot water before she brings it, and you can smell the bacon frying for breakfast.

"Aunt Adelaide was afraid I should

not like being woke up so early, but I do. I waked a good many times. First with the gun. It's like a very short thunder, and shakes you. And then the bugle-play. Father would like them. And then right away in the distance—trumpets. And the air comes in so fresh at the window. And you pull up the clothes, if they've fallen off you, and go to sleep again. Mine had all fallen off, except the sheet, and The Sweep was lying on them. Wasn't it clever of him to have found them in the dark? If I can't keep them on, I'm going to have campaigning blankets; they are sewed up like a bag, and you get into them.

"What do you think I found on my coverlet when I went to bed? A real, proper, blue dressing-gown, and a crimson tie! It came out of store, and Aunt Adelaide made it smaller herself. Wasn't it kind of her?"

"I have got it on now. Presently I am going to dress properly, and O'Reilly is going to wheel me down to the stores. It will be great fun. My cough has been pretty bad, but it's no worse than it was at home.

"There's a soldier come for the letters and they are obliged to be ready.

"I am, your loving and dutiful son.

"LEONARD.

"P.S.—Uncle Henry says his father was very old-fashioned, and he always liked him to put 'Your dutiful son,' so I put it to you.

"All these crosses mean kisses, Jemima told me."

(To be Continued.)

## HOW BERNIE MISSED HER SUPPER.

"Ask mother, please, to save my supper, Kate; Miss Park is going to take the whole school out to Cave Spring, and I'm bound to be a little late."

"All right, Bernie, I'll tell the missus; an' its yerself that will be riddy to ate when ye git back."

Away went the little girl, eager for the delight of the walk with such merry companions, and it was as she said some time after supper before she got home.

"Where's my supper, mother?" she called out as soon as she came in sight of the front porch.

"It is on the table in the dining-room," answered her mother; "but before you go into the house I want to tell you something."

Mother's voice was grave, but there was a shadow of a smile on her face that kept Bernie from feeling alarmed. The little girl came and put her elbows on her mother's knees.

"When I went into the sitting-room this morning," said mother, "I saw Puss and Poll having a sort of experience meeting. I don't pretend to say positively, but this is what I think they were saying.

"Puss—'Poll, what do you think of my little mistress for going off to school without giving me any milk this morning? I ate two mice last night, and am very thirsty, but though I mowed and rubbed against her, she drank her own milk and hurried away.'

"Poll—'My case is harder than yours, mistress, for you are at liberty to seek food, but here I am shut up to starve. I have neither food nor drink to-day.'

"Puss—'I think she ought to be made to go without at least one meal when she is hungry, to remind her of us dumb-lipped folk who cannot ask for what we want.'

Mother's little story was done, and Bernie stood silent and downcast.

"Do you think I had better go without my supper, to-night, mother?" she said presently.

"I leave that to yourself, my little daughter," said her mother.

So Bernie missed her good bread and butter that night, but I don't think Puss and Poll ever missed theirs again.—Sunbeam.

## READY! AYE READY!

The watchful Christian is one who would not be over-surprised if he found Christ coming at once; he would not have something to do first, something to get ready.—Newman.