

pressed opinions contrary to his own, which happened to be singularly bad ones. When he was in wine, the lieutenant was something awful, and he was in wine from eight o'clock p.m. to three o'clock a.m. invariably. He did not like me from the first, and took every means of letting me know it. Now it was my sword-belt that was awry, and now my shako should have been in place of the forage-cap; or I made such a row at mess, or I was a sulky dog that never spoke. I flattered myself, perhaps with reason, that I, from the military college, knew as much of regimental regulations as Lieutenant Bullseye from nowhere, and had probably had as good opportunities as he of learning how to behave myself at dinner; but he was determined to bully me, and bully me he did. Affairs had come to that crisis when opinion began to be divided as to whether I 'took it deuced good-naturedly from Bullseye,' or did not dare resent it. I had had it on my lips a score of times to warn him that I would throw a bottle at him if he said another word; but there's many a slip 'twixt the bottle and lip, and I had never yet mustered the pluck to do it. One trick he played me might have ruined me forever but for the merest accident. Half-a-dozen of us had been out into the country, and were about returning in a mail phaeton and a dog-cart. Bullseye had been as disagreeable as usual during the day, and had not improved since dinner time; I had left the room to avoid him, and was lounging by the inn-door looking on at the harnessing of the horses; and, the windows of the apartment I had just quitted being open, I was fortunate enough to hear the following plot: It was proposed, amidst several 'too bads' and 'precious shames'; but Bullseye, by reason of his 'bad emience,' managed to get it carried. The party, under this and that excuse, were to go back in the phaeton, and leave me to drive home alone; the five were to get on very fast, attire themselves as highwaymen. As they plotted, so it came to pass; but I myself was armed by that time with more evil eggs and rotten oranges than are usually stowed in front of a young gentleman's dog-cart, and singling out my especial foe from the rest, I made his black crape but a very small protection to him.

One night, he went a little further than any of his previous experiments: he told me, in the presence of several others, that, as it was his guard night, he intended to come and duck me in the morning between two and three; and I told him, on my part, that I should like to see him at it. This was accepted as a regular challenge, and I knew that the auditors would make up their minds permanently, according to my behaviour. I was, I confess, burning with a very considerable passion for revenge by this time, and I arranged a couple of heavy iron candlesticks by my bedside, and then waited until it was time. My friend came up through the dark as cautiously as a cat; but fear has a perfect hearing, and I caught the ring of a scabbard against the banisters well enough; I heard his footfall on the landing, too; and allowing, as I thought, just so much interval as would have brought him to the door, I let fly one of my missiles as hard as I could fling. He was nearer than I had calculated, and fell with a groan close by me; and I leaped out in horror to strike a light. My feet got into the water that was doubtless flowing from his broken jug, and I slipped up. When I had lit the candle, I found the lieutenant seemingly dead upon the floor, and the wet on the floor to be caused by a pool of blood that was increasing momently from a wound over his temple. The unfortunate practical joker was in hospital for

seven months, and he bore that terrible lesson written over his brow to his grave. Upon consultation with his intimates, he came to the conclusion that, under the circumstances—I had every day inquired after his health—it would be better to cut than to shoot me; and, except when regimental duty required, we never spoke to each other again. I cannot but recommend some such similar course of proceeding to all young ensigns troubled with Bulls; yes, the remedy is severe, but it is, I believe, the best one. If you are plucky and strong—which you are not likely to be, or Bullseye would not be there—get out of bed, and lick him by all means; but, otherwise, take to your iron-candlestick.

There was one man, Capt. Childers, in the old—th, who would have redeemed the character of any regiment, although composed otherwise of Bulls. Without being what is called pious, the captain was the most unaffectedly good man I ever knew; the soldiers of his own company positively adored him; and the mess, though he was never a late sinner, nor more than a tolerable hand with a cue or a card, gave him three-times-three with greater enthusiasm than to any other man. Although obviously generous, and living in better style than most of us, his expenditure was not what might have been expected from one of his supposed fortune. I had heard this remarked by youngsters more than once, and confirmed by some gray haired captain or veteran subaltern raised for good conduct from the ranks. 'Childers spends all his money, they said, 'in buying pleasures for other people,' and, certainly, if a good fairy ever did wear the wings of a grenadier captain, it was in the gallant—th, under the mortal appellation of Childers.

