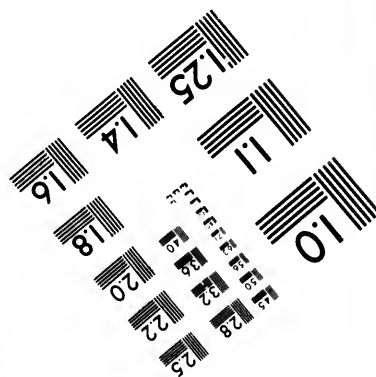
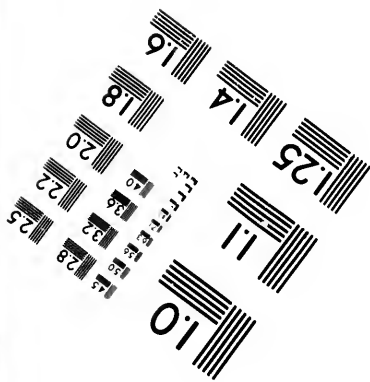
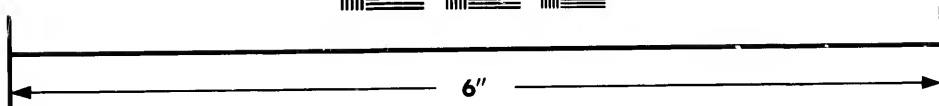
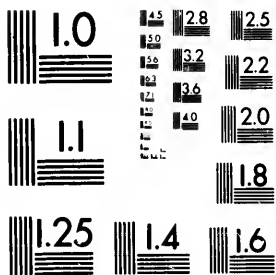


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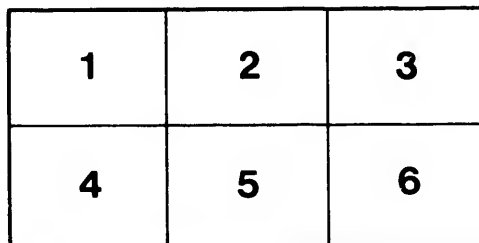
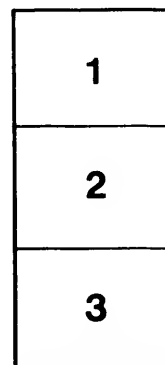
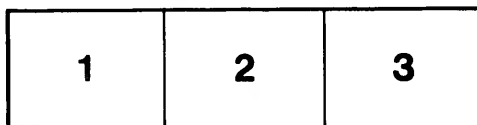
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AMYOT BROUGH

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*Some Account of*  
**Amyot Brough**

*Captain in His Majesty's 20th Regiment of Foot, who fought  
(but with no great glory) under H R.H. the Duke of Cumberland  
in the Low Countries, and had the honour to be wounded in  
the left shoulder under the eyes of General Wolfe at the  
taking of Quebec.*

*By* E. VINCENT BRITON

*Second Edition*



LONDON  
SEELEY & CO., 46, 47 & 48, ESSEX STREET, STRAND  
(Late of 54, FLEET STREET)  
1886

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## PREFACE.

IN relating the plain and unvarnished history of Captain Amyot Brough, my mind has been entirely at ease on one important point—none will ask whether it be true or false. It is a pleasing reflection, and my pen has much enjoyed the liberty thereby secured.

But another name is found in these pages—a name which all men honour, and concerning which I have not felt a like freedom.

In treating of the doings and sayings of Captain Brough, I needed to take council of no one; but in dealing with the character and deeds of the hero of Quebec, I was constrained to seek aid from other writers. I trust they have not misled me.

My chief aim, however, has been to paint the man as I read his mind in his letters, of which a sufficient number are given in the biography by the Rev. R. Wright (1864); and I am bound to say that a careful study of these letters has constrained me to follow Mr. Wright in doubting the accuracy of the story told by Lord Stanhope of Wolfe's extravagant behaviour in his interview with Pitt.

E. V. B.

*October, 1884.*

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN revising this work for a cheaper edition, I have done a somewhat unusual thing, concerning which I feel bound in courtesy to my readers to offer some explanation. The much hurry in which all men now live grows daily more apparent, and it has caused me some pain to reflect that, in the former edition of this book, I inflicted on my friends many unnecessary details, and lengthy conversations, forgetful that such trifles in the life of Amyot Brough, as were therein mentioned, could be of interest only to me, his faithful friend.

Having, therefore, this opportunity, I have set myself to do away with much unnecessary matter, and having shown myself thus tender of my readers time and eyesight, I have ventured, encouraged by the many kindly criticisms which greeted the first appearance of this book, to add a few pages relating to the more private and personal history of Captain Brough.

E. V. B.

*October, 1885.*

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# AMYOT BROUGH

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## CHAPTER I.

### CONCERNING A DIREFUL EVENT.

377 ' You are right, madam ; I'd have been wiser if I had  
399 stayed by own fireside in such weather as this ; but, you  
414 see, I had business to see to, and an old sailor is loath to  
show the white feather, though all the spirits of evil in  
the shape of sharp winds be abroad and adoin'g—which  
same evil spirits, as it seems to me, do as much mischief  
427 on land as on sea. But, as I said, it was business that  
440 brought me out, though if I'd had two grains of good  
462 sense I'd have stayed at home.'

So said Captain Brough, late of his Majesty's Navy, as  
he stood at the door of the Griffin Inn in Penrith town, and  
looked forth into the fast gathering darkness. It was  
barely three o'clock, but the snow had been falling for  
some hours, and dense black clouds were coming up, pre-  
saging a still increasing fall. The mistress of the inn  
shivered, and drew her shawl around her, remarking that  
her guest would have to stay the night in the town—the  
road must be blocked by the snow-drifts by this time.  
But that was of no matter ; the captain would find com-  
pany in the parlour, and a warm chimney corner, at any  
rate.

The captain smiled and shook his head.

'A warm fireside and a hearty welcome you never fail to offer, Mistress Thwaites,' he said; 'but if your boy will bring round my cob before the weather worsens, I make no doubt but I'll cast anchor in my own port before night; for though I can't deny that my eyes are fair dazed with staring at the white blanket all around me, I'd trust old Jonah to find his way home to Broughbarrow were it as dark as pitch; and I've my bits of bairns at home expecting me.'

And with these words, waiting only till the stout horse had been made ready, the captain bade her a courteous good-night, and set out on his homeward way. Those in the inn-parlour gazed after him with some wonder and not a little anxiety, while the stable-boy shook his head ruefully, saying:

'A rakkan he'll niver dew it; lang afooar he gits hecam, he an' t' nag 'll be lost in this terble girt snaa, sooa thae will, sewer an' sartan.'

But the captain had no such misgivings. The distance was not great, old Jonah was stout and willing, and with the thought of the warm stable to allure him would breast the storm bravely, and scoff at the snow-drifts; and in imagination his rider fancied himself already past all danger, and snugly ensconced in his high-backed chair by his own chimney-corner.

We will leave him to his battle with the snow, and let the wind carry us straight over hedges and ditches to that same fireside in the old parlour of Broughbarrow Farm, and make our own observations unconstrained by his presence. And in truth, reader, I had as lief trust myself to the guidance of the wind as to aught else, for when I looked for Broughbarrow Farm a while since, though it seemed to me I knew exactly where it used to stand, I could not find it; and well I know that in days of yore the captain used to say the wind and the old house were well acquainted. So on the wings of the wind we will travel

and whether it pleases to put us in at the front-door, or drop us down the chimney, is small matter on such a night as this, so long as we find ourselves safe sheltered from storm and snow at last.

And the old parlour, with its high wainscoting and faded curtains, its polished floor, its bright log-fire, is a comfortable sight ; aye, and full of the cheerful sound of children's play and children's voices, that best of all music to the heart of him who loves God's creatures. The light has nearly gone ; the room would be dark, but for the glow on the hearth ; the lad who was reading by the window has thrown down his book, the little sister has deserted the task of sewing which has made her fingers ache for the last half-hour, and they are playing a wondrous game of their own invention, which has no name in books of sports, but is glorious fun for all that, not only in their opinion, but in that of Tory, the dog, and Whig, the cat. It leads to many a clamber over chairs and tables, many a scamper out at one door and in at the other, many a spring from stool to chair, many a rush behind the curtains.

'If only I could creep as Whig does,' sighs little Joan, quite out of breath, 'you'd never catch me, brother.'

'I never can catch Whig,' replied the boy. 'It's not fair of him ; he won't let himself be caught. Tory often thinks he's got him, but he's always just too late.'

And as he spoke the white poodle, having-caught sight of the cat, made a bounce at him from the shining oak table on which he had been keeping guard, and, as usual, just missed his aim, but was unlucky enough to descend with unusual weight on little Joan's dearest treasure, a waxen baby, which its mistress had just put to sleep on a footstool. Her cry of alarm checked the game. Whig abandoned the idea of rushing up the curtains, and Tory, much terrified, came timidly to discover how much mischief he had done. The waxen beauty was tenderly picked up by its mistress, who seated herself on the floor

to examine into the misadventure. Tory's paw had fallen too heavily on the doll's head, and the result was a serious crack across the crown.

'It's bad—very bad,' said the child. 'I doubt if Cleopatra will recover. I do, indeed, Tory.'

'O-o-oh!' said Tory mournfully.

'You see, her head is cracked, and that's a mortal injury. No human being can recover when the head is cracked.'

'O-o-o-oh!' said Tory in despair.

'It's of no use to say "Oh!" in that doleful way. You should not be so clumsy, Tory; I often tell you so.'

Tory hung down his head, and heaved a deep sigh, whereupon Whig, who had been rubbing himself against Joan's anxious little face, seeing that Tory was in disgrace, thought it fitting to deal him a smart box on the ear.

Tory looked piteous, but was too depressed to avenge himself, feeling that, considering the crime he had committed, even Whig might be at liberty to punish him; but Joan's sense of justice was offended.

'Whig, I wonder at you! Have you no feelings at all! When you see the trouble I am in, must you, too, begin to vex me? Tory is not your kitten, that you should beat him. Do mind your own business for once in your life! My precious darling, does your head ache? Do you think you are going to die?'

'Joan' said her brother, 'you are a goose. Who ever heard of a wax doll dying? You are making Tory wretched; he didn't mean to hurt the stupid thing.'

'He is careless, and thoughtless, and clumsy. You know you are, Tory.'

Tory whined a piteous assent. He did know he was a wretch, a brute, a monster, the greatest villain that ever breathed; but he adored his little mistress: he could not live if she would not forgive him, and he continued to utter short ejaculations of distress in such tones of lamentation, that at length Joan condescended to say:

'There, that will do, I see you are sorry ; we will hope the child will get better, and the crack will not show much if I make her a pretty cap to cover it. Shake hands, Tory, and make your bow.'

Whereupon Tory wiped his eyes with his paws, rose gracefully on his hind legs, and laying one paw on his heart, extended the other to his little mistress, and then, feeling quite himself again, gave Whig to understand it might be advisable to flee up the curtains, if he did not desire some return for his ill-natured treatment.

Joan continued to lavish tender attentions on her baby, and Amyot, seeing that the romp was at an end, picked up his book and tried to pursue his reading by the fire-light. But the flame was so flickering and uncertain that he soon desisted, with the remark :

'It's very hard we mayn't have a light till father comes in. There's nothing on earth to do.'

'But candle-light costs a deal,' was the sage reply of the eight-year-old maiden, 'and you can think as well in the dark, and talk as well in the dark ; and I don't think it's good manners to sit mum and silent when you're not alone in the room. Deborah says book-learning makes men-folk dull and poor company ; and I think so, too.'

'And I think', said Amyot vehemently, 'that a man that can't read can have nothing to say worth hearing ; and so he'd better be mum, as you call it, Joan.'

'You are rude,' was the little maiden's calm reply ; 'why speak so loud, Amyot ? I am not deaf.'

'No ; but you aggravate me, Joan. I can't tell why, but you do.'

The little sister looked at him with the same quiet gaze of dignified surprise with which she had subdued the dog Tory. She was a soft, gentle little creature, but wondrous staid and managing for her years. Her blue eyes were serious and earnest ; she could laugh a good ringing laugh, but she never smiled. Sometimes Amyot felt subdued by

her air of unconscious authority, but not unfrequently his temper, naturally somewhat hasty, was ruffled by her very quietness. Being a year older than she was, it seemed to him that he ought to be able to consider himself older and wiser ; but instead of being able to enjoy any such feeling, he was continually conscious of her superiority in every respect but that of physical strength. He not unfrequently lost his temper, she never did ; he was often idle and careless, she was ever occupied and busy ; he was constantly reprov'd for his short and uncourteous speeches, she could always say just the right word to everybody ; and thus, from one cause or another, Amyot could scarcely fail to have an idea that his little sister was his superior. Happily he could not accuse her of anything like conceit, and consequently his love for her was as real as his respect. True, as he had said, her calmness aggravated him, but he hated himself that so it was.

She was a pretty thing to gaze at, this little maiden, with her fairy-like figure, clear skin, and long fair hair. Amyot's hair, too, was long, and both children wore it low upon their foreheads ; but Amyot's hair and skin had a darker tinge, his shoulders were broad, and he had little grace of movement. Tory and Whig took liberties with him which their sense of propriety would never have permitted them to attempt with their little mistress. He was their playfellow, she was their goddess. They would turn a deaf ear to his commands when such commands were not entirely to their minds ; her voice, never raised above the gentlest tones, brought them to her feet in a moment.

The sudden cessation of the noisy game in the oak-parlour had brought on the scene one of the inmates of the kitchen—the afore-named Deborah, a stout, elderly country-woman, who, ever since the death of the captain's wife, four years before, had, to use her own expression, ' kept things going ' at the farm. Her husband, Michael

Jephson, was hind, or managing man, out of doors; for the captain was, in their opinion, a mere babe about farm matters; and how could he be aught else, seeing that ploughs and harrows, spades and pitchforks, are of no account on board ship? No doubt he might be well enough at driving a ship; but it took a wiser man than he to keep a farm going, and that wiser man, in his own and his wife's opinion, was honest Michael Jephson.

But though they did not think highly of their master's wisdom, both husband and wife were truly attached to him and his children; and Deborah's usually cheery face wore an expression of anxiety as she opened the door of the parlour to see how the children were amusing themselves, and, in reply to Amyot's exclamation, 'I wish father would come home!' remarked:

'It'll be lang afooar he'll git heeam t' neet. Only heear what a terble storm's cumman; t' hoose an' t' trees can scarce bide wheer thae bea. Mappen he's stoppin' in Peerith, Michael says. Sewer, he'd niver bother to cum heeam sick a neet as thisan.'

'Not come home!' cried Amyot. 'Father's been a sailor; he cares nought for wind and snow. Oh, he'll come home, I make no doubt at all!'

'Whist, lad, yer ivver fur thinkin' yasell reet. We'll see. I'd be terble glad to knaa as t' maester, top-cooart, pipe, an' a', be safe in Peerith this varra minute.'

'And I'd be glad to know he was coming down the lane, as I dare say he is,' responded Amyot. 'I'll ask Mike to come with me to meet him.'

'Nae, that ta wilna. Mike an' his rheumatic to gang oot in t' snaa!'

'Then I'll go by myself.'

'Nae, I tell ya; sit still in t' house, an' hooap all's reet sae lang as ya can.'

And she turned back into the kitchen, leaving the chil-



dren gazing at each other with awe-struck faces. Joan was the first to speak.

'Deborah is frightened,' she said; 'but father is never afraid of the wind and the rain. He will come home, Amyot.'

'If he can,' said Amyot. 'Mike told me one day that he remembered a storm which blocked up all the roads about here in a few hours, and it has been snowing all day. He said several men were lost in snow-drifts.'

'To-day?'

'No, not to-day; that time years ago that Mike was telling me about.'

'Years ago the roads, I dare say, were very bad,' suggested Joan. 'I do hope father will get safe home. The wind does howl terribly.'

There was something unusually sad in the little girl's voice. Tory's ear caught it, and fearing, doubtless, that she was still fretting over the mischance of her waxen baby, he came to her side with a sympathetic and regretful whine.

'Yes, Tory,' his little mistress said, 'we are thinking of your master and the storm, and we are very unhappy about him.'

Tory sighed deeply, and went to the window to gaze out into the darkness. After a few minutes he pricked up his ears and seemed to listen. The children noticed this movement, and ran to the window to discover what was to be seen. But all was dark as pitch; the wind howled, the snow beat against the pane; and though Tory evidently heard something more, the children strained their ears in vain to catch the much-desired sound of horse's hoofs.

'I shall go and tell Mike and Deborah,' Amyot exclaimed. 'Tory thinks he hears something—that's plain enough.'

Mike and Deborah were sitting at their supper with

the two lasses who formed the kitchen staff, when Amyot burst into the room exclaiming :

‘Tory thinks he hears father coming ; but we can see nothing. Do, Mike, bring a light and come and see !’

He rose slowly, but willingly enough ; for he too had had misgivings, though it was not his way to talk about them. Suddenly he stopped.

‘A heears summat tew,’ he said, ‘bet it’ll no be at t’ hoose-dooar, Amyot, lad. A heears a scratchin’ loike at t’ shippen ; sewer t’ maester’s been and rooad rin thecar ;’ and he went down a long flagged passage, and opened a door that led into the back-yard.

‘It isn’t like father to do that,’ murmured Joan, as the two children followed down the dark, cold passage, shivering as they met the keen blast that rushed in at the open door.

Mike had disappeared ; but ere they reached the open air, they heard him utter an exclamation of astonishment and dismay, and at the same minute Tory rushed past them, barking furiously.

‘Amyot, lad, bid yan o’ t’ women fooak ta get es a leet ; yan can see nowt,’ called Michael in a voice which was full of fear ; and in a few minutes Deborah and both the lasses were out in the yard, she holding a lantern, by the light of which Michael was to be seen holding by its bridle a poor drenched horse, in as sorry a plight as horse could well be.

‘Whist, whist !’ said Deborah, as the girls began to utter cries of alarm. ‘Joan, my lamb, rin in t’ hoose ; t’ wind will blaa ya reet awa’. Yer fadther mun a tummelt aff in t’ snaa. Mike ’ll ga a bit o’ t’ rooad, and he’ll be sartan to meet wi’ him, if bet t’ mooan wud cum oot.’

‘Let me come too, Mike,’ pleaded Amyot, with white lips and eyes wide open with terror ; ‘let me get up on Jonah, and come with you. Oh, I must go and find father !’

Mike looked at his wife. She had pulled off her shawl, and was wrapping it round the boy as he scrambled on to the weary horse's back.

'Ya mun let him ga,' was her reply; and Mike took the bridie and turned the horse's head back the way he had just come.

It was not easy to make Jonah stir: he was almost spent. Every hair on his body, as well as the saddle, was wet as possible. What could have happened to the master? Where could he be at that moment?

This was the question in Deborah's mind; but as Mike and the lantern disappeared, and the court was left in darkness, she turned to the trembling child beside her, and drawing her into her arms, carried her back into the warm kitchen, soothing her as best she might. Joan did not speak, but some quiet tears were falling; and Deborah wished she would talk, and be for once, as she said to herself, like other bairns. There was a long silence, only broken by the one question from Joan, 'Did Tory go with hem!' and in answer to the assurance that the dog had followed close in the horse's steps, she sighed, 'That is right; it was his duty,' and said no more.

An hour passed in this quiet suspense; then the same muffled sound of trampling in the snow was heard, and Joan slipped down from Deborah's knee and darted to the door. The three women were following, but before they could lift the latch the door was opened from outside, and Amyot, panting, wet, and utterly worn out with battling against the wind, stumbled into the room.

Joan shrank back in alarm. Amyot's eyes stared at her, but did not seem to see her. Great sobs shook his whole body, and his breath came in deep gasps; his face was as white as ashes, his long dark hair hung over his face.

'Ya mun teeak aff hes claes, and git him summat warm ta drink,' Deborah,' said Mike, who followed

closely ; 'and a mun teek Jonah t' shippen, and then I'll ga call oot t' lads, and we'll ga tagither and leeak in t' river and ivverywhaars, an' mebbe we'll find him teean side o' tuther. Bet git t' bairns t' bed, an' mak' 'em teek summat to it.'

He swung the heavy door behind him as he spoke, and was gone.

Amyot had sunk down on the hearth before the fire, and, deaf to all Joan's entreaties that he would tell her where he had been, did nothing but cry and sob, till the little sister fell into her wonted manner, and said :

'You will never be a man. I thought boys were ashamed to cry and moan like babies. I am surprised at you, Amyot—Mike was right to say that Deborah should put you to bed.'

'Deborah will not put me to bed, and I am not a baby. But you do not care, Joan. I suppose it is nothing to you that father is drowned, and will never come home again—never !' and Amyot burst out into a piteous wail which brought tears into Deborah's kind eyes, and made the two strong country lasses sob and cry.

But Joan did not cry. Her little face grew very pale and almost old in its intense anxiety, as she clasped her small hands together, and gazed earnestly at her weeping brother.

'It is not true, Amyot ; you love to frighten me, but I will not believe it is true. Deborah, it isn't true ; he is frightened, and doesn't know what he is saying. Jonah came safely home. Father may have fallen off and hurt himself, but he can't be drowned—can he ?'

'Nae, nae, ma lamb. He sud a gaan roond be t' rooad ; bet mebbe he cudna find t' naarest rooad. Speek ta her, Amyot, and tell her wot Mike telled ya, and whya ya are sae sewer es yer fadther's lost.'

Amyot, thus urged, made an effort to control himself, sat up, and in a choking voice told his tale.

'We went exactly the way Jonah had come. It was easy to find it, because he had struggled along through the snow; he had come straight down the lane, but before that he must have lost himself, for the rack led into the little meadow, and right down to the river-side, and there, Mike says, he must have stumbled and lost his footing, and Mike believes they both fell into the water; and, oh, it is deep there, and goes rushing and foaming along, and we could see nothing—nothing at all—neither in the river nor along the bank, and Jonah wouldn't stay; he was so frightened Mike couldn't hold him; he broke away, and would come home, and carried me with him.'

'An' a varra gude thing tew,' said Deborah soothingly; 'fer ya cuddent hae deen nae gude. Mike 'll dew better by hissel. An' noo, ma barn, ya mun coom ta bed, an' Joan 'll cum tew, loike a gude lile barn.'

'I'll come and sit by Amyot, but I cannot go to bed,' was Joan's resolute rejoinder. 'If they bring father home all wet and cold, there will be a deal to do, and he will want me.'

Amyot's heavy eyes were closing before he was laid in his little bed. Was it the shock or the cold that had so crushed the strong-spirited lad? Deborah feared it was both, and fears for her master, anxious thoughts for her husband out in the storm, and great misgivings for the little lad, together made up a burden, the like of which she had seldom known.

She paced restlessly to and fro, upstairs and down, now listening at the back door, now gazing out into the darkness from an upper window, now returning to the room where the dark head was nestled in the pillow in an uneasy slumber, while the brighter head of the little girl lay back in a rocking-chair, as she kept her weary watch by the bedside; anon returning to the kitchen to see that the fire was good and the kettle was boiling, that when the master came all might be in readiness.

When he came! Ah, if ever he should come!

The long hours crept on slowly—oh, how slowly! Only those who have watched for the morning can guess how slowly it came at last. Deborah had listened to each hour as it struck, had struggled against the drowsiness which assailed her at the darkest, stillest hour of all, had wrapped herself in her warmest shawl as the night grew colder and colder, had built up the logs on the hearth, had seen her candle burn down in the socket, and had lighted a fresh one, and still no sound was heard outside the farm. She had seen with relief that Amyot's sleep had grown more peaceful and natural, and had rejoiced to find, on one of her visits to his room, that the little sister's eyes had closed, and her bright head had sunk down on the pillow by his side; the fears, the sense of responsibility at last forgotten, and the children were both fast asleep.

How the good woman dreaded their awakening! Long before sunrise the beasts would be astir, the lasses would be at work, and then the children would awake. And what should she say to them? How tell them to hope, when all hope had died in her breast? 'But children are children,' she thought; 'they'll not die of grief, though Amyot has a warm heart, and the lassie is not quite like other barns.'

