

THE STORY OF A SHORT LIFE.

BY JULIANA HORATIA EWING.

CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"You're a V. C., and you ought to know. I suppose nothing—not even if I could be good always, from this minute right away till I die—nothing could ever count up to the courage of a V. C.?"

"God knows it could, a thousand times over!"

"Where are you going? Please don't go. Look at me. They're not going to chop the queen's head off, are they?"

"Heaven forbid! What are you thinking about?"

"Why, because—look at me again. Ah! you've winked it away, but your eyes were full of tears; and the only other brave man I ever heard of crying was Uncle Rupert, and that was because he knew they were going to chop the poor king's head off."

"That was enough to make anybody cry."

"I know it was. But do you know now, when I'm wheeling about in my chair and playing with him, and he looks at me wherever I go; sometimes for a bit I forget about the king, and I fancy he is sorry for me. Sorry, I mean, that I can't jump about, and creep under the table. Under the table was the only place where I could get out of sight of his eyes. Oh, dear! there's Jemima."

"But you are going to be good?"

"I know I am. And I'm going to do lessons again. I did a little French this morning—a story. Mother did most of it; but I know what the French officer called the poor French soldier when he went to see him in a hospital."

"What?"

"*Mon brave*. That means 'my brave fellow.' A nice name, wasn't it?"

"Very nice. Here's Jemima."

"I'm coming, Jemima. I'm not going to be naughty; but you may go back to the chair, for this officer will carry me. He carries so comfortably. Come along, my Sweep. Thank you so much. You have put me in beautifully. Kiss me, please. Good-night, V. C."

"Good-night, *mon brave*."

CHAPTER VIII.

"I am a man of no strength at all of body, nor yet of mind; but would, if I could, though I can but crawl, spend my life in the pilgrims' way. When I came at the gate that is at the head of the way, the lord of that place did entertain me frooly . . . gave me such things that were necessary for my journey, and bid me hope to the end. . . . Other brunts I also look for; but this I have resolved on, to wit, to run when I can, to go when I cannot run, and to creep when I cannot go. As to the main, I thank him that loves me, I am fixed; my way is before me, my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though I am as you see."

"And behold—Mr. Ready-to-halt came by with his crutches in his hand, and he was also going on pilgrimage."—*Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*.



AND if we tie it with the amber-colored ribbon, then every time I have it out to put in a new poor thing, I shall remember how very naughty I was, and how I spoil your poetry."

"Then we'll certainly tie it with something else," said the master of the house, and he jerked away the ribbon with a gesture as decisive as his words. "Let bygones be bygones. If I forget it, you needn't remember it!"

"Oh, but, indeed, I ought to remember it; and I do think I better had—to remind myself never, never to be so naughty again!"

"Your mother's own son!" muttered the master of the house; and he added aloud: "Well, I forbid you to remember it—so there! It'll be naughty if you do. Here's some red ribbon. That should please you, as you're so fond of soldiers."

Leonard and his father were seated side by side at a table in the library. The dog lay at their feet.

They were very busy: the master of the house working under Leonard's direction, who, issuing his orders from his wheelchair, was so full of anxiety and impor-

tance, that when Lady Jane opened the library door he knitted his brow and put up one thin little hand in a comically old-fashioned manner, to deprecate interruption.

"Don't make any disturbance, mother dear, if you please. Father and I are very much engaged."

"Don't you think, Len, it would be kind to let poor mother see what we are doing and tell her about it?"

Leonard pondered an instant.

"Well, I don't mind."

Then, as his mother's arm came round him, he added, impetuously:

"Yes, I should like to. You can show, father dear, and I'll do all the explaining."

The master of the house displayed some sheets of paper, tied with ribbon, which already contained a good deal of his handiwork, including a finely illuminated capital L on the title-page.

"It is to be called the Book of Poor

chair close to the organ. And the tuner was tuning, and he looked round, and James said, 'It's the young gentleman;' and the tuner said, 'Good-morning sir;' and I said, 'Good-morning, tuner; go on tuning, please, for I want to see you do it.' And he went on; and he dropped a tin thing, like a big extinguisher, on to the floor; and he got down to look for it, and he felt about in such a funny way that I burst out laughing. I didn't mean to be rude; I couldn't help it. And I said, 'Can't you see it? It's just under the table.' And he said, 'I can't see anything, sir; I'm stone blind.' And he said perhaps I would be kind enough to give it him. And I said I was very sorry but I hadn't got my crutches, and so I couldn't get out of my chair without some one to help me. And he was so awfully sorry for me, you can't think! He said he didn't know I was more afflicted than he was; but I was awfully sorry for him, for I've

there never was anybody but me who wasn't. And I wished I knew their names, and I asked the tuner his name, and he told me. And then I thought of my book, for a good idea—a collection, you know. And I thought perhaps, by degrees, I might collect three hundred and sixty-five poor things, all brave. And so I am making father rule it like his diary, and we've got the tuner's name down for the first of January; and if you can think of anybody else you must tell me, and if I think they're afflicted enough and brave enough, I'll put them in. But I shall have to be rather particular, for we don't want to fill up too fast. Now, father, I've done the explaining, so you can show your part. Look, mother, hasn't he ruled it well? There's only one tiny mess, and it was The Sweep shaking the table with getting up to be patted."