When my name was on the top of the list of ensigns, and nothing but death could have made me a lieutenant, the fairy took me for a walk upon Chatham ramparts; and the conversation turning upon the purchase-system, I expressed my opinion against it strongly enough. 'Look at Captain Sloman, who is only one step before you,' I said, 'and has been in the regiment fifteen years longer than yourself! Look at young Greenhorn, who is the third purchasing ensign, who will walk over my head; and only watch the trickery and black-legging that take place all the year round, about buying this man and that man out of the regiment altogether, that the rich ones may get on, and four hundred pounds is wanted from one and two hundred pounds from another, according as he is benefited by the alteration.'

'All quite true,' replied Childers; 'and although the purchasing system does prevent great senility among the commanding-officers, it is, upon the whole, a very indifferent plan; but remember, you need only have the regulation money—which you are actually forbidden to exceed—once lodged at Cox's, and no power on earth can oblige you to be passed over.'

'Yes, captain. But what young man is prepared, with ever so much justice on his side, to dare the indignation of his brother officers in thus stopping the promotion of half the regiment? Could any more odious system have been contrived than this, which renders an honest man who does his duty an object of contempt? And, moreover, how few of us have even this regulation-money? Where, for instance, am I to look for it, or Jones, or Smith, or Robinson?'

'That,' said the captain, speaking slowly, and with some hesitation, 'is just what I wanted to get at. The fact is, I have some loose cash lying idle; and if you will permit me to lend it to you until you are a genera-

officer, with a regiment of your own, and the commandantship, say, of Chatham, it will confer on me a great pleasure. No there's no obligation; I look upon it quite as an investment. I assure you, and the money shall be lodged for you at once. You will be quiet about this, please, to everybody, and hunt, if people wonder, at an unexpected legacy.'

Captain Sloman, whom Childers had insisted on placing before himself on the Army list, had had a sort of legacy of this sort bequeathed to me, and four or five other officers besides; and, thanks to our common benefactor, I was a lieutenant before the year was out. My gratitude to this man turned to affection, which increased as I came to know him better. From his companion, I became his friend. I talked to him unreservedly, as I would have talked to a wise and tender-hearted elder brother; and, at last, I told him all. I had read of some, similarly afflicted as myself, who had found noble mentors—men who, brave as lions themselves, had pity and advice for their weaker brethren—and Childers, I said to myself, is surely one of them. I revealed my secret; I said to him, the man you have made your friend is a coward.

I knew at once that I had gone too far. I had rashly judged this high-minded, honorable man to be able to reason calmly even on this matter. He could not conceal from me that he was deeply shocked. He said I was most culpable in entering the service at all that I ought to leave it while no mischief had yet been done; and then, on a sudden, the remembrance of what he had done for me struck him, and he colored to the very roots of the hair. I said I would sell out, if he pleased, as I was in his hands—a cruel and improper speech enough, but I was very angry and disappointed—but he only replied, let us sleep on this, and talk more about it to-morrow morning.

I tossed and tumbled sleepless on my camp-bed, cursing my folly and anathematizing the whole martial race; but soon after dawn, Childers came in with outstretched hand; and 'Forgive me, my dear fellow, you were right,' he said; 'your conduct has been very praiseworthy. By all means, seek every opportunity of strengthening your nerves; and I hope, please God, to see you one day by my side in battle for God and the Queen against somebody.'

Not eighteen months from that time, the news of the declaration of war with Russia came to us while at mess, and I cheered as lustily as any; perhaps the danger seemed then so distant, or else, as I believe, my desire to shew myself worthy of the trust which Childers had in me, outweighed my fears. The town where we were quartered was soon ringing with preparation for the field; the harbour was choked with frigates and transports for embarkation; and among the first regiments that received the route for the East was the old—th.

In the dirty troop-ship 'Obstinate,' I was soon convinced that fear itself was not without a master: unaccustomed as I was to the ocean, I saw, in the Bay of Biscay, wave after wave rise above the topmast of our vessel, and gulf after gulf yawning to receive us, without a touch of terror. If men had hauled me from my noisome berth, or torn me from the deck-side, to which I was generally lashed, to hurl me into those roaring depths, I should neither have been alarmed nor surprised. Unutterable sickness had seized upon body and soul; but when we had passed the Straits, and the fair blue Mediterranean broke into smiles around us, it seemed as if I was waking in heaven after purgatorial pains.