A footstep in the snow, a hand softly lifting the latch, and her husband stood within the door. A miserable figure, drenched and battered, dejection in every line of his usually cheery face, utter weariness and exhaustion in every movement; and behind him, looking, if possible, still more a picture of despair, was the dog Tory.

Michael spoke no word as he put down his lantern and stout stick, and spread his hands to the blazing log.

Deborah gazed at him, and uttered the one word:

'The maester?'

He shook his head.

'Yse nowt to tell.' Then, turning to the dog, who was making for the stairs, 'Na, Tory, lad,' he said, 'thoo munna gang to t' barns. Let the lile things be, thae'll knaa sune enoo.'

The dog hesitated a minute, then, convinced apparently against his will, he returned to the hearth, stretched himself wearily down and waited ; waited for the day to come, and all that it might bring.

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## CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH AN IMPORTANT LETTER IS WRITTEN.

AH, me! that waiting time! that weary waiting time, how long it lasted! People were, methinks, more patient in those days than they are now. This century has ushered in the demon haste, and we can wait for nothing, bear nothing, put up with nothing, as in days gone by our forefathers could. Uncertainty is unbearable; delay not to be tolerated. Last century events moved more slowly, and, perhaps, it seemed more natural to have to wait. I know not, but it seems to me that in the bustle and hurry of life of these days many of the virtues of our race have become extinct. We have no time for the genial courtesies of life; scarce time to enjoy our pleasures; may it not sometimes be said, scarce time to mourn our dead?

But in Amyot Brough's childhood there was time enough and to spare. No telegraph called friends to his help; no railway brought them in a few hours to his door. Not that sympathising friends were wanting. Neighbours came in plenty; stout farmers waded through snowdrifts to help in the search, and more than one kind-hearted motherly woman came to comfort the poor children; but so long as the snow continued to fall, no trace of the lost father could be found. Day after day Amyot rolled restlessly about the house, and Joan sat silent by the window. Mike and other men came and went with never a word to say, and Deborah and the maids whispered together, and wondered how it all would



end. And in the evening the children would crouch in the chimney-corner, silent still, but ever listening, with Tory and Whig beside them, full of comprehending sympathy.

How long those days of uncertainty seemed ! But the certainty came at last, when the snow melted, and the river grew less troubled, and the skies cleared, and the snowdrops peeped above the ground. Then the doubt—if doubt it had been—passed away. The good old captain, who had many a time braved the wildest tempests on far-off seas, had met his death not far from his own house-door, in that stream which looks so harmless as it rushes over its rocky bed, in bright summer weather. The certainty had come—the certainty that a grave in the old churchyard was all that the captain now needed ; the certainty that the children were alone in the world, and must now live for each other—Amyot for Joan, and Joan for Amyot.

Looking back, in after years, on those long days of waiting, Amyot once said, ‘They seem to me as long as any year of my life ; and Joan grew paler and more still every day.’

She was very still and silent for many a week after the father had been hidden from her sight under the sod behind the church. Amyot longed to make her talk ; but in those dreadful days he had made many a firm resolve, and one was that never again would he speak sharply to that little sister who was now his one and only possession ; he would be to her a real elder brother, knight, and protector. But why—oh, why would she not talk to him ? At last she did. It was a bright day at the beginning of February. The church bells had been sounding in the morning ; but it was long since any one had taken them to church, and the idea of going had not occurred to either of the children when suddenly Amyot spoke.

‘There are lots of snowdrops under the apple-trees in

the orchard, Joan. I have heard of people putting flowers on graves. Shall we go to the town and take some? It would be something to do.'

Joan woke as if from a dream, and said somewhat listlessly, 'If you like.'

Amyot remembered his good resolution, and replied, 'It is as you like, Joan dearie.'

'It is hard for a lad to have nought to do,' reflected the little girl; 'but about the snowdrops, Amyot—I scarcely know why we should take them. Why do people do such things? But I'll come; we can think about it as we go.'

'Shall we take Tory?' asked her brother, when she had arrayed herself in her cloak and hood for the walk, and was standing by his side in the orchard. The dog had followed her, and was earnestly seeking leave to go with them.

'Take Tory to the churchyard! it wouldn't be right—he might tread on the grave.'

'Oh, no! indeed he wouldn't! he went the other day, you know.'

'Well, he can come; and the flowers—I wish I knew about them; there are so many things we don't know, Amyot.'

'Yes, indeed,'—it was delightful to have a talk once more. Amyot determined to encourage her to continue: 'But if people put flowers on graves it must be the right thing to do.'

'That is just like a boy,' Joan replied, in quite her old tone; 'you speak without thinking; but, Amyot, people always say that those who are buried know nothing about it. So why we should put flowers on their graves, I cannot see.'

'It's the only thing we can do for father now, at any rate.'

'No, indeed!' Joan's pale face grew animated and

earnest. 'We can do just the same things now that we used to do. I don't mean to make the least difference.'

'Don't you! but he won't know!'

'How can you tell, Amyot?'

'Well, I can't tell, that's just about it. We know nothing about him now, Joan; people say that he is alive, gone to heaven, and such things, but I don't know what they mean, do you?'

'I don't know what heaven means, so I can't think about that; but I've been thinking, Amyot, about father and us, and it seems to me it's like this. When father went to market, or to Carlisle, and was away a day or two, we did just as we should have done if he'd been at home. I helped Deborah, I read my books and sewed my seam just as usual, and you did your lessons and worked in the garden; sometimes father asked what we'd been doing, and sometimes he didn't; but we went on just the same. Well, why should things be different now? Father's gone somewhere, perhaps farther than Carlisle, perhaps not so far; he's away, but if we're honest folks, we shall treat him just the same as if he was here.'

'Have you been thinking this lately, Joan, while you've been so quiet?' asked Amyot, with admiration; but as she did not reply, he continued, 'But father's gone farther than Carlisle, it seems to me.'

'Does it? Well, to me it doesn't, and I'll tell you why. Some time ago, I forget when it was, I was sitting in the kitchen one evening—you were in the parlour with father, looking at his maps—well, I was undressing Cleopatra, and Tory was waiting to rock the child to sleep, when I heard Deborah reading to Mattie and Sue while they ironed the clothes in the laundry. She read about a number of different people. I can't remember half their names, but I know they were dead, and some had died very hard, starved with cold, and famished, out on the mountains; some had been murdered. I felt very

sorry for them, but I wished Deborah would not read such doleful stories, and I was trying not to listen, when she stopped a minute and then went on ; she was still reading about the same people, but the book called them a cloud of witnesses, and said they encompassed us, and that *as* they were watching us, we ought to run our race well. It was like poetry, but it wasn't poetry. I am not quite sure I know what the race meant, but if the book spoke the truth, those who are dead are not so far off as Carlisle.'

'It was a fairy tale, I suspect ; you always did like to hear about fairies and ghosts, and sometimes, I believe, you fancy you see them ; don't you, Joan ?'

Joan avoided the question. 'I like to think that father is not very far off—that part of him, I mean, that thinks and loves ; the best part of him, that is.'

'I don't believe he is anywhere near ; you believe so easily, Joan, and you imagine so much ; but look here, if father should be able to see us now, he can't be happy, because you know he'd see how dull we are without him, and people say folks are always happy when they go to heaven.'

'I've thought of that, too,' Joan replied, with hesitation ; 'but if he isn't as happy as he will be some day, I believe he's satisfied, and that's a kind of happiness. Of course, he's glad to have mother again ; and as for us, perhaps as they say it's good for us to have to manage for ourselves. Mother and he might have taken too much care of us if they'd stayed with us—who knows ?'

She stopped with a sob, and Amyot felt a great lump rise in his throat ; something within him seemed to say that that slight, fairy-like creature needed a good deal of care, and that anyone would say it was hard for her to have to do without both father and mother's guardianship.

They trudged along in silence for some time, Joan choking down her sobs, and struggling to be as calm as it

seemed to her she ought to be, and Amyot fighting with the angry sorrow that was clamouring to know the why of it all. Neither spoke till Penrith town was reached, and they crossed the market-place, and passed under the old church-tower to the new-made grave on the north side of the churchyard. There was a sound of music from within the church, and when they had laid the snowdrops in order on the grave, they stood and listened. Joan loved music, and thought the sounds very sweet and pleasant.



PENRITH CHURCH.

'Shall we go to church sometimes?' Amyot suggested. 'I should like to hear the singing.'

'Yes; we'll go *sometimes*,' Joan said; 'just as we did when father was alive; and when we grow up, we'll go every Sunday. I heard him say to Mike once, "It isn't well for the children to see too much of the parsons; they're a breed that don't improve, Mike." I don't know what he meant, do you?'

'Not quite; but, Joan, last time I went to the church with father it made me feel as if we'd all been doing something wrong, and I didn't want to go again at all.'

'When was it, Amyot; and what happened?'

'It was just before the cold weather—the roads were bad, and father wouldn't let you come. That Sunday when Tory ran after us, and came into church. Don't you remember? I told you about it.'

'Yes; he didn't behave well. You said he sat and groaned.'

'But I've often thought of it since, and I think I know why he groaned. You know he always groans when he has been taken-in—when he thinks a bone is meant for him and Whig gets it; or anything like that. Well, I'd had a notion till that Sunday that church was a solemn sort of place, and that decent, respectable sort of folks went there; but that day it seemed to me that it was all make-believe and play-acting. Of course, I liked the singing, and I liked the stories one hears read; but I didn't like the rest of it. The parson wasn't our parson that Sunday—not Parson Morland—but a man from the Fells somewhere. I know all about him, but I can't remember his name. He made a great talk about folks denying themselves, and working hard, and doing their duties, and not drinking and eating too much, or wasting their time going to cock-fights, and the like. He said it quite solemn, as if he meant it; but it was all make-believe, because I know, Joan, that that man himself drinks hard, spends all his time playing bowls or skittles at the public-house, and never does any work at all.'

'Oh, Amyot! you must be mistaken. You can't have seen him, so how can you know?'

'Never mind. I do know. But that wasn't all. Before he began to preach I'd been wondering about some other things. The parson had read out a long list of things that people ought to do or oughtn't to do. He said folk

mustn't steal ; and there was that bad lad, Nick Bowles that Deborah says she can't keep from stealing the eggs and pulling up the cabbages, looking quite good and honest, and saying very loud—as loud as the parson—that he hoped he never should steal, or something of the sort. And there was Jem Sykes, who beats his old mother, who's bedridden, praying as loud as loud could be that he might honour his father and mother ; and Farmer White, who makes his men work on a Sunday, saying the prayer about keeping the Sabbath. Oh ! it was play-acting, every bit of it—that's why Tory groaned. And, do you know, Joan, that crusty old doctor was sitting in front who always swears at Tory, and when the parson said folks oughtn't to swear, Tory gave a grunt and caught his coat-tails in his mouth, as if he would say, "There, listen ; that's meant for you." But if he could have got up in the pulpit, Tory would have made a better sermon than the parson, I believe—for he likes things honest and straightforward, Tory does ; and it's my belief he won't go there again in a hurry.'

Amyot looked very hot as he ended this long speech, and his little sister's 'Hush, they're coming out of church,' scarcely availed to silence him, so excited had he become.

They mingled with the departing congregation, and received a great deal of compassionate notice from many who were sorry for the poor captain's children. Just as they were passing through the little iron gate, they were overtaken by the vicar—Parson Morland, as he was generally called. Joan looked with reverence at the tall figure in gown and bands, and laid a warning hand on Tory's head, as she fancied she caught the sound of a low growl beside her. Amyot pretended not to see the clergyman, lest, as he said to himself, he should have to listen to some good advice which would be all sham and tomfoolery. But he was too well-bred not to answer when he heard his name called, and, as it happened, the vicar's

mind was not just then set on giving good advice—perhaps he had exhausted his supply in church.

'I've been thinking of you children many times,' the parson said. 'If the roads hadn't been so bad, I should have come out to see you. But I want to know what is going to happen to you. You can't go on living at the farm by yourselves. Have you written to your father's relatives to tell them of his sad death?'

No such thought had occurred to either of the children, and they said so, Amyot adding that they knew none of their relations, and couldn't write to them. They meant to go on living at the farm, he said; they were not alone—Deborah and Michael lived there, and were very good to them.

'Oh, yes; I know. All very well for the present. But your friends ought to know, my lad; you must write to them and ask their advice—or if you don't, I must. What relations have you?'

'Father had neither brother nor sister,' Joan replied, for her brother did not like the vicar's peremptory way of speaking, and was not inclined to reply. 'He often said he had nought but distant cousins—and mother's family lived in the South: grandmother lives in Kent, and I've an uncle and aunt in London. Father used to write to them sometimes. Mother was half French, and father said Aunt Aimée was like her.'

'Do you know where they live, these people?' inquired the vicar.

'There are some of aunt's letters, and grandmother's too, in father's desk,' answered Amyot, rather sullenly. 'I can write to them if you like, sir. But we do very well as we are.'

'Amyot, the vicar knows best,' suggested Joan timidly.

'Yes, sir, we will write. Amyot can write a nice letter if he tries.'

'Then try, by all means, and do it quickly, Amyot;



business is business, and should always be attended to without loss of time.'

He patted the children on the head and strode rapidly away, feeling glad to have thus discharged his duty towards the lambs of his flock.

Amyot was inclined to be very angry at what he called the vicar's meddling, but Joan's decided 'I am sure it was kind of him to trouble his head at all about us,' quieted him, and he began to wonder what he should say in this important business letter, and what the result of it would be.

'I hope they won't say that we can't go on living by ourselves, as the vicar did,' sighed little Joan. 'I shouldn't like to leave Broughbarrow at all, and Mike and Deborah, and the cows and all.'

'It is my farm,' said Amyot; 'I couldn't leave it; everything would go wrong if I did; people should always live on their property.'

Joan's demure little face relaxed a little. 'Deborah said our uncle and aunt would be our guardians, whatever that means. I suppose we shall have to do what they say. But I hope they'll say we may stay here.'

The composition of that letter was a most serious business, so serious that Joan was inclined to think it ought to be put off till the next day, Sunday not being the day to transact business; but when Amyot protested that he would not have the vicar say that he neglected business, she gave way, and consented to ask Deborah to light the candles for them in the oak parlour that evening, that they might be quiet while they wrote their letter.

'Now, if you really want to help me, Joan,' her brother remarked as he seated himself before the old desk which had been his father's, 'you must put Cleopatra to bed, and not allow Whig to jump on my back, and you had better have a cloth ready, in case I should upset the ink.'

Joan did most truly wish to help him, so these little arrangements were soon made, a chair drawn to Amyot's side, and all was in readiness.

The name of Broughbarrow Farm was carefully written at the top of the page ; then Amyot paused.

'I shall write to grandmother,' he said ; 'I have seen her picture, and know what she is like. I can't write to this stranger man, my uncle ;' and Joan assenting, the letter began

‘TO MISTRESS DARLEY.

‘HONOURED MADAM, MY GRANDMOTHER,

‘You will marvel why it is I, Amyot Brough, who write, and not my Honoured Father, but a Terrible sad thing has come to pass, and I am forced to write you word of it.’

‘You know that is quite true, Joan. I am forced—I would not do it otherwise.’

‘Yes; but never mind, go on.’

‘I am not going to hurry, Joan, or I shall make mistakes. I don't know what to do. Must I tell all about it—about the snow, and the long time that we didn't know what had happened ? I can't tell that !’

‘No, there's no need ; all that does not matter now, you know ; just tell that father's dead, and that we are living here just as usual !’

‘And that we want to stay—I shall say that too, Joan.’

‘Shall you ?—will it be respectful, do you think ?’

‘Of course it will, if I write it neatly, and put plenty of capital letters—that's the difficult part of a letter, to know just when to put capitals.’

‘And the spelling !’ suggested Joan ; ‘but you'd better go on, Amyot, it's getting late.’

So the letter proceeded :

‘It is a verry Sad thing for Us, Joan and Me, and I

make no dowt that you will be much disconsolate too when you hear that our dear Father is dead. People tell Us that He is better off, but we think He was quite content here, and We wish He had stayed with us, that is, Joan and Me. We are verry lounelie without Him, but bye-and-bye We shall be youst to it perhaps. The vicar bade Me write You this sad news, so We hope you will excuse this short letter, which is writ by me in great trouble.

‘Your dutiful grandson,  
‘AMYOT BROUGHT.’

‘I have heard people say,’ remarked Joan, who had watched every word with deep interest and much admiration, ‘that a letter ought to have a postscript; do you know what a postscript is?’

‘Yes, it’s a piece written on at the end after the name of the writer—any important thing which has been forgotten; it should be something very important, and I’ve written all there is to write.’

‘Well, I hope it’s all right; it looks quite beautiful. Do you know how to fold it up and fasten it? You must be sure to write the address very large, because when Mike has taken it to Penrith and paid for it, and sent it off, we shall not have the least idea what sort of people take care of it; they mayn’t be able to read well, or they may be blind, or very old and stupid, and it is such an important letter, you know.’

Thus cautioned, Amyot wrote the address in very large letters, and added, by way of additional security, ‘Kent is in the south of England, a long way off.’ A remark which Mike thought extremely prudent. ‘If ya nobbet sewer, Amyot, as it beant in t’ Noarth.’ But on this point both the children were confident. Father had so often spoken of their relations in the South, that there could be no doubt about it; and it would doubtless be a

help to the people at the post to know ; otherwise, of course, they might have to look it out on the map, and then, if they chanced to get the map wrong side upwards, the letter would certainly go right away over the border.

'An' I've heered es they be sick a set o' feckless fooak tuther side o' t' Tweed, like es not ya letter would be liggin in a ditch, if so be es thay git hoald on it,' was Mike's opinion of his Scottish neighbours ; 'bet mebbe fooak in t' South are a gae bit daft. I's heered nowt sae verra good aboot them.'

'Father was foud of Aunt Aimée,' Joan remarked, with a sigh. 'He always hoped that I should be like her, and like my mother ; and they both lived in the South, Mike.'

'Na doot ; and I's verra sewer es ya cuddent dew better than be loike ya mudther, my lile lassie. She wes es bonny an' es blithe es a bird, and a reet good wife to t' fadther ; ay, she wer ower good fur this warld. Bet, hawivver, theear becant mickle fooak loike her ; an' Londoneers, es I've heered tell, are pooar feckless things, a-gossipin' an' a-bodderin' wi' udther fooaks' consarns ; a-rinnin' off a feytin' in forran parts, an' leavin' t' wife an' t' barns ta fash for 'emselves.'

'But grandmother doesn't live in London. She lives in Kent ; still farther off than London. Father said it was.'

'I rakkan it meaks lile differ ; somewoceans in t' South ; tudther side o' t' Atlantic, beant it ?'

'The Atlantic ! Oh, no, Mike ! The Atlantic Ocean is on the west of England,' cried both children at once. 'Father sailed across more than once.'

'Ay, ay ; all reet. I thowt as 'twer a river. Bet river or ocean, it meeaks na matter, call it which ya wull.'

### CHAPTER III.

#### TORY MAKES FREE WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S TAILS.

It is impossible at this distance of time to follow, even in imagination, the career of that important letter ; whether it went south or whether it went north ; whether it crossed the Atlantic, or contented itself with a trip to Ireland, we do not pretend to say ; one thing only seems certain—its travels must have been tedious. More than once had the vicar, who was not an impatient man, expressed the belief that it must have miscarried. More than once had Mike vowed that next time a letter needed to travel so far, he should have to go with it, and see it a bit on its way ; and many times more than once had the children wondered whether the people at the post troubled themselves to send children's letters at all, before anything seemed likely to happen in consequence of the epistle composed with so much care on that Sunday evening.

'Not that it matters much,' Amyot would say ; 'we did our duty by them, and if grandfather and my uncle don't care that father is dead, we cannot help that.'

But Joan was not so easy about the matter. Perhaps she felt more desolate than he did, and had a yearning in her heart for these far-off relatives, who, though strangers, were still her own flesh and blood.

She believed in them. Father had always spoken with much affection of her mother's sister, her Aunt Aimée, and as she lay in her bed at night, weeping those tears which were never seen in the daytime—tears that came

from her very heart, so desolate and hungry—she wondered what that Aunt Aimée was like, who was her own mother's sister—her own mother's! Joan could but faintly remember that mother; but the picture that memory when sorely taxed would still occasionally call up was a very sweet one, and Joan could not but long to see one who was said to be like that dear mother gone far away.

And yet she scarcely knew what she hoped would happen. Aunt Aimée was not likely to come and live at Broughbarrow, and Joan did not wish to leave it, not even to go to see that wonderful place called London. Still, she wanted something to happen, and when Amyot said every day, 'You see, Joan, they don't want to be troubled about us. They think we can look after our own affairs; and they're quite right, so we can,' she did not echo his words, or seem cheered by them.

She was sitting one day in the deep window of the oak parlour, pondering over the uncertainties of the future. Her seam had been forgotten; Cleopatra, too, was unnoticed, though seated close beside her, and Whig, after trying in vain to attract some attention, had curled himself up and gone to sleep, when she was roused from her reverie by Amyot's voice calling her in impatient tones from the garden. There was something in the sound of his voice that made little Joan's heart beat more quickly, and a flush mount to her pale face. 'Joan, where are you? Joan, Joan!' and by the time she had reached the lawn in front of the house, her brother, breathless and panting, came rushing up the slope from the rocky stream which flowed below the farm.

'Joan, Joan, Mike says——' was all he could gasp out; then, stopping to recover breath: 'Mike says that Tom, the carter, told him this morning that a post-chaise from London has brought company—that he saw a gentleman from London at the Griffin Inn yesterday evening; and

the landlord told him he was a real gentleman, and no mistake.'

Joan drew her head up, and looking at her brother, said :

'If the gentleman is our uncle, Amyot, he will not say the same of you ; he would think you a cowboy, if he saw you now.'

'Why?—because I've been fishing, and the bank is all red mud, and it sticks to my clothes, and my hat has gone somewhere down the stream, and it's useless to wear shoes and stockings when one's after trout? If he's a real gentleman, and if he's my uncle, he won't judge me by my clothes. Hey, Tory, what's the matter?'

'Oh, Amyot, run, hide yourself!' cried his sister in dismay, as, turning to ascertain the cause of Tory's bark, she saw a tall gentleman in wondrous trim attire coming towards them.

Such an elegant coat, such perfect small-clothes, such lovely shoe-buckles little Joan had never seen. She gazed in speechless admiration, and so, alas! did Amyot, totally forgetful of his rough hair, red face, and dirty clothes.

'Hush! down, down, my good fellow!' were the stranger's first words, addressed to Tory, who had his own good reasons for wishing to ascertain the character of the visitor. Then, as Joan moved shyly to meet him, making the prettiest curtsy she could accomplish, he added :

'So this is Broughbarrow Farm, and you two are my niece and nephew. I am glad I have found you at last, for I thought once that I should verily have been lost in the mud, and had to go back to London without seeing you, and that would have been a pity, seeing that I have been travelling nigh upon fourteen days for that very purpose. My little maid, will you lead me into your house and let me rest awhile?'

Joan promptly complied, while her brother, somewhat

abashed that his sister was receiving more notice than he, ran off to wash his face at the pump, repeating to himself, with a pertinacity not unusual with him, that he should not change his clothes, since a man could be worth nothing who would judge another man by his garments. But in this resolution he was overruled. Deborah caught him as he was coming in by the yard-door, and, turning a deaf ear to all his arguments, fairly dragged him to his room, where she did not leave him until she had seen him attired in what he called his Sunday-best.

But a change for the better in the outward man is not always accompanied by a corresponding improvement in the mind and temper. Amyot's disposition had not improved during the last few months. His was a character that greatly needed control. He had been his own master of late, and the least attempt at dictation roused a spirit of opposition and defiance which was apt to break forth in surly speech.

Joan's little face grew anxious as she turned it towards him as he entered the parlour. She knew the look on his face, and her heart misgave her.

She had been trying to act the hostess, feeling terribly shy and timid, and longing that Amyot, who was never shy, would come to help her; but when she saw that scowl on his face, she repented of her wish most sincerely.