"He has ruled it beautifully. But what a handsome L!"

"Oh, I forget! Wait a minute, father, the explaining isn't quite finished. What do you you think that L stands for, mother dear?"

"For Leonard, I suppose."

"No, no! What fun! You're quite wrong. Guess again."

"Is it not the tuner's name?"

"Oh, no! He's in the first of January—I told you so. And in plain printing. Father really couldn't illuminate three hundred and sixty-five poor things!"

"Of course he couldn't. It was silly of me to think so."

"Do you give it up?"

"I must. I cannot guess."

"It's the beginning of '*Lætus sorte mea*.'"

Ah, you know now! You ought to have guessed without my telling you. Do you remember? I remember, and mean to remember. I told Jemima that very night, I said, 'It means "Happy with my fate;" and in our family we have to be happy with it, whatever sort of a one it is.' For you told me so. And I told the tuner, and he liked hearing about it very much. And then he went on tuning, and he smiled so when he was listening to the notes, I thought he looked very happy; so I asked him, and he said, 'Yes, he was always happy when he was meddling with a musical instrument.' But I thought most likely all brave poor things are happy with their fate, even if they can't tune; and I asked father, and he said, 'Yes,' and so we are putting it into my collection—partly for that, and partly, when the coat-of-arms is done, to show that the book belongs to me. Now, father dear, the explaining is really quite finished this time, and you may do all the rest of the show-off yourself!"

(To be Continued.)



"Do you know now when I am wheeling about in my chair."

Things, mother dear. We're doing it in bits first; then it will be bound. It's a collection—a collection of poor things who've been hurt, like me; or blind like the organ-tuner; or had their heads—no, not their heads, they couldn't go on doing things after that—had their legs or arms chopped off in battle and are very good and brave about it, and manage very, very nearly as well as people who have got nothing the matter with them. Father doesn't think Poor Things is a good name. He wanted to call it Masters of Fate, because of some poetry. What was it, father?"

"Man is man and master of his fate," quoted the master of the house.

"Yes, that's it. But I don't understand it so well as Poor Things. They are poor things, you know, and of course we shall only put in brave poor things: not cowardly poor things. It was all my idea, only father is doing the ruling, and printing, and illuminating for me. I thought of it when the organ-tuner was here."

"The organ-tuner?"

"Yes, I heard the organ, and I made James carry me in, and put me in the arm-

tried shutting my eyes; and you can bear it just a minute, but then you must open them to see again. And I said 'How can you do anything when you see nothing but blackness all along?' And he says he can do well enough as long as he's spared the use of his limbs to earn his own livelihood. And I said, 'Are there any more blind men, do you think, that earn their own livelihood?' I wish I could earn mine!" And he said, 'There are a good many blind tuners, sir.' And I said, 'Go on tuning, please; I like to hear you do it.' And he went on, and I did like him so much! Do you know the blind tuner, mother dear? And don't you like him very much? I think he is just what you think very good, and I think V. C. would think it nearly as brave as a battle to be afflicted and go on earning your own livelihood when you can see nothing but blackness all along. Poor man!"

"I do think it very good of him, my darling, and very brave."

"I knew you would. And then I thought perhaps there are lots of brave, afflicted people—poor things! and perhaps

A DRUNKARD'S BRAIN.

"I was present at the autopsy of a noted old "rounder" of my town a few weeks ago," said a resident of Troy, N.Y., recently, "and I was startled and shocked at what I saw. The dead man was about sixty years of age and had been the town drunkard for forty years. The doctors had surmised that when they cut his head open a pronounced smell of alcohol would issue from the skull."

"I thought it only one of those grim jokes that Æsculapians indulge in sometimes when they are carving a fellowman to mince meat in the interest of their science. But I soon learned that it was no joke, for when the surgeon's saw had cut off the top of the man's skull the odor of the alcohol that filled the home room was strong enough to almost sicken one. Then one of the surgeons struck a match and held it close to the brain. Immediately a blue flame enveloped the entire portion of the cerebral organ exposed, and the quivering flesh sizzled as if on a gridiron."

"That experiment and disclosure set me to very serious thinking about the error of my way. I am not a temperance lecturer nor a prohibition politician, but I must most respectfully and firmly decline your invitation to have something. I don't want my brain to float around in a sea of alcohol, as did that of the poor old town drunkard of Troy. There is no telling how many other men's brains will reveal the same condition if an autopsy is held upon them."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.