'And you are fond of your old home?' their uncle was saying as he entered; 'you love Broughbarrow, you say; but, nevertheless, my little mountain fairy, you must say good-bye to it for a while—only a while perhaps. Aunt Aimée wants you, and your grandmother too.'

Joan's lip quivered, and she glanced at the gathering cloud on Amyot's face. Did her uncle see it, she wondered? She half thought he did, for he was watching Amyot with a strange smile lurking round the corners of his mouth. His face was grave; not exactly severe, but Joan felt that, whatever her brother might say, she at least could never



dare to question her stranger uncle's will. He was so different from the only man she had ever known intimately—her father—that though he held her hand and his arm was round her waist, she knew she should never feel inclined to lean her head against his shoulder, or nestle into his arms, as with her father she loved to do.

'Yes, your grandmother says you will be a real comfort to her, and when your letter arrived, she was greatly distressed that it was impossible for me to start at once to fetch you; but I was busy, and it is a long way to these mountain wilds. And Amyot is growing a big lad; we must find a school for him.'

'There's a school here—that is, at Penrith. Father always said I should go there,' Amyot broke in suddenly; then, so far remembering himself as to reflect that a man may fairly be judged by his manners, if not by his raiment, he added, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but that was my father's wish.'

'Oh, Amyot!' exclaimed his sister, 'but if I go away, you could not stay here—you will not separate us, will you, sir?'

'My uncle said I was to go to school, Joan; you could not go with me there.' There was a quiver in the boy's voice, but he tried to make it sound hard and indifferent.

Joan's head drooped: this was a trouble she had not anticipated, and the future was instantly shrouded in the deepest gloom. Tory, sitting at her feet, threw his head back, and set up a most dismal howl.

'Come, come,' said their uncle, 'we must not be so doleful; why, even the dog thinks something terrible is going to happen.'

'Oh! Tory always knows what we think,' Amyot replied hastily, upon which his uncle laughed, and, getting up, said:

'Well, well, we will talk more of this by-and-by. I shall call upon your vicar, and consult him about you;

and in the meanwhile let me see this house of yours, and the man who manages the farm—I must have some talk with him; and then you must show me where your father kept his papers, my little maid.'

Again that preference for Joan. Amyot felt much aggrieved; and it was with a swelling heart and a strong sense of ill-usage that he accompanied Mr. Pomfret about the premises. Was he not master of the farm?—had not even the men learned to understand that, and to treat him with something like a proper degree of respect?—while this stranger-uncle looked down upon him as a mere child, who would, of course, have no will of his own!

During the next two or three days Mr. Pomfret stayed at Broughbarrow, looking over papers and settling many matters of business which had fallen into confusion since the death of Captain Brough; and one day he had old Jonah saddled and rode into Penrith to see the vicar.

Not to linger over this period—rather a melancholy period in my story—I must pass over the succeeding days, during which the children by degrees discovered that their Uncle Godfrey had determined that, as he said, 'Amyot should have his will—for a while at least—and that the mountain nymph,' as he called little Joan, must pack up her baggage and come with him to the South.'

'You'll be separated for a year or two, of course,' he said, 'but don't let's have any crying or fuss about that; your father's children ought to be brave, and I hate tears, and so does your aunt.'

And he saw none—rather to his surprise, I think. Joan squeezed Cleopatra tight to her heart, to still the wild beating there, but she said nothing, and kept her tears for those dark hours when she alone lay awake in the old farm house. Deborah wept, but Joan never cried, merely because others did; I think the sight of tears rather served to dry up hers than to cause them to flow—it is thus with some natures. Joan's natural reserve made her

constantly remember her uncle's words, and they served effectually to keep her calm.

And Amyot? Pride kept back his tears.

'It was quite right,' he said; 'Joan should be with ladies, he had no doubt; but a farmer should always stick to his land, and a farmer he meant to be.'

Joan knew that there was a great lump in his throat which made his voice so strained and odd. If she had not known it, I believe her heart would quite have broken.

It was a very pale little face, and very still, quiet little person that Uncle Godfrey saw by his side as they stood on the high-road waiting for the heavy post-chaise which was to carry them to London. Until that morning dawned, Joan had cherished a secret hope that Amyot's courage would give way, and he would beg to be allowed to go too; but no such request had been preferred, and the last moment had come.

Deborah and Mike were rubbing their eyes, but the children's cheeks were dry. Uncle Godfrey was proud of them, and much relieved also, for he had dreaded the parting above all things.

'We shall get off without any scenes,' he said, and he mentally rubbed his hands with satisfaction. But, alas! he had forgotten one person, and that one no insignificant part of Joan's world.

'You will be very good, Tory, will you not?' Joan had said to her humble slave that morning. 'You will not whine, or cry, or even groan, because you know my trouble is big enough, and if you forget yourself, I may too.' And Tory had promised; nay, more, he had given her his hand upon it. 'Two years will soon pass away, Tory, and then Amyot will come to see me, and bring you with him; so you see we need not cry!' Tory agreed, but he went away and told Whig, and they both declared that it was a scandalous shame, and that under

the circumstances it was clearly impossible to eat any breakfast.

'Tory never breaks his word,' Joan said to herself, as she watched the downcast mien of her favourite, and read in his mournful eyes the tale of his bitter grief; 'he will do as he has promised.'

And so he did. But Joan's compact had not been as comprehensive as she had fancied. Tory received her parting caress with every symptom of subdued sorrow, and made no attempt to follow her into the chaise; but his pain could not be controlled—it must have a vent—and as Mr. Pomfret was following his niece into the chaise he found his stiff coat-flaps seized from behind! There was a crack and a rent—and Tory's pent-up rage was let loose in full fury over a large piece of rich silk, which his teeth had torn away, and were now dragging about in the dusty road. The chaise rolled off; little Joan's face, as it was last seen, was a strange mixture of amusement and consternation. Tory's fit of frantic revenge was not wholly misjudged, for it had the effect, at least, of changing the current of his little mistress' sad thoughts, and if, as in duty bound, she made his excuses to her much-incensed uncle, I think her favourite's parting demonstration of affection, though unbecoming in the highest degree, did her sore heart good.

The chaise had entirely disappeared from view ere Tory had satisfied himself that his spoil was torn to shreds; until then, Amyot's stern orders to him to let that thing alone and come home, fell on perfectly unheeding ears. At last, groaning bitterly, he obeyed; but Amyot marked that one shred of the rag was carried home between his clenched teeth and taken straight to Whig, and then the two, who had forgotten many grudges in their mutual hatred of the departed guest, united to make an entire end of this unfortunate fragment of his dress.

'I suspect Whig put him up to that piece of mischief,'

Amyot thought to himself ; ' it is like Whig's spiteful ways.'

I believe that in his heart the boy felt jealous of these two dumb animals ; they had each other's society, and he, why—he was all alone ! It was very selfish of Joan to have gone away and left him ; no doubt it was fine to travel up to London in a *three-horse chaise* with Uncle Godfrey ; no doubt, when he saw her next, she would be a fine young lady, ready to laugh at her clownish brother ; no doubt she meant to forget all about him, and be happy and all the rest of it ! Well, he could not help it : he had done what was right ; for a man should live on his property—everyone said that—and if he was miserable there, why, he supposed it couldn't be helped ; only if Joan had stayed all would have been right.

Then he went out to look at his property—the fields, the haystacks, the farm-horses, the cows, the sheep ; they all looked just as usual, and paid no special regard to him, their owner and master ; had Joan been with him, the cows at least would have turned their heads to look at her.

Then he went into the house again, and finding nothing to do, he fetched the book which Uncle Godfrey had given him on parting, and stretched himself on the window-seat to read it.

It was by that wonderful man who wrote 'The History of the Plague,' and it was a real boy's book ; more than once Captain Brough had promised that he would buy 'Robinson Crusoe' for his boy, but the purchase had been put off from time to time, and this was Amyot's first experience of the delights of that wondrous tale.

Tory, sitting in hopeless grief at a little distance, wondered much at his absorption, and gave it afterwards as his fixed opinion to Whig that boys were but poor creatures, had no feeling, were stupid, senseless beings ; in which decision Whig fully concurred, being much aggrieved because Amyot had read his book while he ate

his dinner, and consequently had quite forgotten Whig's customary portion.

'Girls for ever!' he had said, pushing his saucer of milk towards Tory, who, though he had no heart to eat, could not refuse so loyal a toast, and drank long and deep.

But although 'Robinson Crusoe' was a great solace, that day was terribly long and dreary, and as he went to bed, Amyot was not sorry to think that a new life was to begin for him on the morrow.

He was to become a grammar-school boy. His uncle had settled *that* before he went away; every day, wet or fine, he had told his nephew he was to go to Penrith without fail: there was to be no shirking, no impunctuality; only on those conditions had Mr. Pombret deemed it right to allow his nephew to remain at Broughbarrow.

And Amyot had promised, thinking this injunction very uncalled-for and interfering, and with difficulty repressing a haughty answer. True, it was a long walk, but what of that? It would while away the long days, and at school he should have some friends.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A RIVAL GODDESS.

AMYOT, as we have seen, had not improved in temper or disposition during the months which had elapsed since his father's death ; a strong will, somewhat hasty temper, and dislike to submit to authority, had always characterised the lad, and his uncle had not been slow to discover these peculiarities. He had shrunk from the task of putting himself into the lost parent's place, being by nature averse to trouble, and not specially fond of children. The boy must, by-and-by, go to a good school, but for the present, perhaps, a somewhat rough one would do well enough. If the boys were rather uncouth in manner, and of very different grades of social rank, as Mr. Pomfret deemed likely, they would do Amyot little harm, since he, in his uncle's opinion, had no manners at all ; if they were rough and knocked him about, it might take the conceit out of him, which was much to be desired.

But in this last respect Mr. Pomfret's hopes were not destined to be realised. With many of the little fellows who frequented Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, the son of Captain Brough, who had a right to call himself owner of a good-sized farm, who could ride into Penrith on his own nag, and who, moreover, was as good a scholar as the other boys of his age—I say, such a new pupil was decidedly worthy of consideration—in fact, rather a great man.

'I loike him verra weel, for all he's a gentlemon, es ya can heear by his talk,' said a sunburnt, white-haired

laddie, who came from the Fellside, and could give Amyot no further address, but was very desirous to place himself on a footing of something like intimacy, because, 'ya see, when t' weather be dirty, twa could ride on t' beeast es well es yan, and t' wud be sae convanient loike.'

But something, I scarce know what, made Amyot rather shy of the Fellside laddie, and much more disposed to make friends with some of the town boys, whose conversation was more interesting, inasmuch as they heard 'if anything was stirring, and brought word to school with them.'

Three of these, brothers of the name of Kirkbride, were not slow in responding to his advances ; they lived at a very short distance from the school, in a square, dark-red house, with their mother, who had been a widow for the last ten years. The eldest, Lance, was fifteen years old, and the head boy of the school, and Amyot looked up to him accordingly with great respect ; the other two were younger, and worked in the same class with Amyot—but as Jasper and Percy were neither very clever nor very fond of books, their new class-mate viewed them with quite different feelings ; they were his peers, in no sense at all demanding respect. Jasper, it is true, declared that he could lick Amyot in a fair fight whenever he liked, but as yet no fitting cause for a fight had presented itself, and Lance set his face against fighting for nothing. 'But we'll have a bout before long, let Lance say what he likes,' Jasper assured Amyot ; 'but I'll not fight you when that poodle of yours is by—he'd be a dangerous sort of second, I warrant you.'

That poodle, as Tory was so irreverently termed, was very frequently by. The farm was dull without either of the children, and Whig had been driven by despair to take to poaching, so Tory was fain to follow his young master's example, and spend much of his time in the town. Of course he was too sensible to spend hours shut



up in a close room staring at books; he had a much greater variety of resources than Amyot, and carried on inquiries of many kinds: there was a weekly fair which afforded him much amusement; there were rats by the river side to be hunted; there were cats who, unlike Whig, ran away when he came near; there were others who rushed up trees, and at a safe distance spat at him—very amusing creatures they were. Then there was an old woman who spent much time cleaning and dusting the church. Tory made friends with her, and whiled away many a half-hour running up and down the gallery stairs, or watching her from the gallery or from the pulpit itself. The church was so conveniently near to the school that Tory felt always safe, when there, that he should not miss the happy moment when Amyot came out free to go home. Among Amyot's school-fellows he had also many friends: the white-haired laddie, whose pockets often produced some dainty for him; the three brothers, who loved to teach him new tricks; and sundry others, who capered and shouted around him whenever they saw him. But in Tory's faithful bosom there was still a terrible blank. 'The days were well enough,' as he told Whig, 'but the evenings were fearfully tiresome; no games now, no helping to put Cleopatra to bed, none of that sweet society without which a dog feels himself sinking to the level of the brutes;' and Whig condoled and suggested that he should try poaching, but to this proposal Tory turned a deaf ear.

But one warm afternoon towards the close of August, on coming out of school, Amyot found that his dog had made a new friend. The gate into the churchyard stood open, and there, walking round and round the quaint stones called the Giant's Grave, Amyot saw Tory in company with a little girl whom the three Kirkbride lads at once hailed as Primrose.

'Hilloa, little one! hilloa, Primrose! how came you here?'

'Come to take you home, if you's been good little lads,' was the little maiden's prompt reply; 'mother's left me here to wait for you--she's gone to see Goody Greenaway.'



THE GIANT'S GRAVE.

'And you've found a friend while you've been waiting; you're a rare one for making friends.'

'Such a funny dog! such a dear dog!' said the child, seating herself on the stones and taking Tory's head in

her arms; whereupon Amyot, thou, feeling shy, came up and stood by his dog's side. 'Is he yours?' asked little Primrose, lifting up her face and looking at him.

It was such a lovely little face that Amyot's whole thoughts were given up to considering it, and he quite forgot to answer her. Eyes of the deepest violet blue, with long dark fringes; a rosy budding mouth, and skin as white and soft as milk. It was a face that rippled all over with smiles; there was the merriest laughter in the eyes, the gleefulest quiver about the lips, while the tiny feet seemed rather to dance than walk.

'Of course, this is Tory, and he belongs to Amyot Brough. We've told you about him many a time, Primrose,' said Lance, taking the child's hand to lead her away; but she stopped him.

'Wait a minute, I am not ready yet; he has been very agreeable to me—I must give him something that he may not forget me. Have none of you lads something nice in your pockets?' and she looked round at the three boys, who searched but in vain.

'Oh! Tory needs nothing, Miss Primrose; he would be hurt, if he thought you wanted to pay him,' said Amyot, blushing up to the roots of his hair.

'How stupid of me,' he thought, 'to grow red as a turkey-cock because a little girl speaks to me; what a fool she will think me!'

But if she did, she did not say so, though she gazed at him very earnestly as she said:

'I like your dog; I almost love him. I wish he could come and spend the day with me sometimes, while you are at school and do not want him. I like gentlemanly dogs!'

'Tory will be very pleased,' Amyot said, feeling much the bitterness of the fate which cut him off from such a privilege. 'If we may walk home with you now, Tory will know where to come; and I too should like to know where you live.'

He said this with another blush, and the little maiden laughed.

'You are almost as gentlemanly as your dog,' she said, as she allowed him to take her left hand, the right resting in Lance's large palm; and in this order they went down the narrow path towards the street where the Kirkbrides lived.

They parted on the steps, Primrose laying her soft hand on Tory's head, and saying:

'Do you understand, you dear dog, that I want you to come and spend the day with me on Friday—not tomorrow, because I shall be busy, but the day after—Friday—shall you remember, Tory?'

'Trust him—he'll remember!' Amyot answered; and Tory made his very best bow and departed.

What an evening that was! Whig wondered what had come over his master and Tory; but he was left to wonder, for no one enlightened him.

The evenings were very long just then, and Amyot usually spent them in poring over 'Robinson Crusoe,' and another tale by the same fascinating author, which had lately come to him from London, called the 'Memoirs of a Cavalier.'

How Tory and Whig hated those books; but on this particular evening, though the book was open before him, Amyot lay on the grass and stared absently at the blue sky, though I doubt whether he saw the sky at all, or the trees either; the fairy vision which had crossed his path that afternoon was still before his eyes. It had made him think of Joan, and long, more than he had ever yet done, that she would come back, and things would be as in days of yore. And Tory, he too sat staring straight in front, only starting up occasionally to rush round the garden and then return to his seat, with an air of great contentment—'Just for all the world,' Whig said to himself, 'as if the little mistress had come back.'

Had Tory been the hero of my tale, as I am half inclined to wish he were, dogs being for the most part more easily comprehended than men and women—I say, had Tory been my hero, it would be my duty, as it would also be my pleasure, to follow him on that eventful day when he found himself introduced into the new world of Blencathara House, and go with him through the many excitements that awaited him, as his new friend showed him her many treasures, her family of waxen babies—all whose virtues and faults she detailed to him as he sat sedately before her, and listened with eyes wide open and full of interest ; we would follow them into the old garden and see the jackdaws, whose chattering almost turned Tory's brain ; we would sit under the old cedar and listen to Primrose's tales of the fairies that lived under every bush, until we longed, as Tory did, that our eyes could see all hers saw from under those wondrous long lashes. To be appreciated once more was balm to Tory's spirits ; to be talked to, as Joan had talked to him ; to be the trusted recipient of many secrets ; to be assured finally, 'I have told you all this, Tory, because you are so gentle and polite, and because I see that you understand all my feelings,' was simply enchanting ; and the good dog became on the spot her devout adorer, a slave once more to beauty and virtue.

But we must not be led away from the straight path of duty by the bright eyes or witching wiles of this wee damsel, but return to the plain, unvarnished history of Amyot Brough. And truth compels us to admit that the day which was so bright to Tory was but a sorry one with his young master. Never had school been so fruitful in woes to him ; never had lessons seemed so hateful, or the master so stern a tyrant. Unhappily his thoughts had gone after his dog. The master grimly assured him that he was daft, or little short of it, and when that observation failed to bring him to his senses,

recourse was had to a bunch of twigs from the tree, created, as the master assured him, for the special benefit of children. Proud as he was, Amyot had no doubt of the soundness of this reasoning; his father had held the same views, and acted upon them, and even when most uplifted by the idea that he was master of Broughbarrow, he had never failed to recognise the fact that as long as he was young enough to be whipped, he must not expect exemption from that most necessary part of education.

Nay, had Fate so willed it, that Amyot had escaped correction, far from respecting himself the more for such exemption, I suspect that he would have felt in after years that he had missed something which might have made him a wiser and a stronger man. His education would have been in some sort imperfect; his childhood would have been a childhood of neglect.

Nevertheless, it was a sorry day, and this Tory was not slow in perceiving, when, full of bounding glee, he met his master coming out of school, and found his rapture at once checked and chilled by an almost unnoticed reception. There was no need to tell the wise dog what had happened: he had been young himself, and knew well the consequences of youthful folly; perhaps he wondered whether Amyot had been drinking the cream, or tearing up the flowers in the garden; but he wisely refrained from inquiries, and showed his sympathy by respectful silence, and by walking quietly by his master's side all the way home, instead of rushing wildly backwards and forwards, as was his usual practice.

But the darkest days in our lives have an end, and the sun that sets in a storm often shines its fairest on the morrow; and so it proved on the morrow of that gloomy day. It was a half-holiday, and the Kirkbride lads, full of good-natured remorse for having laughed at Amyot's afflictions on the previous day, had resolved to make their peace with him by inviting him to go for a long

walk with them in the afternoon, and Amyot, who in his bitter trouble had vowed that he would never speak to them again, was readily appeased, and gladly agreed to their proposal.

'We are going to take some cakes with us, and stay till the little one's bed-time,' Lance said; and both Amyot and Tory were rejoiced to find that Primrose was to be of the party.

'The little madam, did you think she would let us leave her at home?' Lance exclaimed; 'no, indeed, wherever we go she goes, to keep us out of mischief, she always says, and my mother says she is right. But we shall have to carry her, for we want to go right up to the Beacon, and that is too far for her.'

'Lance,' said Amyot, with some hesitation, as they started for Blencathara House, 'is Primrose your sister? I thought she was, but the boys say no.'

'She's our sister, and she is not,' Lance replied. 'That is, my mother has adopted her, but by-and-by she will be my wife,' and the lad blushed with an air of pride and some defiance. 'Didst never hear how she came to us?'

'No, indeed, tell me.'

'It's more than three years ago—we think she is about six now, she may be more, but we cannot tell; I was sauntering about in the woods, trying to shoot wood-pigeons with a bow I had made, when I heard a strange sobbing sound. At first I thought it was a bird, and then I feared it was a pixy, for there are queer creatures in some of these woods, but I could see nothing. I looked all around me, and grew more scared every moment, for the wood was still and silent, and no living thing seemed stirring, and yet ever and anon I heard this sobbing noise. Folks tell of uneasy ghosts that cannot rest, but wander about crying and lamenting their wicked lives, and it seemed to me that this sound might come from some

such wretched being. But while I was wondering and listening, a tiny child came tottering from among a quantity of bushes and bracken, holding up the skirts of her little petticoat, which was full of primroses. Her pretty face was all swollen with crying, and when I asked her who she was and what she was doing in the wood alone, she only sobbed and cried most pitifully, and kept repeating, "Nanny dorn away." And then I could just remember that before I heard that sound of crying, I had caught sight of a woman's figure just disappearing along a distant path. I had thought little about it, and could never call to mind in the least what she was like.'

'And you do not know any more than that? You have no idea whether Primrose was born in Penrith, or had been brought here by that horrid woman?'

'My mother did all she could to find out something about her, but all we could learn was this: some travellers had stopped for a few hours at "The Two Lions," a tall gentleman, a little girl, a man and a maid; they only waited to have a meal and bait their horses, and then they rode away. The landlord of the inn thought little Primrose was like the little girl, but he had not asked their names, nor heard anything about them. So my mother took the little lass and said she should be our sister; but, I say that she is mine, and when she grows up I mean to wed her, and then, Amyot Brough, what say you, shall I not have the fairest bride in old England?'

'She is right bonny,' said Amyot warmly; 'but how did you know her name was Primrose—did she tell you?'

'Nay, I say she could tell us nothing; we called her Primrose because I found her among the primroses. My mother chose the name, and we all liked it well. But here is the child, all ready and waiting, you see.'

It was a blithesome afternoon, something too sultry



perhaps, but as they had nought to do but amuse themselves, the heat was no great matter ; the two younger lads were very intent just then on an insect collection which they were making, and had little thought or attention to bestow on aught else. Lance and Amyot sauntered along, now talking to Primrose, now conversing with each other. 'You need not mind me,' the little maid had graciously remarked ; 'Tory is quite as interesting to me as any boy can be—he has more sense than many boys.'

'Has he?—how does he show his superior sense?' asked Lance, much amused.

'He takes no pains to show it, that is why he is so charming,' Primrose observed. 'Now you, and Master Brough, you talk in fine long words, just to make me think you are wiser than I.'

'Well, Tory does not do that certainly,' Amyot answered, laughing ; 'but as he does not talk at all, Miss Primrose, how do you know he is so wise !'

'He understands,' the child replied, 'and he believes, that is why I like him. You boys believe nothing.'

'Indeed, Miss Primrose. I believe everything you say, every single word.'

'I will not try you,' the child replied, shaking her head doubtfully ; 'boys believe nothing.'

'What is it she wishes us to believe?' Amyot asked, much perplexed.

Lance smiled. 'Her little head is ever running on fairies, pixies, and such like, and we laugh at her ; it is stupid of us, for her fancies are pretty ones enough. I will take a run down the hill and see what Jasper is after, and perhaps she will tell you some of her visions if you are very docile and teachable.'

He ran off, and Primrose looked after him in some alarm ; then, laying her hand on Tory's head, she seemed satisfied that she was protected, and sat down on the

mossy trunk of an old fir-tree, and began tying up a bunch of blue harebells, to make a posy to adorn the side of his head.

'If you were my very own dog you should wear a bright knot of ribbon every day,' she said; 'do you love flowers, my 'Tory dear? The little fays do: they take such care of the flowers, and are so sorry when they are all withered and dead; what will they do, now all the foxgloves are drooping? They ring their tunes of joy on them; these pretty little bells are so feeble, they give



PENRITH BEACON.

scarcely any sound at all, that is why everything seems so still and quiet to-day.'

'Where do the fairies go in the winter time, Miss Primrose?' inquired Amyot in a humble tone of meek inquiry.

The large violet eyes rested on him with a look of strange wonderment, then, with a tone of calm assurance, she said, 'The flower fairies must have some rest, I

suppose, like other people. Why, they sleep while the flowers are sleeping, and then the others come out.'

'What others, Miss Primrose?'

'Poor boy, he goes to school, and yet he asks such simple questions! Why, the wind fairies, and the water fairies, and the ice and snow fairies. Oh! Tory, such a lovely ice fairy stayed in our garden last winter—she was there for ever so long. The jackdaws saw her, and they took care never to hurt her, she was so beautiful—all bright and clear and shining—and she had such a sweet little face. I got up one moonlight night to look at her, and she was standing on the edge of the stone fountain looking into the water.'

'Do they do any good, these fairies, think you, Miss Primrose?'

'Oh! I wish,' said the child fervently, 'that I might ever do half as much. I can't tell you all they do, but they are busy all day long, and some of them work in the night too. The wind fairies dry up the damp, and make the ground nice and hard; and the ice fairies, they get rid of those nasty grubs that spoil my plants; and the water fairies—oh! of course you know all the good they do; but, perhaps, you don't know how bright they all make this world, for you don't look as if you thought it very bright, Master Brough!'

'Perhaps I don't. It isn't always bright, is it, not even to you?'

'Yes, always; and I mean that it always shall be bright. I hate dull faces, dull colours, and dull speeches. Why should people be dull and sad, I wonder? even mother, who has had sorrow of her own, looks bright, and so will I.'

Amyot looked at the smiling face uplifted to his, and wondered in his heart whether if sorrow came to her, such as had visited him and Joan, she would still talk about the world being bright; and Tory looked thoughtful—perhaps he was thinking the same thing.

'Lance is a long while gone,' the child said at length, 'and I am growing tired; we must soon go home.'

'We must wait here until he comes back, or we shall certainly miss each other,' Amyot replied, 'but I will shout.' So he did; and from the rocks overhead there came back the mocking echo, 'Lance, Lance!'

'That is a wicked pixy answering you,' Primrose said; 'she is very rude to mimic what you say. I wish somebody would pull her ears.'

But, nothing discouraged by the echo's bantering sound, Amyot raised his voice and tried again: 'Lance! Jasper! Percy!' but no Lance or Jasper or Percy replied.

An anxious look stole over Amyot's face, for the sun was going down, and to confess the truth, the Beacon Hill wood was not by any means such a familiar place to him as to his friends. 'If it gets dark before they come back, I shall find it hard to make my way out of this wood,' he said to himself, and Tory, guessing, by force of sympathy, his master's thoughts, began to whine gently.

But Primrose was still engaged quite happily with her own imaginings, and the grave faces of her two companions quite amused her. 'The lads have gone rushing after a wondrous butterfly—I know their ways,' she said; 'perhaps they have run a mile or two, but they will come back presently; and we are very happy here, are we not?'

'Very happy indeed,' Amyot declared, but in his heart he knew that this was not true. The strange tales he had often heard of all manner of wild and savage beasts who had once inhabited these parts, wild boars, wild cats, and the like, not to speak of pixies and hobgoblins, returned to his memory; a night in such company would not be pleasant, and to his excited fancy the night seemed coming on with extraordinary swiftness. And Primrose—ought she to sit so long on the grass, which might, even

now, be growing damp? Amyot almost wrung his hands as these thoughts passed through his mind, and Tory again looked up in his face with a whine of anxiety.

'Perhaps it would be best for us to turn round and walk slowly home,' he at length suggested: 'surely they will overtake us.' But to this plan Primrose seemed loath to agree. Lance might be vexed, and mother always bade her stay with the lads.

Amyot reflected that the lads had not stayed with her, and grew each moment more indignant at their delay. Tory roamed about uneasily—looked down every path, and pricked up his ears at every sound; but, alas! no step could be heard—no movement but the twittering of birds among the branches, or the rustle of the leaves in the evening breeze.

The sweet contentment on the little one's face showed no variation; 'it was very sweet in the wood at evening,' she said, but it was getting a little cold; perhaps it would be well to run about. And so for a while they played a merry game of her own invention over some mounds of earth and some trunks of fallen trees.

The moon came out, and one or two stars peeped forth, and 'the light was so very pretty,' the little maiden said; but she was getting sleepy, she would like to go to bed, if only Lance would come and carry her, for she was tired, and could not walk.

'Then I will carry you,' Amyot bravely said, 'and we won't wait any longer, for I am sure your mother must be looking for you, and Lance and the others must have missed their way.' And then he lifted her up, and carried her what he thought was a very long way; but she was much heavier than she looked, and before long she slipped from his arms, and said she would walk, for he was not strong enough to carry a person nearly as big as himself. Amyot did not tell her, but a great fear had taken possession of him that they had neither of them

much notion in which direction they ought to proceed, and that it might be a very long time before they reached home, even if she succeeded in walking so far.

It was a piteous sight to see the child striving bravely to drag herself along, though her legs ached terribly, and her eyes positively refused to keep open; but she persevered for half-an-hour, during which they seemed to make little progress, so slowly did those tiny feet travel. Then she stopped, and saying, 'I think it would be rather nice to sleep out of doors such a warm night,' she sat down at the foot of a tree, and leaning her weary little head against the trunk, was almost asleep in a moment. She roused herself, however, to say, when Amyot, sitting down beside her, drew her on his knees and rested her head against his shoulder:

'Shall I tire you? It is very cosy so, and good Tory will bark and drive away all the lions and tigers and bears, and you and I can have a nice sleep.'

'There's nothing else to be done that I can see. I can't make her walk,' Amyot reflected ruefully; 'but I fear she'll catch her death of cold. Tory, come and sit close to her; your coat will help to keep her warm.'

The dog obeyed, nothing loath, and licked his master's face in token of sympathy; then the three sat still and silent. Primrose's soft breathing soon showed that she was fast asleep, but fear and anxiety kept the others wide awake.

## CHAPTER V.

### IN WHICH WE TAKE A JOURNEY.

PENRITH town, as I have before observed, was between two and three miles from Broughbarrow—farther than Deborah Jephson cared to walk; for she was not so young as she had been, and stirring about the farm was all the exercise that she for the most part deemed necessary.

Therefore, when real necessity called her to the town, she was wont to make the journey in the farm waggon, seated by Mike's side; and as the roads were for the greater part of the year very bad, the journey was not so short as might have been expected.

It was a very real necessity, and a very serious piece of business which took Deborah to Penrith on the special occasion we have in mind. She was expected there, and when the waggon had made its slow way through the town, and was pulled up by Michael at the door of Blencathara House, it was no surprise to either of the worthy couple to see Tory sitting on the doorstep, watching for them.

'In coorse, he made sewer es I sud coom,' the good woman observed, as she received his somewhat subdued caress. 'Best in t' dolorums about t' young maester, Tory? Nae, he's no' that sick sewerly.'

But hopeful as the good woman was wont to be, she could not deny that it was a very white face that lay on the pillow in one of the rooms of Blencathara House, to which she was led by Mistress Kirkbride, who, in much

anxiety, had sent to summon her to help in nursing her young master. 'All that nursing and doctoring could do she would gladly provide,' the good lady said; 'but it was natural the lad should want his old nurse;' and Deborah replied, with a curtsy, 'Ay, ay, to be sewer.'

But for some days Amyot seemed to take little note of who was about him; sometimes he slept a heavy sleep, sometimes he lay and tossed about in feverish wakefulness, with wide-open eyes which seemed to gaze fixedly at nothing. He moaned and rambled in his talk, so that Jasper and Percy ran away frightened, and declared he had lost his wits. Then he grew quieter, and, to the relief of all, the surgeon said he would mend now; all he wanted was to recover his strength.

'Bet that's nae sa easy down es ya mun think,' Deborah remarked to herself and to Mistress Kirkbride, when the days passed and the coveted strength still delayed its return; 'bet it'll coom, niver feear. He's becan freetan hissell' this mornin', an' sayin' es t' young mistress niver cooms nigh him, an' he's that weary o' his loife, he canna put oop wi' it.'

Mistress Kirkbride said nothing in reply to this hint of Deborah, but soon after left the room, and before long the door was gently opened, and Primrose's bright little face peeped in with the shy inquiry:

'Please may I come and see the poor sick boy?'

'Like a sunbeam darting through a cloud on a rainy day,' Deborah thought to herself as she made the child heartily welcome; and then, resuming her own seat by the window, and taking up the long grey stocking which was her constant companion, she listened with much interest to the children's talk.

'Mother says you saved my life—I mean you and Tory,' began the little maid. 'She says that if you had not kept me so warm, I should have taken a bad cold, as



you did, and then she believes I should have died ; but I don't feel sure, because I am very strong and never do have colds.'

Amyot smiled faintly by way of response, and she went on :

' You must not talk, because you are ill, and talking will make you cough. I am going to talk to you and amuse you, and when you are well you shall tell me the things I want to know—about the long time you sat holding me while I slept, and about Mat and Joshua coming through the wood, and Tory running off to fetch them, and about them carrying us home, and about how silly the boys looked, and how mother sent them all to bed without any supper. It was so stupid of me to sleep all the time, and know nothing about it. But am I talking too fast? Shall I be quiet a little while now?'

Amyot made an effort to assure her that he wished for no greater pleasure than to listen to her voice, but she stopped him, laying her little hand on his mouth, repeating, ' Sick people ought not to talk ;' and then, replying to her own question, ' Yes, I am talking too fast. I think I'll talk to Tory, and then you need not listen unless you like.'

And Tory, well pleased at this arrangement, came and wagged his tail and seated himself at her feet.

' Yes, Tory, it was you that saved my life, so I'll love you for ever ; because it wouldn't have been nice to die like babes in the wood, would it? But I never thought of dying—did you? And, Tory, isn't it funny to see Lance so ashamed of himself? Mother wished that his father would come to life again just to horse-whip him ; but I thought that would not have been worth while, because she might have asked somebody else's father to do it for her ; so Lance got off. But I tease him dreadfully—don't I, Tory?—and tell him I won't be his wife now, because he would leave me to die in a wood ; and he can't

say a word. But I don't mean it, Tory ; it's only fun, you know.'

Tory thought it was very good fun, and his tail thumped the ground approvingly.

'Oh ! you dear dog, I do love you so ; now, shall we show your master how nicely you have learned to sing since he has been ill ? now, remember all I have told you ; sing softly, except when I lift my hand, and then sing loud, as loud as you can. Now, we'll begin,' and she began a simple ditty in as sweet a voice as a thrush's warble, while Tory obediently whined as accompaniment, keeping his eye on her hand, and promptly obeying the signal to sing loud or soft, as she dictated.

Amyot laughed almost like himself at this performance, and the little girl, greatly pleased to see him so well amused, continued to make Tory show off various feats which she had taught him during the quiet time of Amyot's illness.

'Count ten, Tory,' ten barks followed. 'How many brothers have I, Tory ?' three barks replied, and so *ad infinitum*.

And thanks to the cheering influence of Primrose's visits, which after this became very frequent, Amyot began rapidly to mend. Deborah returned home, telling the boy that there was now no reason why he should encroach on the good lady's kindness, and that in a few days he had better come home as usual. This was by no means welcome news to Amyot, but he had enough right feeling to fear intruding, and his happy stay at Blencathara came to an end.

Broughbarrow looked more dull than he had ever thought it, as with Tory at his heels he approached his home one afternoon in September, right weary with his walk, and thinking that as there would be no one particular to talk to, he would go early to bed.

But a surprise was in store for him. Mike and Deborah

greeted him warmly, and made him rest in his father's old arm-chair ; but both seemed to have something on their minds, and before long out it came.

'Mappen ya've heeard es we've hed letters, ay, an' theear's yan fur ya, a reel girt an 'ew—likely it's from Mistress Joan,' Mike began.

This was good news ; but something in Mike's tone implied that, to him, at least, the letters did not contain good news.

'Have you had letters, Mike ? I didn't know you ever had letters.'

'Bet why sudn't I hev' letters es weel es udther fooak ? Bet this an is aboot yasell ; it cooms from that gran' gentleman, yer uncle, and it tells me es plain es can bea ta send ya reet aff t' him in Lon'on toon ; seems es he thinks we heven't moinded our dooty by ya, and sae t' Lon'on ya mun ga by t' furst coach es will tak' ya.'

Amyot listened breathless.

'It wasn't anybody's fault that I caught cold,' he said. 'Where's my letter ? perhaps Joan will tell me more ;' and through his mind there rushed the thought, 'Home is very dull ; perhaps, after all, it will be better in London or at school.'

Joan's letter was speedily produced ; it was only the second that Amyot had received from his sister, for letter-writing was not an easy matter to the little girl, and Amyot rightly guessed, as he opened the sheet, that many hours had been spent in penning its contents, which ran as follows :

'Westerham, Kent,

'September 6th, 1739.

'MY SWEET BROTHER,

'It is long since I wrote to you, and now I am almost beside myself to think that I shall not need to write to you on your birthday, but, all being well, I shall have you with me then. Uncle's letter will tell you all,

except how glad I am. My grandmother has been so unhappy about you since we heard of your illness, and she sent for Uncle Godfrey, and made him write that letter, and if only I felt sure that you would not be quite heart-sick to leave Broughbarrow, I should go wild with joy. But you will come, I know, because we owe our grandmother all honour and obedience, and you will love her dearly, as I do.

‘And you will like this village, too, though you will miss the Fells, and all the rushing streams, and you will not understand the way the people speak, it sounds so different from the Cumberland folk.

‘And now, dear Amyot, I have a certain thing to tell you that makes me wondrous glad. Grandmother, dear sweet lady, says that you may bring my dear Tory with you—she will not have him left behind on no wise. And tell Tory, with my love, that I have found out that he was born here; my grandmother says she gave him, when a tiny pup, to our dear mother, four years ago, just before she died. And grandmother has still Tory’s mother, but she is a cross old thing, not like Tory at all. Grandmother says she has always had a dog of that breed, ever since she came from France, forty years ago. I wish poor Whig could come too, but it would be a burden to you to bring both, and he would scarce like to leave Deborah. Dear Deborah! give her my love, and Mike too. I would they could both come with you; but, as grandmother says, it is best to wish only for that which we are like to have. I have filled my paper, and have writ a wondrous long letter, so no more at present from

‘Your fond sister,

‘JOAN.’

The other letter to which Joan alluded was from Mr. Pomfret, and was addressed to Michael Jephson, giving full orders and directions about Amyot’s journey, which

was to be by the next coach, lest the roads should become too bad for travelling. He had written also to Captain Brough's lawyer, to make all proper arrangements with the master of the grammar school, who might naturally be disturbed at such a sudden departure. Thus all was settled, and Amyot could not deny that the prospect of a change was entirely welcome.

Home had looked so dreary after his late sojourn at Blencathara House, that he would have welcomed almost any change, and Joan's loving letter had made his heart yearn towards her.

True, there was a little heart-ache about the friends he was leaving, a misgiving that when far away he should find out that he missed his boy friends and little Primrose sadly. But these thoughts he tried to put away, and began to look forward eagerly to the journey, and all the wonders of London, and the new life at Westerham.

He had but three days for his farewells, and, considering that he was scarcely strong enough for the fatigues of the journey, it was perhaps as well that he had not a lengthened period of anticipation to undergo; for, as will easily be imagined, excitement gave him little chance of sleeping.

How strange it seemed to find himself once more waiting on the high-road for the London coach, as some months before he had waited, with a lump in his throat to see Joan start. Perhaps his throat was not quite free from such inconveniences on this occasion, but it is pleasanter to be the traveller than the one left behind; pleasanter to have new circumstances to anticipate than the dull monotony of the old life without much that hitherto has made it happy. It was sad to see Deborah and Mike and the farm-men's regrets; sad to shake hands with Lance, Jasper, and Percy; sad to see the grave expression on little Primrose's usually bright face, for they had all come to see him start; but it was pleasant

to say good-bye to the many grey days of the past, and dash into something new.

The lumbering coach is toiling along towards them ; the three horses pull up beside the little party in the road, and the door is opened.

'Plenty of room, young man,' says the fat driver—'Plenty of room,' echo six massive-looking persons inside—and Amyot shyly introduces his small person among their many packages, feeling much impressed with the idea that he is being buried alive. In consideration of his recent illness he had been specially provided with an inside seat ; but Lance's whispered advice 'to go outside most part of the way' is a most welcome suggestion, and he determines to see if he cannot act upon it before many hours are over.

The small trunk containing his worldly all is stowed away, Tory has made his round of farewells, and ensconced himself between his master's knees ; the long whip is solemnly whirled round the horses' heads, and Amyot feels that his childhood is over—the new stage in his life is reached, he is going to start in the world afresh.

The one link with the past is this little dumb companion, who, with amazing forethought, has laid in a vast stock of patience and forbearance for this new chapter in his history. He is somewhat tearful and depressed, consoling himself, doubtless, with the reflection that this strange, lumbering machine cannot go on for ever—or, if it does, some deliverance from it will be granted to him, and that there is the sweet prospect before him of the meeting with his dear little mistress. His doggish heart will ever cherish fond remembrances of little Primrose, but Joan's image is still firmly enthroned in his memory, and all the sunny past, he tells himself, will return when these three labouring horses have plodded through their task of conveying him to her presence. Before long, he hopes, there will be some opportunity of cheering and

encouraging these same horses, by jumping and barking in front of their noses ; but until that happy moment comes, nought behoves like patience, for truly they are very slow-going creatures, these coach-horses.

But hark, Tory ! others are more charitable than thou.

'Wonderful changes since I was the size of him,' says one stout passenger to another, looking at Amyot. 'No coach like this un betwixt Edinboro' and Lon'on in my young days. We're growing a'most too comfort-seeking I take it.'

'Well,' said his neighbour, a younger and less contented mortal, 'I'd not find it amiss if they'd make the road something better. 'Tis hard on the nags—poor beasts.'

'But they're steady ; keep a good steady pace, slow but sure. A man has time to think, still—though not so much as when I was young ; but I fear me, come another hundred years, folks will have no leisure to think out one good thought in a lifetime. Didst ever hear, sir, that some daft body has foretold that in these parts coaches will run along the Fells without so much as a horse to pull them—and all to come to pass, so the old goody says, in the space of the next hundred years.'

'Nay ! then the horses will have an easy time on't. 'Twill be their millennium, I take it. But the nags don't dislike their work, though maybe they would be well content to do it without the help of the whip. But what's taking this young man up to London ? He's a young traveller, that he is.'

Amyot, thus addressed, told his tale from the time of his father's death to the illness which had determined his relations to send for him to live near them.

The company in the coach listened kindly—thankful for anything to cheer the tedium of the way, and Tory came in for a share of notice. Then there came a very steep piece of hill, and the coachman's suggestion to his

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passengers that 'it was a fine thing to stretch a body's legs sometimes,' fell gratefully on the ears of both Amyot and the dog ; but two out of the six fat passengers declared that they preferred a level road for walking, and remained in the coach.

The day wore away very slowly ; probably both Amyot and his dog would have agreed, had they compared notes of their ideas, that it was the longest day in their life, and many more such days followed, until they both grew quite used to the coach and their companions, and it seemed ages since they had bidden farewell to Broughbarrow. Sometimes they sped along a smooth road between stone walls or hedges ; sometimes the coach toiled painfully up a long hill ; sometimes they passed through a town, causing much excitement to the inhabitants, and not a little to the passengers. The changing of horses was a welcome event to Amyot, and a great amusement to Tory, who seemed continually buoyed up with the hope that the new steeds would be faster, and scamper over the ground in the way he was wont to travel.

By the end of the week they had left hills and rocky country behind them, and were travelling through the flatter scenery of the Midland counties. Amyot had pretty well abandoned his inside place, and for the most part spent the days on the top of the coach, or by the driver's side, asking an infinite number of questions, and hearing tales of the wonderful adventures and hairbreadth escapes of the coachman and guard, and longing that some such good luck as a scuffle with highwaymen might yet fall to his share.

'But bless your heart,' said the coachman, 'they know better ; these gentlemen don't interfere with me and Tom unless they've heard as I'm carrying quality with long purses and plenty of jewels, and such like ; they know all about my cargo—the folks at the inns tell them



all about the northern coach and her doings. And this time I've nothing so very particular in the way of passengers. No, I don't expect to be stopped on this journey ; though of course, Tom has his pistols ready.'

Amyot knew that already, having seen these same pistols ; but he was sorry to hear that there was little ground for hoping to see them fired. It was growing dark, and the inn where the coach was to put up for the night was still distant. The trees on each side of the road were high and thick ; the air was still ; strange shadows fell across the way ; everything was weird and ghostly in the fast-fading light. Tory had squeezed close to him, a sure sign that he too felt something of the nameless fears that often haunt the twilight hour. It was just the time for a desperate deed, and Amyot held his breath and listened for stealthy steps until he could almost believe he heard them.

The coachman's remarks to his tired horses were growing discontented and impatient. 'Get along there, you, Nancy, get along ; come up, Joe,' seemed to be losing all effect. The road was heavy, and the coach-wheels sank deeper and deeper in the mud, till at last, in the efforts to find a pleasanter footing, the weary beasts made a sudden swerve, and in a moment the coach had run off into a deep ditch, full of watery mud and slime, where it fell over on one side, to the unutterable dismay of some ducks who were half-asleep among the weeds and rushes, and the no small consternation of the stout passengers inside, who were also dozing away the twilight hours.

It was not precisely the kind of accident Amyot had been desiring, and the furious struggling of the poor, frightened horses as they kicked and plunged, and tried in vain to free themselves from their awkward encumbrance, was not a pleasant sight. He had fallen into a very soft bed of mud, and Tory had shared his fate ;

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neither, therefore, had sustained any injury ; but the coachman had been less fortunate, and when at length he was extricated from the ditch, where he was lying half choked with watery mud, he groaned so piteously that it was plain he believed himself in a very bad way.

One by one the passengers scrambled out from the overturned coach, and then, with great difficulty, the plunging, restive horses were quieted and unharnessed.

'Like it or not,' said Tom the guard, 'all you gentlemen will have to walk on to the village—it ain't much above a mile—and send help to me and coachman. Send some stout lads and a horse or two, and lights—do you hear, gentlemen?—for it will be dark in no time now.'

There was no help for it ; so, with much grumbling at the untoward accident, the mud, the badness of the times, the depravity of things in general and the weather in particular, the passengers started in search of the nearest inn.

'You've only to go right straight forward,' was the guard's injunction ; but 'right straight forward' meant through seas of mud and pools of stagnant water, so deep and so black, that before long Amyot was forced to carry Tory, now no longer white, lest the brave dog should be choked or drowned.

It was a very long mile that lay between the scene of the upset and the wayside inn which afforded the nearest lodging, and the darkness had become profound before the luckless passengers reached it. Then there was much exclaiming at their woeful plight—much wondering how such a mischance could have befallen the London coach, before any stout lads could be found who would go to the help of the expectant guard and coachman.

'And you, my little man—why, you're little but a mass of mud and dirt!' said the mistress of the inn to Amyot, who was indeed in a piteous plight. She looked kind and motherly, and his tired face excited her pity ;

the gentlemen could be made comfortable by her husband, she thought, but the poor child needed a woman's tendance, and, without more ado, she led him, nothing loath, into her little kitchen, and making him sit down on a low bench beside the hearth, she set herself to pull off his boots and stockings, which were so soaked that they seemed glued to his feet.

'Hey! what's this?' was her exclamation, as Tory lifted his head from his master's arms and licked her face, 'you're both so much of a colour that I never saw the dog, poor beastie. Put him down, my dearie, and let him warm himself.'

But poor Tory was loath to soil her clean hearth by sitting down, and stood looking so miserable that a rough-haired lass, who was washing in an outhouse, brought a large tub of warm water, in which, after Amyot had soaked his numbed feet, Tory was immersed, greatly to his own satisfaction, and, it must be said, to his beautification. Then, a brimming porringer of bread and milk having entirely restored both boy and dog to cheerfulness, the kindly woman opened a folding-bed in a cupboard that led out of the kitchen, and Amyot was soon in a sound sleep, with Tory curled up on his feet. In that dreamless sleep neither of them heard anything of the commotion which greeted the arrival of the coach, some two hours after, and it was broad daylight when they were again ready for life and all that it might bring.

The coachman's injury was not so serious as it had at first appeared: 'A severe sprain, and perhaps a broken rib or so,' Tom, the guard, asserted; a rest at the inn for a few days would set him up, and the landlord of the public-house was ready enough to take the reins in his place.

'The coach must not be delayed, or we should lose our character,' said Tom proudly, and accordingly, with fresh horses, they were soon again on the road.

And this slight catastrophe was the only adventure worthy of the name which Amyot met with on this his first journey ; as they drew near the capital they seemed to travel more quickly, the relays of horses were apparently more up to their work, and the amateur coachman seemed anxious to make sure of bringing his team in at the appointed time, and with as great a flourish as if he had been the fully-accredited driver.

Tom, the guard, too, blew his horn more frequently, and especially when the coach was passing through one of the little towns, which, as they neared London, lay at shorter intervals along the road ; everything bespoke their speedy approach to the centre of life and industry.

Twenty times at least had Amyot asked, 'Is that London?' before the affirmative reply set his heart beating and his cheeks aflame. It was not all pleasurable excitement, for some misgivings mingled with the satisfaction he felt in knowing that his journey was almost at an end.

'Oh! Tory,' he whispered, squeezing the dog close to him as they sat together on the top of the coach, 'that is London over there, where you see the smoke ; and you and I will feel terribly strange among all the fine people there. I should like to run back all the way we have come, but we can't, so we must try to bear ourselves like other people ; we must be careful to make our best bows, and we must not sit down without being bidden ; and we must keep ourselves clean and smart. Do you understand, Tory ?'

Understand ! of course Tory understood, but there were difficulties in the way of this last-named duty ; and as he licked Amyot's face, he whined plaintively as he shook himself and looked at his dirty coat.

Amyot understood the gesture, and replied :

'Yes, we are a pair of beggars, and no mistake, but when we have had a chance of washing ourselves we shall

feel better ; and one thing, Tory, you must remember not to tear anybody's coat—do you hear ?'

Tory hung down his head for a moment, but speedily recovering himself, looked at his master and blinked his eyes, his usual method of replying : ' I know, but it was not at all a bad joke, though perhaps it might not be safe to try it any more.' And then the pair were silent again, watching the streets of houses drawing nearer, and finding much to amuse them every few yards.

Perhaps of the two Tory was the more evidently excited when they were really travelling down the streets ; Amyot, looking at the crowded thoroughfares, wondered whether it was a fair-day that so many people were abroad, but the driver only laughed at this idea, and assured him there were not more than usual ; and after this the boy thought it best to be silent, lest he should make some other ridiculous mistake.

At length, after many turnings and windings, when numerous passengers seemed on the point of being run over, and only to escape by a miracle, the coach rattled up to an inn door and stood still ; and there, waiting beside a hackney-coach from which he had just descended, Amyot at once spied his uncle on the look-out for him.

It was pleasant to the fatherless boy to feel that he once more belonged to somebody, and Mr. Pomfret's greeting was sufficiently kind and paternal to reassure him, and make him forget his fears ; in a few minutes more they were seated in the hackney-coach, and starting in the direction of Bloomsbury, where Mr. Pomfret lived. Amyot wondered if this were another town, but soon discovered that it was part of London : one of the best parts his uncle told him ; and Queen's Square, where he lived, was almost like the country, being open and fresh and breezy, looking over the fields right away to the village of Hampstead. Seeing he was interested, Mr. Pomfret went on to tell him more about London, and pointed out to

him many objects of interest ; the two new churches of St. George's in the parish of Bloomsbury, and St. George the Martyr at the corner of Queen Square, also the fine new house called Powis House, with its Corinthian columns and splendid façade, built at the expense of the French king, on the site of the old house of the same name, burnt down in 1714.

Thus occupied and amused, the drive seemed a very short one, and the hackney-coach stopped before a large house in Queen's Square, long before he had expected. It was such a handsome house, with such a wide entrance hall, and broad steps, that something of his shyness returned as he followed his uncle up the steps, and saw the tall footman who stood within the door. But on the staircase a lady was standing, tall and slight, and most beautifully attired, at sight of whom Tory immediately executed a series of his best bows, thereby reminding Amyot of his duty, and eliciting great applause from Mr. Pomfret, who, up to that moment, had taken no notice of the dirty-looking poodle.

The lady came swiftly downstairs, and drew Amyot into her warm embrace, then, still holding his hand, she opened a door that led from the hall, and took him into a large parlour, the windows of which looked out into the square. His uncle followed them, and when Mrs. Pomfret seated herself in a large elbow-chair, he placed himself behind her, leaning on the high back of her chair.

The colour mounted to Amyot's forehead as he felt himself thus examined by two keen pairs of eyes. His aunt touched his forehead with her lips, and then looked at her husband, and smiling, said something in French ; the boy blushed more intensely still, for he guessed that his own appearance and manners were the subject under remark.

' Poor fellow,' said his aunt, noticing his confusion, ' what a weary long journey he has had ; he must be tired

to death. Are you hungry, little nephew, or do you most of all desire to go to your chamber? it is prepared and ready, and if you like, I will send you some refreshment upstairs.'

Of all things in the world, Amyot decided that to go to bed was the most desirable at that moment; there was a look in his aunt's cold grey eyes which made him shrink from her, though she still held his hand, and was stroking it with her soft fingers. So he lifted that beautiful hand to his lips, and bidding his uncle a respectful good-night, followed the servant to the sleeping-chamber prepared for him. Tory was sitting on the mat at the foot of the stairs; and, greatly pleased to recover possession of his master, he trotted upstairs behind him in a much more contented mood than the boy himself. For as he closed the door of the parlour he had heard, or fancied he heard, a soft rippling laugh from his aunt, and the exclamation, 'Such a prodigious awkward lad, I never saw the like!'

How many flights of stairs they climbed! He verily believed they must be ascending to the stars; at Broughbarrow there was only one short flight of stairs to the bed-chambers. What folly to build houses so high! Why had Joan never told him of these ridiculous London houses, and why, oh! why, had she never said how his aunt stared at people, and laughed at them as soon as their backs were turned? Could Joan—his faithful Joan—have grown like Aunt Aimée?

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## CHAPTER VI.

### WHEN TORY FINDS HIS LITTLE MISTRESS.

WAS he glad or was he sorry? This question Amyot vainly asked himself as he strolled round the Square garden about a week after his arrival in London, and the question had been suggested by the remark dropped by his uncle that day at dinner, that he was so vastly employed that he could not say when he should be able to find a day to take his nephew down to Westerham. His aunt had kindly pitied him, and assured Mr. Pomfret that he was pining for his sister; but though he scarcely allowed it to himself, even the prospect of meeting Joan had been almost forgotten in the strange delight and wonder of this new world of London.

The very bustle in the streets, the constant passing to and fro, the street cries in the early morning, the whirl of life and activity, had awoke in him a passion to be doing something. He had listened to the talk of busy politicians in his uncle's house, had been admitted to the sight of Dr. Meade's museum of curiosities and paintings in Great Ormond Street, and had even caught sight of many great men whose names were in everyone's mouth. It seemed to him that years, not days, must have separated him from the old Cumberland life, and as he sauntered round the Square garden watching Tory, whose happy spirit found easy satisfaction in chasing the brown leaves along the garden paths, he wondered whether even to be with Joan again would be as enchanting as this wondrous fairyland of novelty and excitement, of



new thoughts and new aspirations. Tory he knew well would rejoice to be again in the fields and country lanes. He was feeling in no small measure cheated, that he had not yet been able to discover his little mistress ; but, always light of heart, the good dog lived in hope. Well washed and combed, he had recovered his self-respect, and could find much to amuse him in the town and its strange inhabitants. He was contented to wait. Not so his young master ; when he listened to the discourse of those who were doing great things in the world, he fretted and fumed to think that for him years of school must intervene before he could command ships, fight battles, paint pictures, or write mighty books. His cousin Guy, a gay captain in the Grenadiers, hoping to see some service on the Continent, rattled on in merry guise of marches and victories, sieges and assaults, as if his wars were over and his laurels won.

Amyot listened, and resolved he would be a soldier and fight the French as his father and grandfather had done. Then of a sudden the dream was changed. Guy's half-brother Arnold had just returned from France, where he had been studying under the care of his stepmother's French relatives—returned, as his father bitterly complained, more French than English, more Papist than Protestant, but withal gentle, tender-hearted, full of lofty aspirations and fervent longings for the revival of faith in the land.

Amyot bowed at once to the fascination of his pure and lofty soul, and listened entranced to his tales of the saintly Archbishop of Cambrai, who had dedicated himself in his youth to missionary work in North America, but had given up his heart's desire at his King's command, had then fallen under that King's displeasure, and in his banishment from Court and Court favour had been sought out and visited by the wise and good of all nations ; 'Your grandfather among others,' Arnold

added. 'Oh, that I had known him! but your grandmother will tell you more about him, for she knew him, and has heard him preach too, as well as the great Bishop of Meaux.'

And listening to these tales of holy lives, Amyot forgot his warlike intentions, and felt that Arnold was right when he said the war with sin was the only war worth fighting. True, his aunt laughed at her eldest son's enthusiasm, and wished he would come down from the clouds, and dress and talk like other people; his uncle fumed and muttered some bitter invectives against Popish plotters and French traitors; but, as Arnold's spirit was never ruffled by jests or gibes, his young cousin felt instinctively that he must have the right on his side, and revered him accordingly.

It was a far greater pleasure to Amyot to linger by Arnold's side in the Abbey of Westminster, or in the great church of St. Paul's, listening while his low musical voice related wondrous histories of martyred saints and heroic deeds achieved under the banner of the Cross, or quivered with emotion as he spoke of the mighty war yet to be waged, of the world sunk in indifference or vice, than to drive with his aunt in her chariot to Vauxhall Gardens, where the gay world enjoyed itself, and forgot such dismal matters.

Mrs. Pomfret thought, and not perhaps without reason, that a consciousness of his awkwardness and rustic manners was the cause of this dislike on the part of her nephew to the society of the *beau monde*; indeed, it was no small annoyance to her to be burdened with the company of such a raw country lad. Her stepson might be wanting in some of those elegancies of language which were generally deemed essential to a high-bred gentleman, but he was never *gauche*, and none had ever received aught but courteous treatment at his hands; she had never blushed for him, though well aware that he was peculiar;

her own son was all that her fastidious taste could desire ; but this orphan boy was a trial, and she much feared that he would never grow into anything at all akin to a gentleman.

To these lamentations her husband listened with his smile of languid indifference, and replied :

'Do not distress yourself, my love ; if he turns out quite unpresentable, we must get him service in some foreign land where the chances of war or fever may save us the pain of being ashamed of him. And, indeed, if my judgment does not much deceive me, his hot temper will endanger his neck long ere he be grown to years of discretion ; so make yourself easy ; you will not be troubled with him long !'

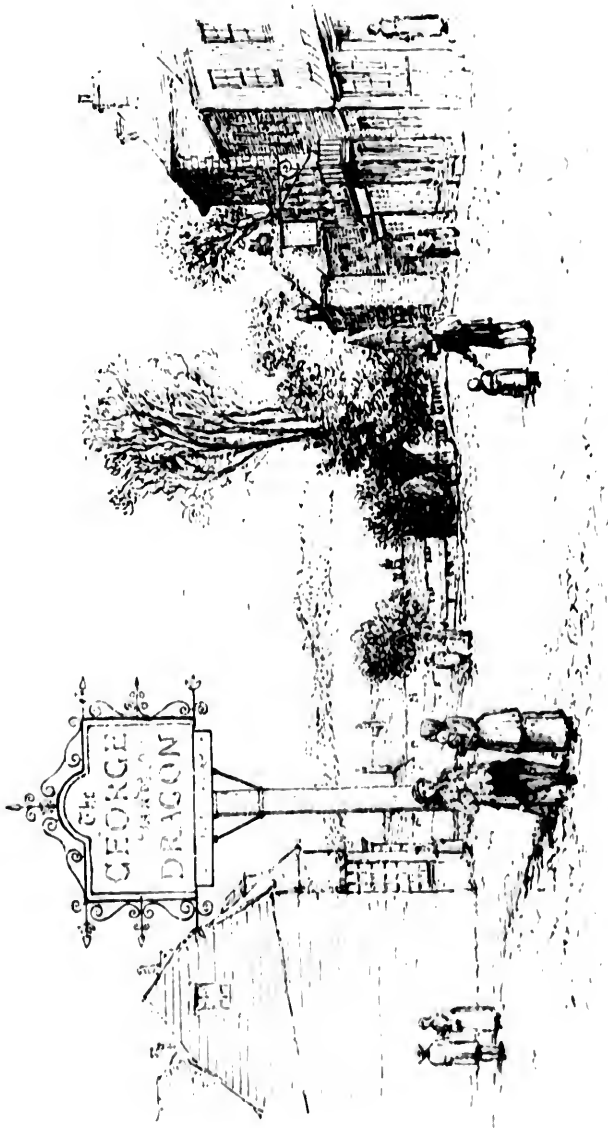
'Nay ; I wish the child no harm ; he is my sweet sister's son, though he favours her but little. My son Arnold tells me that he has parts and abilities, though he has no more manners than a dog—nay, not so much as his poodle ! But Arnold is vexed that you let him read what he will, and says he should be guided in his studies.'

'Then let Arnold guide him ; but no, the captain was loyal to King and Church, and his son should tread in his steps ; but I'll not meddle with the lad—he must go to school ; that is, when he has paid his respects to his grandmother at Westerham.'

Probably this conversation determined the worthy but indolent gentleman to bring his nephew's stay in his house to a speedy conclusion ; for the very next day he announced that he had now sufficient leisure to ride with the lad to Westerham, and that he had written to announce their coming.

'Taking to the roads again,' thought Tory. 'Well, this time we can hardly fail to find the little mistress !'

And the little mistress's heart went forth to meet them, though duty and propriety kept her from following the dictates of her inclination, which would have led her far



WESTERRHAM.

down the London road to meet the travellers when the long-desired day at last dawned.

The little Kentish town was looking its very best that autumn evening when Amyot first saw it ; how often in after-years, when discontented with his lot, with himself, or his surroundings, or resting after a long day's march in foreign lands, did he strive to recall that first impression of the quiet little village street, the green slopes of the park, the changing colours of the tall trees, and the peaceful flow of the little river which ran before his grandmother's house. He might call Broughbarrow home, but it was not long before Westerham was more truly home to his heart than ever his Cumberland birthplace had been, and Mrs. Darley's house was by all acknowledged to be most entirely and altogether home-like.

And there was no denying that it was very pleasant to be once more possessed of Joan, and Joan so grown and improved that Amyot could scarcely take his eyes off her. He wondered why she had never looked so neat and well arrayed at home, for his father, he knew, had always wished that she should be dressed as a gentlewoman, and had grudged no money spent on Joan's slips or hoods ; but now she looked for all the world like a soft dove, and no wood-pigeon had ever cooed so sweetly as her voice sounded in his ear. And his grandmother, in her rich, but softly falling paduasoy, her snowy kerchief, and delicate lace cap—whence some braids of snow-white hair just escaped—was she not the loveliest old lady imaginable ? Aunt Aimée's blue eyes were doubtless very beautiful—he had heard fine gentlemen tell her so a hundred times—but Amyot had shivered at their cold scrutinising glance, while he gazed with undisguised admiration at the bright brown eyes that had such a loving warmth in them, even when they twinkled with amusement, as, indeed, they often did when they caught sight of him.

'I thought I should have been vastly afraid of my grandmother,' Amyot confessed to his sister, after a few days' residence at the red-brick house that faced the little river and the rich ground of Squerries Court, where Mrs. Darley had lived ever since her widowhood. 'I thought she would have laughed at me as Aunt Aimée did, and I do hate to be laughed at ! But, Joan, I cannot understand her, can you ?'

'Who, dear grandmother, or Aunt Pomfret ?'

'My grandmother. Sometimes she looks like a holy saint in a church window, when she lays her hand on your head, Joan, and says, *Que le bon Dieu te bénisse* or something of the sort, for I shall never be able to speak that silly French stuff, whatever she may say ; and then sometimes all her face laughs, and she is as merry as my little Primrose—my fairy queen. Say, Joan, do you understand her ?'

'Perhaps not quite,' Joan admitted ; 'but I love her, oh ! so dearly ; and as for being like a saint in a church window, if they were half as sweet as she, I think it is quite right to put them in church windows, though Miss Johnstone says they make the church monstrous dark, and she believes it is wrong to have painted windows at all.'

'Miss Johnstone is vastly queer. Why does she live here ?' asked Amyot. 'She teaches you, I know, Joan, and she winds wool for grandmother, but she is not related to grandmother, so why does she live with her ?'

'I never asked,' Joan replied ; perhaps it is for the same reason as many other things that seem strange'—and she laughed her quiet laugh of deep amusement.

'What things ?'

'Have you not noticed how many funny things and creatures there are in this house ? The cat with three legs ; the parrot with the bald head ; the ugly old butler with one eye ; and the cook who is stone deaf ; the dog

who snarls when you stroke him ; the pony that stands still every few yards, and—and——'

'The little girl who sees the worst side of everything and everybody,' said a low voice from behind her. The children started and turned round ; the brilliant dark eyes of Mrs. Darley were fixed on Joan's blushing face, and she said, with something of reproach in her musical voice, 'What dost thou mean, petite? Is it such a chamber of horrors, thy poor grandmother's house, that thou fearest to dwell in it, and art begging thy brother to carry thee away?'

'Indeed, no, madam ; it is the dearest home in the world. We were only wondering why——' and she stopped.

'Wondering why ! Ah ! that is the way of the world now, always wondering why. Better not, chérie ; rest thy little brain, and be certain that there is a reason, and a good one, for all that seems strange. Yet, if thou must know this particular why, it is just simply this : here is an old woman good for nothing much, but able to give a home to many whom no one needs or loves or admires ; they are not ugly or strange or troublesome to her, and so she takes them in, and loves to have them—yes, curious little maid and all.'

'And clumsy country lad too, madam?' inquired Amyot, with a deep flush on his face.

'Yes, yes ! child, for sure. Yet, bethink thee, the cat makes the best of his three legs ; thou hast a goodly pair of thine own, and a straight and comely figure, why, then, walk as if all the ground were newly ploughed, and thy body and legs had fallen foul of each other?'

Amyot laughed. 'Joan had forgotten to name me,' he said ; 'twill go hard with me, madam, but I'll learn to walk as well as the cat ! My aunt was for ever ashamed of me, but I could not bear myself so as to please her ; and, to tell the truth, I'd no great liking for her fine beaux.'

'Tut, tut ! be thyself, child. Imitate no one's airs, but be thine own best self, and let thy grandmother and sister be proud of thee.'

'I shall ever be that,' Joan replied, 'be Amyot what he will ; I could not help it, madam.'

'Nay, nay, little simpleton, talk not such foolishness ! Women, poor silly things ! have a trick of loving even the drunken sot that would fell them with his fist ; but I speak not of love, but of pride ; if Amyot grow not up a true loyal-hearted gentleman, such a one as men may



SQUERRIES COURT.

esteem and women trust, then, Joan, thou mayest love him in a poor weak fashion, but thou wilt despise him in thine heart the while.'

'Nay, madam, nay ; I never could,' was Joan's response, as she lifted her steadfast blue eyes to Amyot's face, which none could deny looked honest and true and straightforward ; but the old lady repeated :

'Thou art wrong, petite, I know thee better ; thou wilt never reverence aught but worth : look to it, Amyot.



that thy sister may ever hold thee as meet to be honoured as now she doth.'

The old lady left them with the quiet step and easy motion that had ever distinguished her, and the children followed her with eyes full of admiration, Amyot murmuring :

'She is the sweetest, loveliest old lady I ever saw ! I will be all she will have me, but, oh ! Joan, tell me how ! Think you I vex her, as I did Aunt Aimée ?'

'Dear grandmother is never vexed except by such things as you, Amyot, will never do, I trust. She would have you bear yourself more like a gentleman, and she looks for more dutiful language towards herself ; but when Miss Johnstone lamented bitterly that you walked into the parlour without so much as lifting your hat, and that you neglected to open the door for her, and said your voice was so rough it made her feel quite nervous, grandmother said, "He is a gentleman's son, and the sense of what is fitting is there ; 'tis but the training he lacks."'

'Any lad would make Miss Johnstone feel nervous ; even you, Joan, forced her to seek her scent-bottle to cure her fainting, when you let the door shut suddenly this morning.'

'She suffers much from the vapours,' Joan replied. 'Amyot, we should not laugh at her.'

'No, indeed ; the vapours must be dolorous things indeed, to judge by her countenance ; but tell me, Joan, do you know the lad that would not terrify her ?'

'Yes, indeed ; there are brave young gentlemen living yonder at Squerries Court, who are wondrous favourite with her ; and Master Edward Wolfe, of whom I have spoken many a time, and his brother James ; they are ever mindful of her whims, as you call them, and treat her with true gentle courtesy. It was but yesterday she wished that you resembled Master Edward Wolfe.'

'And you, Joan, do you wish I resembled this paragon of a youth?'

'I would have you your own self, like none else; but yet I know that when you see him, you will like him well.'

'When I see him! is that likely? you have shown me the house where these lads live, but you said, Joan, that they had gone to school, and that their parents were about to leave Westerham.'

'Yes, so I did; but grandmother proposes to send you to the same school with them. She spoke to Uncle Pomfret about it when he was here, and they said that by the new year you would be well and strong and fit for school again.'

'I am well and strong now.'

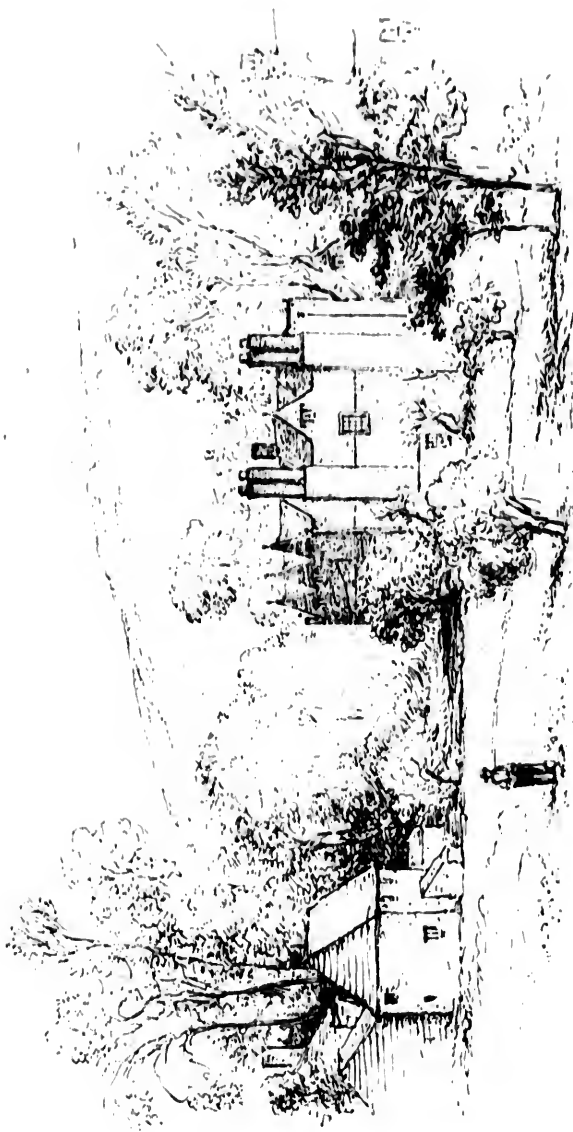
'Nay, my grandmother said after the new year; and she said more that I do not mean to tell you.'

'I know,' said Amyot gloomily; 'that until I was a little less of a savage, I had best not mingle with these fine gentlemen, lest they should laugh me to scorn. Well, and if they did, I have a pair of hard fists to defend myself, and I know how to use them.'

'But we want you to keep your strength to serve your country,' was Joan's soothing response. 'Now tell me again about little Primrose, and Lance, and dear old Broughbarrow. I wonder shall we ever see it again?'

'To be sure;' and then, nothing loath, Amyot suffered himself to be led into long, rambling stories about his old friends and old life—interesting enough to little Joan, but scarcely worth relating.

Meanwhile, in her wainscoted parlour, the windows of which looked out on the smooth sunny river, Mrs. Darley was sitting in her elbow-chair, lost in thought. In spite of Joan's flattering assurances, Amyot did not unfrequently contrive to vex the placid old lady; and when she had parted from the children, after her brief



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conversation with them, it was to be met by her ancient butler and still more ancient cook, both full of complaints of the noisy, unruly ways of her grandson.

She had heard them with her usual patience and quiet dignity, and had quelled the angry storm of their excited feelings by the earnest appeal :

'The child is fatherless and motherless, and orphans are God's special care ; not in haste will I meddle with His training. The world will deal him the rude blows which are the Almighty's rod. As for me, I will try to do the cosseting and comforting that the poor lamb as surely needs, though you, Hannah, and you, Doddridge, think nothing but stripes can benefit him, and would have him horsewhipped without mercy.'

'Nay, madam, but if you knew——'

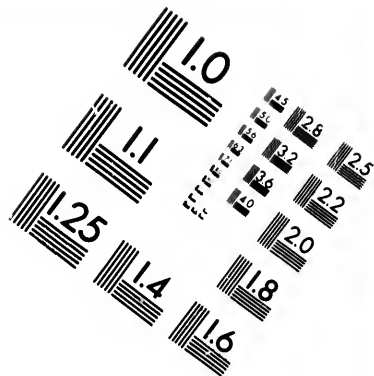
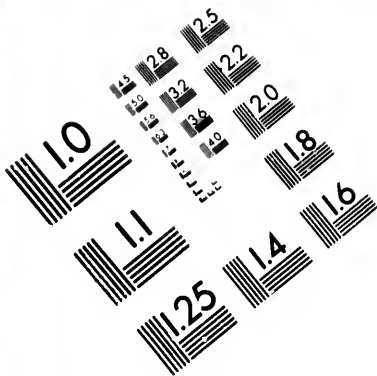
'If I did, where would it profit me ? I have resolved, and your complaints will not change me. We have been, perhaps, too quiet here ; and a little noise will make a change.'

And so she dismissed them, with the reflection that small trials are good for all, old servants not excepted.

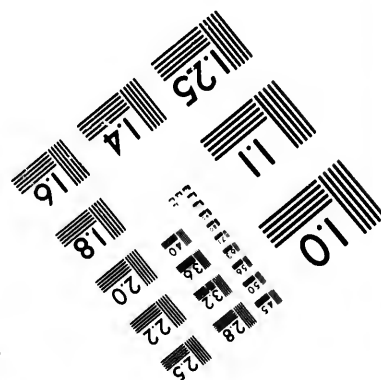
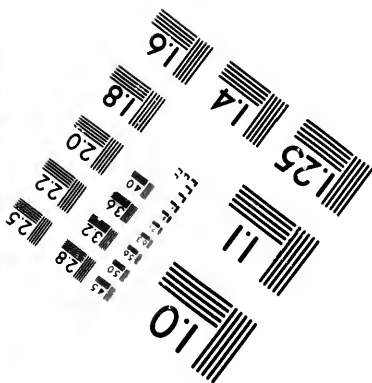
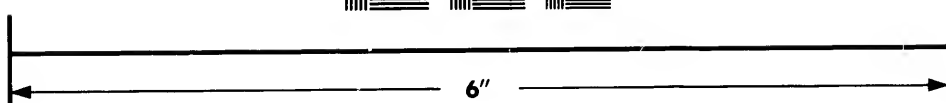
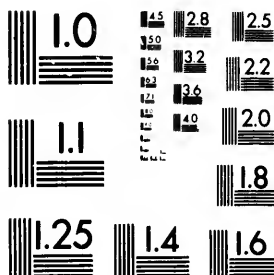
And for herself too, no doubt. The small tumults were a trial, though, of course, only in a wholesome degree ; they made her thoughtful, not sad. Sad ! Who had ever seen Mrs. Darley sad ? Possibly they suggested some regrets that she had not sooner insisted upon having the charge of her orphan grandson, and some uneasiness lest the six months during which he had been his own master should have made him too ungovernable for her quiet rule. Well, he must soon go to school ; and in the meantime she had little doubt that she could so arouse his chivalrous feelings that for her sake he would curb the haughty spirit that had so vexed the old domestics.

'If I can't manage a boy of ten, I'll take to my bed and order my coffin,' was the characteristic conclusion of the valiant old lady's reflections.





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## CHAPTER VII.

### FINDING HIS LEVEL.

'A WHIMSICAL world this is, a restless, ever-changing, never-resting kind of place ; and the race of beings who proudly call it their own, grow every year more fidgety and given to rushing about.' Such was Tory's soliloquy, when, before he had well settled down in his new home, he found his young master carried off, and himself left behind with his little mistress. Well, it could not be denied that Amyot and the new home did not exactly suit one another, and Tory hoped that in his next experience his young master would find some comrades more congenial than Doddridge and Hannah.

Whether such was the case the good dog might have been puzzled to decide, had he been able to follow his master and judge for himself ; possibly, for his peace of mind, it was well that a sense of duty restrained him from gratifying his curiosity, and kept him in the quiet home at Westerham, and the safe companionship of Queen Joan.

And where was Amyot ? School had begun for him in sober earnest, and in the good town of Greenwich, among boys who for the most part were south-country lads, the northern boy was trying, and not very successfully, to hold his own.

See him one Sunday afternoon, early in the year, sitting lonely at one end of the large schoolroom ; the others are talking merrily in groups, the room rings with their laughter, but no one talks to him ; his face wears a scowl which is anything but inviting, his very worst look, as



Joan would call it ; and the peaceable boys have already learned to keep their distance when young Brough is in the sulks ; and as good luck would have it, some time elapsed before the spirit of evil impels any of the warlike souls to interfere with him.

But it is not in boy nature to refrain from tormenting when such a ready victim is at hand. Some one passing inquires 'What ails Mr. Gruff?' and the smouldering fire burst forth at once. Then follow many witticisms concerning the giant's castle in the mountains, the skulls and



GREENWICH PARK.

bones that are to be seen there, sure proofs of Giant Gruff's ferocity, and the room is soon in an uproar. The elder lads look on amused, till one, a slender boy with blue eyes, turning to his brother close beside him whispers, 'Ned, there's a good fellow, get him away from them and take him for a walk. Mr. Swinden will give leave, I know. 'Tis like baiting a bear, and cowards' work at the best.'

The younger lad obeyed, and though it was no easy work to drag Amyot from the crowd of his tormentors, he succeeded in his attempt, and before many minutes

were past, the pair were free from the schoolhouse and on their way to Greenwich Park.

More than once had Ned glanced at his companion before either of them spoke ; the cloud was not yet entirely cleared from Amyot's brow, when the silence was broken at length by the very simple remark, ' I'm a fool to get so chafed by them. Don't you despise me, Ned ? '



CHURCH OF ST. ALPHEGE, GREENWICH.

' We had best forget them,' was the very prudent reply of his companion ; ' here's the church ; I love Westersham church better than this ; what say you, Brough ? '

' I like going to this church very well,' Amyot replied. ' Till I left Broughbarrow, I did not go much to church — my father did not take us often ; but here I like the organ and the singing, and some other things also. What

was that Mr. Swinden said this morning about a certain psalm tune, and a great man who made it up, whose body lies buried in the church—did you understand what he said?’

‘Understand! yes, right well; I have heard the story many a time, and in former days his tomb bore a quaint inscription—can I remember it, I wonder? let me see, it ran thus: I have seen it written in an old book:

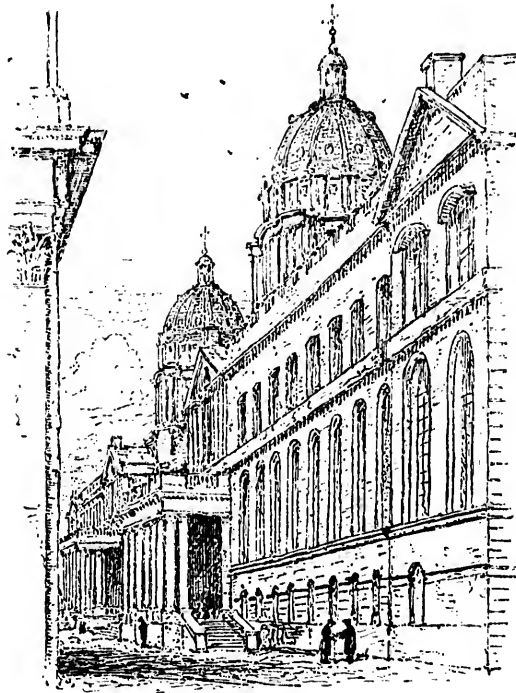
“Entered here doth ly a worthy wight  
Who for long time in music bore the bell;  
His name to shew was Thomas Tallys hyght,  
In honest vertuous life he did excell;  
He served long tyme in chappell with grete prayse—  
F’ower sovereigns’ reygnes (a thing not often seen):  
I mean Kyng Henry and Prynce Edward’s dayes,  
Quene Mary and Elizabeth our Quene;  
He maryed was, though children he had none,  
And lyved in love full three and thirty yeres  
Wyth loyal spouse, whose name yclept was Jone,  
Who here entombed him company now bears:  
As he did lyve, so also did he dy,  
In myld and quiet sort (O, happy man!)  
To God ful oft for mercy did he cry,  
Wherefore he lyves, let Death do what he can.”

‘Tallys, yes; that was the name. I was wondering whether his spirit stays in the church sometimes to hear those tunes sung; but I suppose he has made hundreds more since then, and perhaps he does not care much about his old tunes now.’

‘They’re grand though, so people say who understand, and I think, as James often says, it would be a splendid thing to have done something which will help people hundreds of years after one’s dead and buried.’

Amyot thought so too, but the church being left behind, his thoughts turned to less solemn matters; the green slopes of the park were before them, and the great domes of the hospital, and beyond the smooth river with its many barges, their gay colours making the scene bright and pleasant.

Boy-like, they talked of ships and sailors, great commanders and naval victories, wondered whether it would be their lot to travel far from old England, and hoped they might have a chance of a brush with Spain. Amyot related to his companion many of the witty sayings and quaint expressions in a book which he had seen, when



GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

staying with his uncle in Queen Square, entitled 'The History of John Bull;' and the sentiments of John Bull and Nick Frog, with regard to the greed of Lewis Baboon, drew forth much applause from both the lads.

'Young Spitfire,' as he was familiarly called by his schoolfellows, had quite recovered his equanimity under

the judicious treatment of Edward Wolfe before they returned to the schoolhouse, and submitted very tamely to a short lecture administered by that sage young man before they plunged again into the noisy crowd of boys.

‘How many fights have you had since you’ve been at school, Brough?’

‘Can’t say; a dozen or so.’

‘More than your share, Brough: you give no one else a chance. Try and stint yourself a bit. I’ve a score or two to wipe out; but one can’t fight a fellow who has two black eyes to start with.’

Amyot laughed. ‘They were all older than I,’ he said. ‘I don’t fight the little ones.’

‘Doubt if they were bigger—you’re a young giant, Brough, and your fists were cut out of your own mountains; keep them to fight the Baboons.’

‘Oh! they’ll serve for Britons as well. But I don’t want to quarrel, if they’d let me alone.’

‘Why should they let you alone? You make fine sport for them, by being so ready with your sting. If I were you, Brough, I wouldn’t condescend to notice all their gibes. It isn’t a good thing to get the name of being such a hot-headed dog that no one can speak to you.’

To this advice Amyot made no reply, but, as young Wolfe told a friend afterwards, ‘At any rate, he didn’t bite;’ which was as much as could be expected of him.

From this time forth school life grew brighter to our hero. He ceased to look upon his comrades as his determined foes, and before long his friendships were as many and violent as his enmities had once been. Moderation was a virtue he despised—everything was done with vehemence which he deemed worth doing at all; and consequently trifling quarrels, insignificant breaches of rules, seldom had any attraction for him, while outrageous acts of insubordination, persistent fits of idleness, often

followed by desperate bursts of remorse were the characteristic marks of Amyot Brough during this period of his life.

'Brough, tell me,' began a merry-faced lad, one day, 'have you any notion what ails Ned Wolfe?'

'What ails him! Is he sick?—he looks well enough?'

'Not sick, that I know of; but has he got the vapours, or has he been flogged, think you, that he looks so down-cast, and has not a word to say for himself?'

'How can I tell? Ask himself, if you must know.'

'Well, if you put it in that way, I can't say that I am specially set upon knowing, but being a compassionate kind of a being, I own I feel queerish when a fellow-creature puts on airs that makes one think of churchyards and suicides and such doleful things, and so I made bold to ask your worship if you knew the cause of the poor youth's sad countenance; but I'll beg your pardon if I've done amiss, so you need not knock me down.'

Amyot laughed.

'You're such a droll chap, West; but how should I know? Ned doesn't tell me his secrets.'

'Doesn't he?—you're often together; but what appeared to me so mighty strange is that James Wolfe is just as mad with joy as his brother is mad with grief, and for the most part, the two seem to have but one soul, and for ever think alike.'

'Truly you are right, there, West; it is mighty strange now I think on't.'

'And at the end of the half, too, holidays coming in less than no time, what can it import? Some quarrel between the loving brothers?—well, that would be marvellous, truly.'

'Small chance of that,' Amyot averred. 'James Wolfe is hasty, and doesn't always pick his words; but that they should quarrel—no, never; I won't believe it.'

'Then I'll give up guessing; but see, Brough, there

they go : did you ever see big Wolfe so mighty well pleased, or the little one so sunk in woe ? ’

‘ James Wolfe is telling some piece of tidings ; look how the lads are staring at him ; let’s run and hear. What is it, what is it, Wolfe ? Ned, tell us what your brother was saying but now.’

‘ Nay, don’t ask me,’ half sobbed the lad ; ‘ if only I could go too ! but my father will have but one, and I’m too young.’

‘ Your father, Colonel Wolfe ? Why, is James to go with him—a lad of thirteen to go to the wars ? Well, who ever heard such luck ! ’

‘ Aye, but my mother thinks him too young, and I always deemed that we should go together,’ and Ned turned away to hide his grief.

His brother’s bright eyes were dimmed for a moment as he gazed after him, but murmuring to himself, ‘ We couldn’t both leave my mother,’ he shook off the passing regret, and plunged again into an animated discussion of his future prospects. All envied him, as a few months before all had longed that Fate had given them a share in Admiral Vernon’s triumphs at Portobello, and many were the mutterings and lamentations that such good fortune should befall only one.

‘ Such good luck, to have a colonel for your father ! ’ cried one.

‘ I’d give my ears to serve under Vernon ! ’ cried another.

‘ To have to stay here moping over these senseless books ! ’ added a third, little given to either moping or books.

‘ Well, you won’t have to do that,’ remarked Wolfe good-humouredly ; ‘ the holidays are coming ; hurrah for home, sweet home ! ’

‘ And you’re going never to return, Wolfe,’ said a sentimental lad much addicted to writing verses ; ‘ never to return ! ’

'We'll have a real good supper on the last evening,' remarked a more matter-of-fact youth. 'A monstrous fine affair we'll have this half; see to it, lads, that you get ready your best songs.'

And, like true Britons, they applauded this suggestion; and the last night of the half-year, always rather a tumultuous occasion, was doubly noisy this midsummer, the masters being conveniently deaf, the feasting, shouting, and singing were kept up till late. Again and again the cry arose for one more song, one more toast; but at length a silence fell on the noisy crew, and after much pressing the most noted singer rose to attempt the song of the evening, bowing low to the honourable company, and asking their kind indulgence if his voice (which, alas! was about to undergo that change which the vulgar call 'breaking') should prove unequal to the merits of the song. He thus began:

HOSIER'S GHOST.

'As near Portobello lying,  
On the gentle swelling flood,  
At midnight, with streamers flying,  
Our triumphant navy rode;  
Where, while Vernon, late all glorious,  
From the Spaniard's dire defeat,  
And his crew with shouts victorious  
Drank success to England's fleet.

On a sudden, shrilly sounding,  
Hideous yells and shrieks were heard;  
Then, each heart with fear confounding,  
A sad troop of ghosts appeared—  
All in dreary hammocks shrouded,  
Which for winding-sheets they wore,  
And with looks by sorrow clouded,  
Frowning on that hostile shore.

'On then gleamed the moon's wan lustre,  
When the shade of Hosier brave  
His pale bands was seen to muster,  
Rising from their watery grave.



O'er the glimmering wave he hied him,  
Where the "Burford" reared her sail,  
With three thousand ghosts beside him,  
And in groans did Vernon hail :

"Heed, oh, heed my fatal story,  
I am Hosier's injured ghost  
You, who now have purchased glory  
At this place where I am lost,  
Though in Portobello's ruin  
You now triumph, free from fears —  
When you think of our undoing,  
You will mix your joy with tears.

"See these mournful spectres weeping,  
Ghastly o'er this hated wave,  
Whose wan cheeks are stained with weeping,  
These were English captains brave.  
Mark those numbers pale and horrid,  
Who were once my sailors bold;  
Lo, each hangs his drooping forehead  
While his dismal fate is told.

"I, by twenty sail attended,  
Did this Spanish town affright,  
Nothing then its wealth defended  
But my orders not to fight.  
Oh, that in this rolling ocean  
I had cast them with disdain,  
And obeyed my heart's warm motion  
To reduce the pride of Spain!

"For resistance I could fear none,  
But with twenty ships had done  
What thou, brave and happy Vernon,  
Hast achieved with six alone.  
Then the Bastimento's never  
Had our foul dishonour seen,  
Nor the sea the sad receiver  
Of this gallant train had been.

"Thus like thee, proud Spain dismaying,  
And her galleons leading home,  
Though condemned for disobeying  
I had met a traitor's doom.  
To have fallen, my country crying,  
'He has played an English part,'  
Had been better far than dying  
Of a grieved and broken heart.

"Unrepining at thy glory  
 Thy successful arms we hail,  
 But remember the sad story,  
 And let Hosier's wrongs prevail.  
 After this proud foe subduing,  
 When your patriot friends you see,  
 Think on vengeance for my ruin,<sup>1</sup>  
 And for England shamed in me."<sup>2</sup>

The bravos were loud and long ; the singer bowed his acknowledgments to right and left, and then resumed his seat ; the provisions had long before disappeared, the candles were dying down in their sockets, one or two of the younger lads had fallen asleep, in spite of the deafening din around them, and, as the cheers died away, a strange and most unusual silence fell on the group of lads.

'Speak, do somebody !' whispered a pale-faced boy with large awe-struck eyes. 'I don't like to think of that night at sea, and the hosts of ghosts rising through the waters—three thousand of them, groaning and shivering in the moonlight ! I say, it makes me feel all cold and shaky !'

'Does it ? Would three thousand be worse than one ?'

'I don't know. Have you ever seen one ?'

'Oh, scores of times ! Stray ghosts are as common as daisies in our parts ; but I fancy it isn't usual for them to go in troops, and I've a notion that the man who made that song has put things a little too strong. What say you, West ?'

'Like things strong,' said West. 'Detest your prim folks, who stick to the exact literal truth ; 'tis a good stirring song, and never a ghost too many in it.'

'Pity they stay there ; if I were old Hosier, or his ghost, I'd take a trip to old England and plague the life out of those who sent me on such a fool's errand. 'What's the use of moping and fretting about on the sea ?'

'Little good crying over spilt milk,' remarked Amyot. 'It seems to me that Hosier had but himself to thank for his troubles.'

'You're right there, Brough;' it was James Wolfe who spoke. 'T'would have been easy enough to have dropped his orders into the sea, or read them t'other way about !'

'Bravo ! that's it ! just so !' echoed the lads. 'Teach the land-lubbers to mind their own business ; put the Ministers to bed, and bid them hide their heads under the bedclothes, if the sound of a gun frightens them. Why is Spain to keep all the good things in America to herself, and go prying into our ships to see what we have been at ? England's got ships enow, and brave men enow, to conquer the world, if she might but serve herself of them !'

'Ay, ay ! that she has.'

'And some day she will.'

'Some day she'll turn the tables on Spain, and make the French mounseers quake in their shoes.'

'Ay, ay ; she will.'

"And she shall flourish great and free,  
The dread and envy of them all."

'So she shall—so she shall !'

"Still more majestic shall she rise,  
More dreadful from each foreign stroke."

'If she only gets a chance of one.'

'I tell ye, lads,' broke in James Wolfe, 'that she shall !'

'Whist ! whist ! Some one's coming.'

'Gentlemen, having settled the affairs of the nation, and had a merry evening, I now commend you to your beds. Dream of glory as much as ye will, I'll never hinder ye !'

It was the head-master who spoke, a smile of amusement

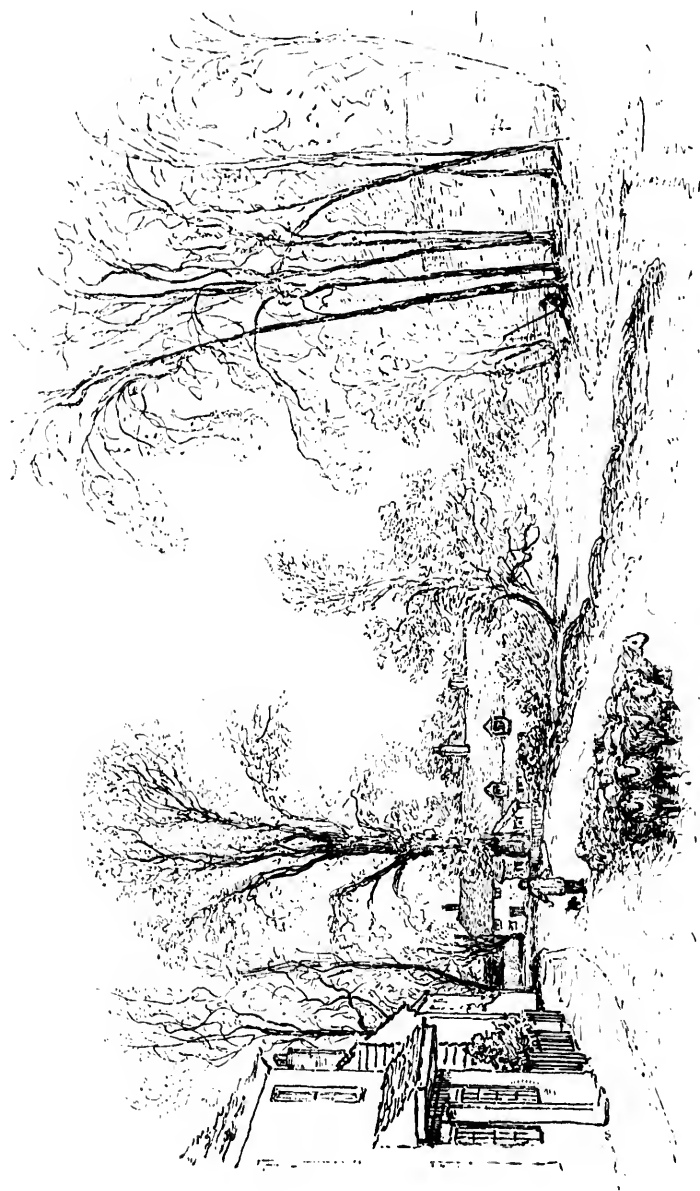
and no displeasure on his face, and the lads dispersed at once.

A few days afterwards Amyot found himself again at Westerham—Joan mightily pleased to have him, but quietly content, as was her wont ; Tory uproariously delighted, as also was his wont.

At first, while holiday-time was a novelty, and the change was pleasing, everyone—even the old servants—pronounced him wonderfully improved. He would sit for hours together, holding a fishing-rod, by the side of the little river, waiting with most marvellous patience for the rare excitement of a bite, till Doddridge said he was a changed boy, and he shouldn't wonder now if he turned out quite a credit to the family—doubtless he had been well chastised at school ; for Doddridge was a firm believer in the efficacy of pain, and could see no other method by which such a wild young colt could have been broken in.

Hannah, too, privately informed her mistress that she had never thought to like a boy so well : Master Amyot was nearly as manageable as Miss Joan, and very near as sensible as the dog Tory. But Mrs. Darley smiled, and being a far-sighted person, she was not greatly surprised when, after a week had passed away, some of the old complaints began to recur.

The fishing was wearied of, the fish being stupid and perverse, and much given to an infatuated fondness for life ; Joan and Miss Johnstone were so delicate that they could not walk if it was hot or wet ; and Westerham was quite out of the world : there was nothing to do. Cock-fights were rare, and Mrs. Darley had a dislike to such amusements ; so it came to pass one fine day that Amyot discovered that he was a most unfortunate individual, and the same conviction, by a strange coincidence, forced itself upon the minds of most of those with whom he came in contact.



THE RIVER PARENT.

Just at this period, and, to use Miss Johnstone's expression, as if he had been specially commissioned to avert some certainly impending calamity, there arrived at Mrs. Darley's house a most welcome visitor in the form of Arnold Pomfret.

'That dreadful boy entirely deprives me of my self-possession, dear madam,' the poor lady had observed. 'It is most providential that we should be protected by the presence of a gentleman just at this unhappy moment. I shall sleep in peace once more.'

'Tis well,' the old lady replied; 'sleep is a blessed thing, but my grandson shall never disturb my rest; and glad as I am to see my daughter Pomfret's stepson, for I like him, I need no protection from him—nor, I trust, from anyone. And, good Johnstone, I pray you, disturb not yourself for the humours of my grandson: 'tis a lad that lacks occupation; we must find him work to do, and he will be well enough, and all this turmoil will cease.'

Prompted by this desire, the old lady was not long before she suggested to Arnold that, as he had a horse with him, and there was a sturdy old pony in her stable, he would be doing Amyot a kindness if he would take him out riding each day of his stay.

'The boy wants exercise,' she said; adding, in a lower voice, 'and plenty of it; provided thou dost not break any bones for him, I care not how long or how hard thou makest him ride; tire him out for us, good Arnold, and we poor women folk will thank thee; and if thou carest not to ride thy horse to death, take him for a walk, and stride as if for a wager, till he is fain to beg for mercy.'

'Nay, madam; what has the poor lad done to be so served?'

'Nought, nought, friend Arnold; the lad is well enough, only I would fain save him from a fit of the gout, and my good Johnstone from a fit of another sort. But enough of that: thou wilt see for thyself how matters

stand ; and now to other points : how hast decided thine own affairs ? for sure it is high time they should be decided.'

'But too true—it is high time ; and, yet, dear madam, though I blush to say it, my mind is no more made up than when last I saw you. My father still presses me to study law, says he has much interest, and hopes he shall see me a judge one day ; but though I am loath to go against his wishes, as I have often told you, the law has no charms for me.'

'And thine own wishes, Arnold Pomfret ?'

'The young man hesitated ; then, looking full into the kindly face that was turned towards his, and the dark bright eyes that gazed through their long silver lashes at his troubled countenance, he said, with an effort :

'They have not changed, madam ; but the questioning and the doubt remain.'

'The doubt how best to serve thy generation ; whether to hide from thy sight all the evils that make thee miserable, and go and shut thyself up among those thou deemest pure and holy, and spend thy life in prayer ; or whether to plunge into the sea of misery and wickedness and do what thou mayest to check the stream ? Are these thy doubts, Arnold Pomfret ?'

'You have read me truly, dear madam, as indeed you ever do ; and now, what say you ?'

'Thou hast seen the monastery of La Trappe, thou enviest the good monks there ; thou hadst always a hankering after the Church of my ancestors, good Arnold, but yet thou callest thyself a Protestant ?'

Arnold hesitated.

'I scarce know what I am, save, I hope, something like a Christian. I have thought little, too little, I fear, of dogma ; 'tis vice and cruelty and misery I want to combat—only tell me how.'

The old lady's eyes glistened.

'My son, I'll tell thee one thing: soldiers fight best when they see the foe, and I need scarce tell thee which of thy two plans is likest to thy captain's. Art astonished at me, Arnold? Didst think I would like to see thee a monk! Nay, nay, my son, I'm inclined to think I'm a pugnacious old woman, for I dearly love a hand-to-hand fight.'

Arnold smiled.

'It would be well if all had your courage,' he said. 'To tell the truth, I believe it is lack of courage that makes me long for La Trappe. I'll put the thought away, and try to face the other alternative.'

'And, Arnold, one more word.'

'The more the better, madam. I am happy to be accepted as your scholar.'

'Nay, nay; my daughter Pomfret hath made thee more civil than honest; who cares what an old woman says? But, nevertheless, I will speak my mind. Thou hast most surely the weapon of zeal and good-will; and though thou speakest of cowardice, I believe thee brave to thy heart's core. Still, there are other weapons: and ere thou enterest the combat, I would have thee well equipped. See to it, then, that all thine armour is forged in the right armoury, and think not to fight till thou hast well proved thy weapons.'

'I believe I take your meaning, madam; and in this, as in all else, I am your loving pupil.'

'Nay, not mine, Arnold; take counsel with thine own spirit, and with those fitted to instruct, not of an old woman who barely knows enough to serve her own purpose, and maybe instruct a child. But I must to my housekeeping cares; we will talk more another time,' and the old lady bustled away, while her young companion took his hat, and calling Amyot to accompany him, started for a stroll by the river-side.



## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEREIN AMYOT BROUGH BETAKES HIMSELF TO THE  
NORTH.

SMALL apology, it seems to me, is needed for passing over with but brief notice the school career of Amyot Brough ; rather, perhaps, should I apologise for bringing such an unworthy mortal before the world at all. My reasons for so doing, kind reader, may be hard to guess ; yet I would pray your patience, and mayhap, if your long-suffering carry you through my tale, you may find somewhat to love, even in my rough and rugged hero.

We find him, then, once more in the little town of Westerham. It is again the summer holidays—the summer of 1745. Since a certain review on Blackheath the year before, when his old comrade, James Wolfe, appeared in the uniform of an ensign, his military ardour has grown fiercer rather than diminished. The king who won glory for England at Dettingen, made himself by that act worthy of all honour in Amyot's eyes ; while the failure of the Duke of Cumberland at Fontenoy was, he was sure, no fault of the duke's or his troops, but all to be laid at the door of the cowardly Dutch.

All the boy's talk was of sieges and battles. War he must see. He would run away and enlist if his uncle would not use his influence to get him a commission. School ? He had had enough of school. Many lads were officers before they were as old as he ; fifteen was a fair age, and none could say he was not tall for his age and broad in proportion.

Such were his sentiments, and Joan, who was the con-

stant and patient recipient of all his grievances, grew pale and anxious as she listened ; but there came a day when matters arrived at a climax.

Mrs. Darley was away on a visit to her old friend, Mrs. Wolfe, in London. It was a long-promised visit, and should have been made nearly a year before, when Mrs. Wolfe was thrown into great grief by the loss of her younger son, who had sickened and died while away on the Continent. Mrs. Darley had longed to go and console the bereaved mother, but her own health had been delicate, and the visit had been postponed. But at last she had gone.

Amyot had his sister to himself, for Miss Johnstone suffered much from 'the nerves' when he was at home, and seldom left her bed-chamber, and Joan was well content with his company. But it happened one morning, as she was sitting in Miss Johnstone's chamber reading to her, as was her daily custom, her ear, keenly alert for mysterious sounds, heard much opening of cupboards and shutting of box-lids in the chamber overhead—none other than her brother's.

'My poor head !' sighed Miss Johnstone. 'Joan, my love, do you think you have influence enough with your brother to prevail on him to forbear making that horrid noise in his chamber. Perchance if you could devise an errand to the village, he might be induced to undertake it. Do not tell him he troubles me, for that I well know is the very purpose of all this din.'

Joan rose quietly, and ran lightly upstairs. Tory, sitting at Amyot's door, greeted her appearance with a whine, which said plainly enough : 'Yes, there's something wrong going on ; see what you can do to prevent it,' and followed her into the room, where her brother, on his knees before a bureau, was pulling out and examining a quantity of clothing, while a travelling-bag, half packed, lay on the floor beside him.

'Amyot, brother !' Joan exclaimed.

Amyot, startled, sprang to his feet ; then seeing her look of consternation, his face softened, he put his arms round her, and said fondly :

'Sister mine, be not vexed with me. I thought it was a good moment, and that I would not lose the chance.'

'Lose what chance ?'

'Now you are growing pale, and putting on that miserable countenance which I hate to see. Joan, sister, it must be so—I cannot be a boy any longer ; look at me—I must be a man, and do a man's work.'

'A man should be patient and loyal-hearted, and bide his time ; but what will you do—where are you going ?'

'Listen, Joan, you have heard, as I, of the preparations making in France, and how men say the Pretender will shortly land in the North, and that there must the quarrel be fought out. Is not our home on the borders, is it not my place to go and see to our property there ? and who knows but I may find a chance of earning that commission which no one will seek for me. I say it is a lucky moment, and go I will ; my grandmother being away makes it all the easier.'

'Oh ! Amyot, wait but till she returns, and ask her permission ; she will be at home, if all be well, to-morrow.'

'Then will I be gone to-day !'

Joan wrung her small white hands.

'It will grieve her sorely,' she said.

Amyot uttered an impatient imprecation ; then, checking himself, he said, taking Joan's hands in his :

'Sister, I cannot help it, I must go ; my heart is set upon it, and it is surely better to go, my grandmother not knowing, than to resist her will, when once it is spoken.'

'I know not that,' Joan replied ; 'and, moreover, I am not sure that grandmother would forbid your wish.'

'Ay, but I am sure of it ; she will not believe but that I am still a child. Nay, Joan, you must make the best of it ; win her to forgive me if you can—if not, you, at least, will not cease to love me.'

'If I could, methinks, I would,' Joan began more passionately than Amyot thought was possible for her ; then, choking back some tears, she continued indignantly : 'Amyot, brother, you are a coward ; Cousin Arnold would tell you so, I know.'

'Cousin Arnold and I do not always think alike,' Amyot replied, growing cooler as she grew warmer ; 'but, yes, Joan, if you will have it, I am a coward. I like not to vex you, and I do fear to see my grandmother, lest she too should be grieved.'

'It is a poor spirit that will give pain, but cannot bear to see it,' Joan responded ; 'but, Amyot, nought that I say changes your mind in the least ; it is of no use then to talk and vex each other. When are you going, and how ?'

'I shall walk to London, and take the mail—get some lifts on the way, perchance—but I have not too much brass, and must save it. Then we part in peace, Joan ? I knew we two could never, never quarrel.'

'It would be of small avail,' she replied sadly. 'Amyot, I know you dread even to seem to be guided by me, yet this once—There your lips curl at the bare thought of it.'

'Nay, nay, Joan, you fancy ; you have guided me oft, and shall do it oft again, but in this——'

'In this I may say nothing. Well,' she stopped, then added : 'if only grandmother would come home.'

The thought lent a fresh impetus to Amyot's activity, and when the old lady did alight at her own door, her grandson was already many miles away. Mrs. Darley was tired, and anxious to rest, and his absence was for some time unnoticed ; if she thought at all about it, she

probably imagined he was out fishing, his favourite amusement. She had much to tell of her visit, of the news she had gathered during her absence, and it was not till she was in the middle of an account of the illness and death of her young favourite, Mrs. Wolfe's son Edward, that she noticed Joan's woe-begone face, and spied some tears ready to fall.

'What, love, didst thou so much care for thy play-fellow? But it *is sad* to think that the dear lad should have been far away from all he loved, when death came to him.'

It was not of Edward Wolfe that Joan was thinking, or rather, it was far less of him, than of one nearer and dearer; yet she was sufficiently interested in the old lady's tale to say:

'Was he then all alone, madam? I thought for certain his brother would have been with him, so loving as they always were.'

'And I too, Joan, had always thought that the poor lad must have died happy in his brother's arms; but, from what their mother tells me, it seems that James knew not how ill he was, and, moreover, his duty kept him at a distance. He grieved sore, his mother said, and has wrote her a very feeling letter, in which he tells her for her comfort—and it is the best comfort a mother can have—how all spoke well of poor Ned, and bore testimony how he had ever done his duty; and, indeed, they were sons to be proud of, both of them, so dutiful—— But, how is it, sweet one? what ails the child?'

'Nothing, grandmother; I was but troubled to think of Amyot.'

'Of Amyot! What of him, where is he—out fishing, or rat-hunting, or gone to see those fighting-cocks again?'

'Dear grandmother, he grieved to seem undutiful, but he has gone away.'

'Gone away! and whither?—to see your cousin,

Arnold Pomfret? It will do the boy no harm; nay, do not cry, Joan, it would have been more civil had he stayed till my return, and asked my leave, but as my daughter Pomfret says, he has never a very clear sense of what is fitting.'

'But, madam, he has not gone to my cousin's; he has started for the North—for our home at Broughbarrow. I prayed him to wait and ask your leave, but——'

'To Broughbarrow! The lad is mighty strange; what thinks he to do there?'

'He is mad to go a-soldiering, madam, and he thinks that if all we hear is true about the coming of the Pretender, there may be some fighting in Scotland, and he will make his way thither.'

The old lady's pale face flushed with some displeasure as she listened to Joan's tale; but seeing the young girl's distress, she smiled, and patting her cheek fondly, said 'How is it, little one, that thou hast such good sense and discretion, and thy brother none? Tell me, when did this most valiant youth start on his journey, and how did he mean to travel?'

Joan told all she knew, and the old lady paused to consider. At last she spoke. 'Joan, love, thy grandmother is getting old, and makes many mistakes, and she scarce knows what to do for the best; but she thinks it may be well to let the lad be. Thy uncle shall write to the lawyer who has control of the property, and from him we may learn what the boy is doing, and then I will write to the lad himself. And now to thy bed, child, and fret not too much about thy wayward brother; thy aunt would tell thee that crying makes bright eyes dim, and that for no brother in the world shouldst thou spoil thy beauty. I'm of another mind, and think that for no brother in the world shouldst thou mar thy peace, so long as thou hast one Elder Brother to bear thy burdens for thee.'

But though she spoke thus cheerily, and dismissed Joan to bed with a smile as serene as usual, and bade Tory not look so dismal, he would see his young master again, Mrs. Darley did not go to bed herself until she had written the letter which the next morning she despatched to London by a safe hand, to inform Mr. Pomfret what had happened.

'As the boy's guardian, I feel that you ought to know at once,' she wrote; adding, however, her own opinion that it might be well to let the boy have his will, and since he was bent on a military life, steps should be taken to obtain a commission for him.

This letter was brought to Mr. Pomfret as he sat with his wife the next evening, telling her some of the many astounding pieces of news which he had heard during the day. 'The French are certainly getting ready for an invasion, nobody doubts that, my love; it is a well-known fact. Marshal Belleisle says that if his government will give him but five thousand men, he will engage to conquer England in a week.'

'Mercy on us! what impudence!' ejaculated his wife.

'And the King's abroad, and nearly all the troops; true, the Ministers are coming to London, but what can they do? There's a rumour, but whether there's any truth in it I really can't say, that the Pretender has already landed in Scotland, and that he is publishing manifestoes, and that sort of thing, setting a price on his Majesty's head.'

'Better take care of his own,' observed Mrs. Pomfret; 'but what was that letter they brought you just now, Mr. Pomfret?'

'I have not read it; it is from your mother—one of her pleasant little letters, no doubt, but nothing of great importance, I imagine.' He opened and read it, and uttered an exclamation of annoyance, adding 'That boy is a plague!'

'What boy—our nephew! what is it, now? has he begun to make love to the milkmaids, or got married at the Fleet?—he is so tall, I begin to fear all manner of evil doings.'

Her husband read the letter, and folded it up with the observation, 'Your mother is right, as she always is; it will be less trouble to humour than to thwart him; for your father's sake many at headquarters will be disposed to favour the lad—a commission will not be hard to obtain; but for the present Amyot must take care of himself. I am not going into those bleak northern regions again in search of him, but I'll write to the lawyer, as your mother suggests.'

'The boy will come to a bad end; such self-will and undutifulness cannot prosper,' Mrs. Pomfret exclaimed. 'Well, I hope it will be but a bullet on an honourable field of battle, but my mind misgives me it is more likely to be a gibbet by the roadside. Poor little Joan!'

Unmindful of the high destiny thus predicted for him, but yet not altogether easy in his mind, Amyot reached his journey's end.

The coach deposited him before the well-known sign of the Griffin Inn in Penrith town, where all looked much as it had done five years before; in fact, so familiar was every house and shop-front, so unchanged were the faces which gazed at him as he alighted, that he could scarcely believe that he himself was so altered as to be quite unrecognisable.

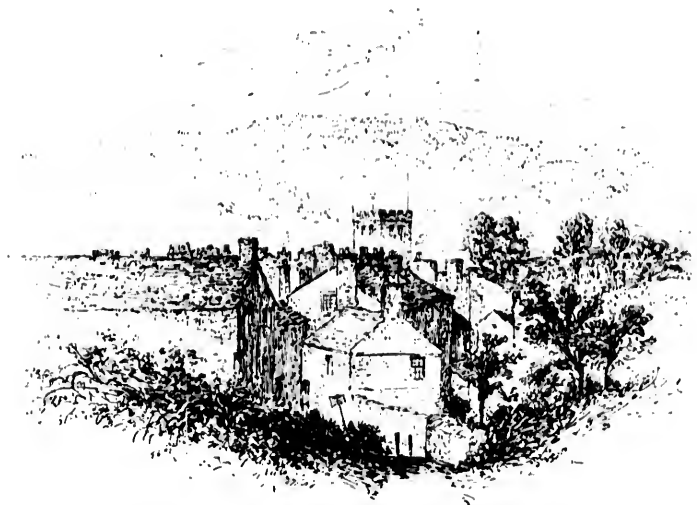
'Lile Amyot Brough, t' cap'n's lad; nay thou'lt niver be he?'

'What, Amyot Brough, o' Broughbarrow? Wull, I niver! Thoo's growed a ter'ble girt fella. Hast cum to see t' land an' farm, an' sich? They'll bee verra pleased ta see ya; go awa' hecam as fast as ya can—Mike he's to heeam an' t' woife tew.'

And his heart warming at the sound of the familiar



brogue, Amyot quickened his steps out of the town towards the old familiar road that led to his home. On the top of the hill he turned and looked back over the town; yes, it was all just as he remembered it—the hill in the distance, with the beacon tower against the sky, the church tower down below, and around it the roofs of the town. He almost wished that he had turned the opposite way, and paid his first visit to Blencathara House. But then he remembered with shame how ill he had kept his



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promise of writing to his old friends there; perhaps they would have forgotten him, and not wish to renew the acquaintance; and for a moment the thought flashed through his mind that he had been rather reckless of his friends' feelings of late, and there might come a day when they would prove equally indifferent to his.

But such unpleasant thoughts took to themselves wings as he stooped his head to pass in at the back-door of his own farm-house. (How strangely low that doorway had

become since last he passed beneath it!) Could such misgivings prevail amid the tumult of wonder and kindly rapture that greeted his appearance? It was long since he had felt so truly at home, and listening to the undisguised admiration which his growth and general improvement excited, receiving the rough but deferential service of his childhood's friends, Amyot's spirits rose, and he went to rest that night in the best bed-chamber in the house, in a state of perfect intoxication of self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction.

## CHAPTER IX.

### REBEL OR NO?

'AND my old schoolfellows—Lance, Jasper, and Percy all are gone? Truly, I thought the house was strangely quiet when I entered, but I little dreamed of this.'

It was Amyot who spoke, standing in the parlour at Blencathara House, the mistress of which was busy with a bowl of water washing some choice china, which never passed through a maid-servant's hands. She had greeted her visitor with some ceremony, which recalled to his mind the misgivings which had troubled it the night before. He thought she was reproaching him for forgetfulness and neglect; and conscious that he was far from guiltless, he felt abashed in her presence. For once, too, he regretted that he had grown so tall, and wished that Mrs. Kirkbride would treat him like a boy once more. Her lack of friendliness made him feel so awkward, while he could not but wish to look his best to the laughing girl who, while helping mother, was watching his every movement, and finding much sport in his awkwardness.

'Yes; they are away on business, I may say,' Mrs. Kirkbride replied, with some appearance of mystery, and again devoted all her attention to a delicate cup, which she handled with the tips of her fingers.

'Away, not dead,' Primrose added. 'Master Brough spoke in such a grievous tone, that he appeared to think they were dead and gone. They are well—at least they were a week ago.'

'And you, Miss Primrose, are you well, too? You are marvellously grown, it seems to me!'

'Nay! From such a height as yours I marvel you can see me. I must e'en mount upon a chair if I am to pay you any compliments!' And she laughed the silvery laugh that Amyot remembered to have heard when he was ill so many years before.

'Primrose! your tongue runs over-fast, child. Carry these cups to the press, and place them carefully on the topmost shelf, and then go and help Maggie with her seam.'

The girl obeyed with no sign of annoyance at being thus summarily dismissed, and Amyot was left alone with the somewhat stern old lady, who, laying down the cloth she held, placed herself in a high-backed chair, and with some ceremony begged him also to be seated, remarking, 'I have a thing to say to you.'

He bowed—a bow that would have made Mrs. Pomfret shriek, but which he imagined was a triumph of elegance.

Mrs. Kirkbride was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to notice it, and, having turned to ascertain that the door was shut, began to speak in an undertone.

'You wish to know where my sons are at the present time?'

'Nay, madam; I would not be so curious.'

Perhaps not. It is not your will to be curious, yet in this matter you are. I see it in your face, and I blame you not—youth is ever inquisitive. Now, as I do not wish that my matters should be talked about, and that Amyot Brough, or any other person, should go about the town saying, 'Mrs. Kirkbride's sons have suddenly left the place,' I am minded to give you my confidence; believing that you, Amyot Brough, have enough honesty to hold that sacred which is told you in trust.'

'Indeed, madam, you may rely upon me.'

'It is well. Then, Amyot, in brief, my sons have gone to serve their King.'

'Joined the army, you mean, Mrs. Kirkbride. I envy them their luck! It is just what I would be doing, but I cannot see my way.'

'You have but half read my meaning. They have gone to the North to seek the Prince and offer him three loyal hearts, and any service he may command of them.'

'The Prince, madam! how, the Prince of Wales is not in the North, and his Majesty is abroad and not yet returned; at least, so I believe.'

'The Prince landed in the Highlands on the twenty-fifth of last month. When you left London it is possible the news may not have been known. Ha! he will steal a march upon them, and who knows but he will be in London before that German Elector has heard of his coming.'

'Madam, you amaze me,' was all that Amyot could say.

'Do I? Well, take time to breathe, my poor boy! If you want service, and the Elector needs you not, Prince Charlie will find you work and kindly smiles, and riches and honour, if God prosper his cause, which I doubt not He will, seeing it is the cause of truth and right.'

But Amyot only gasped.

There was a long silence. At last Mrs. Kirkbride spoke again, and this time on indifferent subjects: asked questions concerning his journey, his sister and his school life, to all of which Amyot answered as if in a dream. Then, suddenly remembering some domestic duty, his hostess hurried away, and a few minutes afterwards the door was gently opened, and Primrose came in.

'My mother hopes you will take your dinner with us,' she said. Then, without waiting for a reply, she continued hurriedly, 'I know what she has said to you. Master Amyot Brough, I pray you tell me what you have replied to her. She says there will be fighting, and I like not to think of you on the wrong side. It is hard to think that you and your old friends may cross swords, or,

worse, may die by each other's hands. It is foolish of me to fancy that such things may happen! But I suppose they have in this quiet land ere now.'

'I scarce think there is like to be much fighting,' Amyot replied.

A few days before he had aspired to no greater happiness than to find himself on a battlefield; but the conversation of the last half-hour had changed his views, and his mind was such a turmoil of conflicting ideas that he scarcely knew what he was saying.

'And yet'—Primrose said doubtfully—'a great kingdom can scarce be won without much bloodshed; unless—oh! I pray that it may be so—the hearts of the people return to their rightful King.'

'I can never call him King whose father abandoned his crown without striking one good blow for it, and who showed himself near as fainthearted when he came over thirty years ago. Such men were never meant to be Kings of England, Miss Primrose. You cannot think they were.'

'Nay, if you look so fierce and speak so disdainfully I shall run away. I fear you, now you are grown so marvellous tall, and wear such a fine cut coat. But you will eat your dinner with us, and give me time to hear about my dear friend Tory and all your travels. Nay, do not hesitate—we will not poison you; at least, not until we are quite sure that you may not be won to the rightful cause.'

'Be quite sure of that, Miss Primrose. I am King George's true man, and will serve none else.'

'Nay, nay'—she stopped her ears—'I am deaf. I will hear no treason. I go to tell my mother that a fat duck and green peas may make a loyal man of you yet. Contradict me if you dare.'

And she danced away, singing 'The King shall enjoy his own again,' leaving Amyot in great dismay and perplexity.

It was rather a silent meal that followed, and Amyot was glad when it was over, and he could escape to think over what he had heard. The Pretender had really landed. Rumours of such an event had reached him on his journey, but this was the first certain information he had had. He wondered much whether any considerable number of men had joined his standard, and especially whether others beside the Kirkbrides had gone from Penrith.

He determined to step into the Griffin and other inns of the town on his way back, and pick up all the information that he could, and judge for himself whether the feeling of the townspeople inclined in any degree to the Jacobite cause. This he did, and found that if he wanted news he could have enough and to spare, but as abundance is often more embarrassing than scarcity, so he was soon forced to admit to himself that he should go home little wiser than when he set out, except in the one important fact which he had learned from Mrs. Kirkbride.

'Ya wants ta knaa what's gaan on ; what's dewan awa to Noarth,' said the landlord of the Griffin. 'Wull I beant sewer whedther theears any feytin theear as yet ; bet I've heeard tell as theears no gitten aboot in t' sea, it's that full o' ships a bringin' forran sodgers frae t' Continent.'

'Neea doot,' added a bystander, 'thae idle fellars hoop t' git sumat t' dew, or leastways t' git paid fur dewing nowt.'

'I heeard tell,' said another, 'as ta rebels wur coomin reet doon ower to Fells a-burnin' ivverything an' a-murderin' all that coom in t' roaad. Thousan's an' thousan's on 'em.'

'Na, na ; thae'll be reet awa in Scotland yet. Mappen it'll be a gae bit afoor thae cross t' boorder. Penrith toon will be true ta King Geoarge, I rakkan.'

'I's none sae sewer aboot that—wha knaa's bet theear rebels amoong us?'

The speaker looked round suspiciously, and valiantly

challenged anyone who was not satisfied with King George to come out and fight out the question in the backyard ; but no one stirred.

'Theear be a bodderin' kind o' chap as thae call Mounseer Saxe, a chap o' mickle prate, wha ses as he's coomin' ta dew mighty girt things, he an' ten thousan' meddlin' forraneers. Has t' heeard whedthter he's loike t' be coomin' this roaad ?'

'Na, na ; I rakkan thae forraneers wull na fash theersells about us ; hawiver, thae be alus fratchin' amoong theersells. Mappen thae've na quite fergittin t' aald Dook o' Marlboro' an t' lesson he giv' 'em.'

'Ay, ay, pity he's deed an' gaau.'

And thus they discoursed up and down the town, till Amyot, tired of listening, went home to talk to Mike and Deborah, and to sit in his father's old elbow-chair, and wonder what he had best do.

And this wondering continued for many days, until he could not help admitting to himself that he wished himself back again under guardianship and tutelage, since to live an idle life at Broughbarrow had been no part of his dream when he left Westerham ; yet how to find work to do, or whether now to wish for service, he could scarce decide.

The northern towns, lying among their mountains, and hidden away, as it were, from the world's bustle and notice, were not very bustling places in those days, whatever people may think of them now. The people who lived in Penrith and its neighbourhood were addicted to much consideration before they took any important step, and Amyot soon fell into their ways again ; and so the days drifted on, and no decision was made. His dream of fighting the rebels side by side with his old friends and schoolfellows had been rudely disturbed, and it was not easy to reconcile himself to the idea of fighting against them.

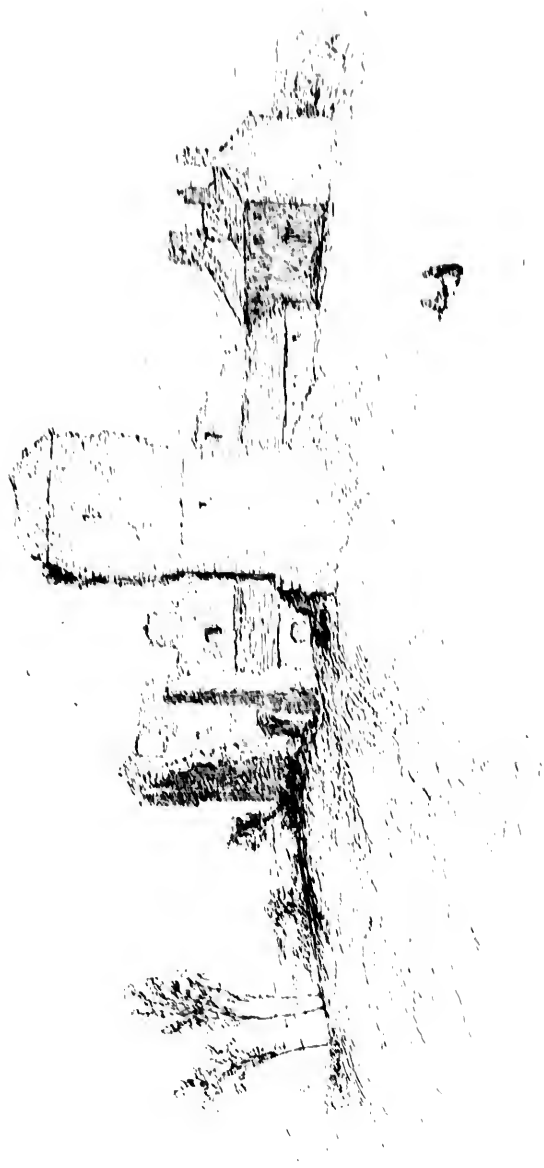


Mike and Deborah could not tolerate the notion of his going soldiering; what call had he to go and get killed for any man, be he called George or James? It made little difference, in their opinion, which was King, and certainly their young master had nought to do with any man's quarrels. They entirely approved of his coming home, and had no doubt at all that he must have found 'them southern folk' most feckless and ill to do with; but now that he had come home, what better could he do than bide there? To go farther northwards would be a senseless move, since everyone knew that across the border lived a set of people little better than savages, with bare legs and a most uncommon kind of dress, not to mention a barbarous style of language, and a mighty fine opinion of themselves. Michael had seen one of these savages come riding into Penrith on the top of the coach, and could never forget his huge stature and horrid dress.

So it was of little use to consult him, and the days slipped by, one after another, wiled by continual quest of news, and discussion as to the turn that events were likely to take. August had passed away, September was far advanced, and still Amyot was living idly at Broughbarrow, when, sauntering down the hill, by the ruins of Penrith Castle, one early morning, he noticed an unusual stir in the quiet little town. Old people who had not left their doors for many years were making what speed they could to follow their more active neighbours to the market-place, bare-legged children were running and shouting, men looked eager and excited, women awe-struck and alarmed.

'What is it?' Amyot eagerly inquired, his heart ready to hail any news with delight, so tired was he of waiting for the something to happen which was to decide his fate.

'A great victory, nay, I mean a great defeat,' was the reply of a young man, who had just dismounted from a



SEQUOIA CALIFORNIA

worn and paled steed. 'Your pardon, friends, but my horse and I have come many a weary mile, and I scarce know what I say, while he, poor beast, scarce knows how to stand; but yonder fellow, who rode with me, can tell you more, for he was in the fight, which good luck, I grieve to say, was not mine.'

He extricated himself from the mob, which was but collecting round him, and repeating: 'Ask yonder fellow in the red coat,' he turned his horse's head down a by street, and, walking by the poor stumbling beast, sought a less frequented part of the town, followed by none but Amyot, who with some indistinct notion of recognition, some floating idea of having seen the man before, resolved to keep him in sight, and see whither he was going.

So slowly did the weary horse proceed, that it was not easy to loiter in the rear, and before long, the man seemed to have an uneasy consciousness that he was being watched, and after glancing furtively over his shoulder at his pursuer, turned sharply round and said:

'I pray you, young man, have you any business with me, that you thus dog my footsteps? if you have, speak out, and pass on!'

He looked full at Amyot as he spoke. Amyot returned the stare, but, at the same moment, recognised the weary traveller as none other than his old schoolfellow, Lance Kirkbride. The recognition was mutual.

'Amyot Brough! Lance Kirkbride!' passed their lips at the same moment; and then the two young men stood still and looked hard into each other's faces.

'You here, Brough?' said Lance, after a few minutes' silence; 'who would have thought of this? What brought you to the North again?'

'Never mind me—what's the news? Is it a victory or a defeat?'

'Both,' and Lance smiled triumphantly.

'You don't mean to say,' Amyot exclaimed in amaze-

ment, 'that the Pretender has fought and won the day?'

'I said nothing of the sort ; but so it is—the Elector's troops fled without striking a blow. Old Cope, who commanded them, is off, I know not and I care not whither. What, Brough, art going to swoon?—is it joy or fear?'

'Where was the fight?'

'Not very far from Edinburgh, at Prestonpans ; the Prince took General Cope entirely by surprise, and the world too, I fancy. Did you expect such news?—not if your face tells me the truth!'

'I never was more surprised in my life,' Amyot confessed ; 'but you, Lance—have you left the rebels, that you are here just when fighting is in fashion?'

'Have me hanged for a rebel if I have!' Lance replied ; 'but have a care how you talk, Brough ; keep a civil tongue in your head, or I may be minded to rid his Highness of one disloyal subject, though he were a friend of my own in days gone by.'

'Perhaps it were well to part ere we come to blows,' Amyot replied, 'for neither of us will brook the name of rebel—no, not even if spoken in jest.'

'Then we'll agree to drop it from our conversation ; neither of us being on duty here, we may bear each other company and do no harm. Come with me to see my mother—it is with her I have business, a matter of a certain sum of money, and then I do but stay to rest my poor beast, and be gone. Come with me, and drink one glass to bonnie Prince Charlie ; none will be the wiser, and none the worse.'

'I'll have none of your Prince Charlie,' Amyot replied doggedly ; but he walked by his old friend's side notwithstanding, and even let him talk of the victory without giving vent to the rage and disappointment that were choking him.

'I had better not go any farther,' he said, as they reached Blencathara House; 'their exultation will put me beside myself.'

'Nonsense, don't be a fool—are we not old friends; why should a change of kings divide us? Ah! there's Primrose—my bonnie bride that's to be—and the old lady peeping between the curtains to see who's coming. It's a robber, mother mine, to steal thy hoarded gold, but well I know thou'lt give it with a glad heart for thy King.'

It was with much reluctance, and a most downcast mien, that Amyot suffered himself to be drawn into the rejoicing group, where he stood scowling and muttering: 'Fool that I was to come—fool that I am to stay!—why don't I go?' and yet he lingered. In fact, he was unwilling to miss the chance of hearing any part of Lance's tale, though each sentence made him more savage than the last. Confident assurance that all would go well, that victory would follow victory, that clan after clan would come to tender homage, that the nobles would flock to the victorious Prince, that a post or two would bring the news of King George's flight, so that when Christmas came the toasts would all be for the restored King James—this was the strain poured forth by the jubilant household, while the bringer of good tidings was feasted and made much of, as if the victory had been won by his unaided arm.

Primrose's bright eyes danced with glee as she listened to Lance's tale, then, glancing to the dejected and sullen face of their guest, as he stood leaning, with half-averted face, against the window frame, listening in gloomy silence to the never-ceasing flow of question and answer, but taking no part in the talk, she observed roguishly:

'Master Brough has grown as grave as he is tall; they have overloaded him with learning at his Greenwich school; it terrifies me much to be in his company. Brother Lance, I pray you contrive some grave and thoughtful speech, or he will despise us one and all.'

'Amyot Brough is a good fellow—you shall not make sport of him. Remember, Primrose, how you once said he saved your life.'

'Aye, and so did you, brother Lance; but Master Brough, I beg you, forget your woes; who knows but we shall be vanquished to-morrow? Let's dance and sing while we may.'

'With all my heart, only ask me not to join you.'

'Aye, but I do; think you that your King, worthy man as he may be for aught we know, bears such a woe-begone face as you? Pluck up your courage, Master Brough, for after all, 'tis the good cause that has conquered, and you can't deny it!'

'Hush! hush, Primrose! deny it he can and will, and I promised we would not forget we were old friends. Mother, I have feasted like a king; now for some discourse. What! Amyot, wilt begone? Well, maybe 'tis best; we'll meet again in less troublous times.'

They shook hands, and Amyot left the house and walked quickly away. Going home, he heard many variations of his friend's tale, but the substance was always the same. The Pretender had made a sudden attack on General Cope's army, his dragoons had fled almost without striking a blow, the victory had been complete. The Pretender was quartered in Edinburgh, and growing every day more popular there.

'He'll be in England in a few days,' he said to himself; 'in London in about a fortnight. What will be the end of it all? My uncle, aunt, Joan, my grandmother; what will they all do?'

## CHAPTER X.

### CONCERNING THE AFFAIR OF CLIFTON BRIDGE.

'NAV, Mike, why should you come? Deborah, keep him at home; these cold days make his rheumatics worse, and if I can't rest at home that is no reason why he should not bide in his elbow-chair after the day's work is over.'

'If ya wud bide ya'sell, mappen es hed dew t' seam,' was all Deborah's reply.

But the old man shook his head, and with much lamenting concerning these bothersome rebels, he persisted in dragging his stiff limbs along the road and over the fields, wherever it pleased his young master to roam.

'I would really be easier if you would go home, Mike,' Amyot urged more than once. But the faithful old fellow was obstinate, and only replied:

'I wud loike ta see es weel es ya; bet, hawiver, thae wars meek a terble girt bodderation, an' foak meek mickle prate about things es thae knaa nowt about. What dusta think it matters whedther t' King be caed George or Jëames—'tis a' t' seam ta me.'

This, a question which had already been discussed until Amyot was quite weary of it, failed to excite him to any reply, and, with his ear strained to catch every distant sound, he continued to trudge along in silence, until Yanwath Hall was close at hand; and there he stood still to listen and allow Mike, who walked very feebly, to overtake him.

'The roads are awful and the sun is setting. Ask leave



YANWATH HALL.



to rest in the kitchen until I come back, Mike ; I will but go as far as Clifton Bridge, and then return.'

'Nay, nay ; I's gaan wi' ya. Bet tell ma, what dusta think es ta'll see?'

'Who can tell?—most likely nothing. Nevertheless, as all say the Pretender is retreating and the Duke is close behind, and neither army can be far from here, there's no doubt but I may see or hear something.'

'Weel, ga an ; I canna keep pace wi' ya, bet I'll folla an' keep an eye an ya.'

Glad to be in some degree free, Amyot quickened his pace ; but he had not gone very far when he stopped suddenly, and, stooping down, laid his ear close to the ground to listen. What was it ? Only the moaning of the winter wind in the leafless trees, or maybe the complaining of some forlorn ghost, wandering over the moor, or the water rushing over the rocks in the river below ? All these suggestions occurred to him, but his imagination—keenly awake to explain the sounds as his boyish love of adventure desired—scribed it to far different causes. It was, he felt convinced, the tramp of feet, the movement of a vast body of men—and that near at hand. Was it the rebel army, or that of the royal Duke ?

Looking back, Amyot saw that the sounds which he had heard, had also reached the comparatively dull ear of old Mike, who, while earnestly signalling to him to go no farther, was making great efforts to overtake him.

It would have been too cruel to disappoint him, so, rather reluctantly, the lad turned back, and in a few minutes the two stood together consulting what they had best do.

'Ya'll be fer feightin' wi' oor fists, I rakkan,' Mike said ; 'but mine are good fer nowt, an soa I perpose es we lig a lile bit amang these yer bits o' brushwood an' listen ta 'em es they ga alang. If it sud be that Pertender chap, I'm no fer sayin' bet ya might heave a bit o' a

steean at his heead. I's varra sartan we'd dew jist es weel widout un.'

Amyot laughed, and preferring to stay with his old friend, made no objection to concealing himself among the low bushes by the river-side, and there they remained for more than half-an-hour before any of the advancing host made their appearance. Travel-worn, bespattered with mud, weary and dejected, appeared most of the men, and the officers looked even more dispirited. It needed no great discernment to discover that hope and many of these brave fellows had parted company, while on many a brow hung the cloud of bitter resentment and savage despair.

The main part of the army were on foot, and as troop after troop passed, struggling through the mud, keeping but poor order, cursing the cold, the wet, and their leaders, Mike whispered to his young master :

'They bea a daft lot a chaps. What fer cuddent they bide at heeäm? Rakkan they'll ha' had theear fill o' travellin', an sarve 'em reet. Better 've beean mindin' theear ploughs. Hoo many think ya ther beä?'

But Amyot had no idea, and the old man rambled on :

'When I teeaks to feightin' I'll bea an officier an' ride ma nag, not ga trampin' throo t' mood. Bet look ya, Master Amyot! I rakkan that 'un bea t' chap es had thowt to meeak his fooartan, that yalla-haired yoongster wi' t' heead a hangin' doon a'most es if he wer gaan ta be hanget.'

Amyot looked, and wondered if Mike was right ; but the Pretender, if this were he, was already past, and still the stream of men continued their weary, toilsome march towards Penrith.

At length there was a pause. Amyot had heard a soldier say, as he passed, that the artillery was still far behind, and that the Prince would halt in Penrith until such time as Lord George Murray, in command of it,

should overtake him. In Penrith, therefore, they would lodge, and perhaps in the neighbourhood ; and full of this thought, and fearing that in their absence Deborah might be alarmed by a party claiming shelter at Broughbarrow, Amyot and Mike lost no time in scrambling forth from their hiding-place, and making their way by short cuts homewards.

All was, however, peaceful at Broughbarrow ; and to the question asked by Deborah and the maids—what should they do if the soldiers came?—Amyot and Mike replied :

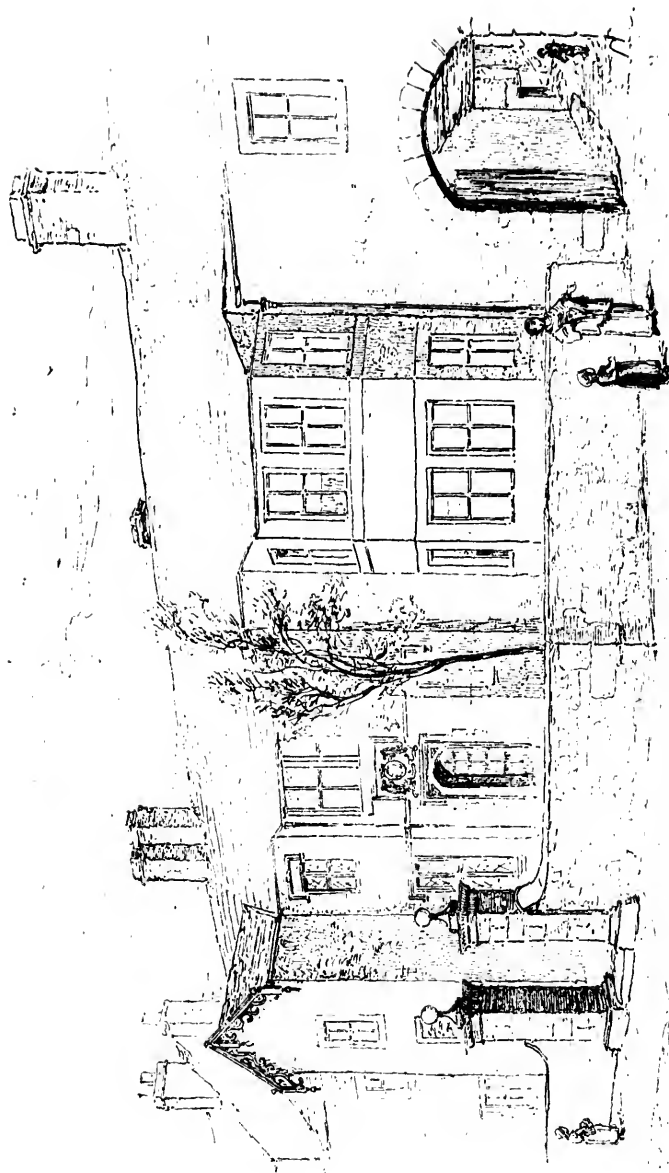
‘We’ll all go right off to bed, and if anyone knocks we’ll take no notice—no, not unless they set the house on fire.’

‘Which mappen they wull,’ Deborah replied.

But, as she had no better suggestion to offer, she was compelled to adopt that already made, and in spite of her misgivings the household was left in peace until the morning.

There was much sighing and lamenting on the part of the worthy couple, Mike and Deborah, over the restlessness of their young master : off to the town he must be as soon as he had got his porridge, though sure it must be a most unsafe place, with all those soldiers about, whose guns might go off any minute ; not to speak of their wicked ways, which everyone knew were too awful to be named by honest folk. But he was not to be controlled : he would see and know everything, and the morning was passed by him loitering about the market-place and Dockwray Hall, watching the rebel officers as they paced the town, and went in and out, for Amyot hoped to have another sight of the Prince, whose adventures had made it quite allowable even for those who cared nothing for him to stare at him.

Amyot half-expected and half-feared lest he should meet Primrose Kirkbride. She could not now triumph over



DOCKWRAY HALL, PENRITH.

him, or speak with sure confidence of the good cause which must succeed ; the retreat from Derby would have taught her not to be too confident, and remembering this, Amyot thought it might be more possible to feel at ease with her than when last they had met ; but, notwithstanding all that had passed, Amyot knew well that she would hope on to the very end, and that her disappointment would be very painful to witness.

But he did not meet her ; and as the day wore on, he bethought him that in all probability other regiments would be coming in, convoying the artillery, and once more he betook himself to the high-road and the adjacent fields, for the paraphernalia of war was growing more and more attractive to him, and the quiet of home more and more distasteful.

As he sauntered along and drew near Clifton Moor, he found that a body of the rebel troops, under the command of a French officer, was waiting there the arrival of Lord George Murray, in order to be in readiness to render aid if necessary.

The sun was setting when the first lines of the looked-for regiments appeared on the dark edge of the moor ; the red glow in the sky lit up the scene, but a thick cloud of dust surrounded them, and to the inexperienced eye of Amyot all seemed in confusion.

Suddenly, from another quarter of the moor, appeared another host, and these were plainly cavalry in rapid motion, dashing at full speed towards the bridge, with evident intent to take possession of it ; while the Highland regiment, which had been awaiting the coming of their artillery, advanced to meet Lord George's force—and thus united, the rebel army came on to dispute the passage of the bridge.

There was a brisk discharge of musketry, then a hand-to-hand encounter with swords and bayonets, and Amyot, from his post of observation among some furze-

bushes, rejoiced to think that by good luck he had chanced to be spectator of a real battle.

That the dust and smoke greatly hindered his view he cared but little : he could see the tumult, could hear the din and battle-cries, the English kettle drums and trumpets, the pibroch's shrill screech, could feel his heart thump against his ribs as now the Highlanders, and then the Royalists, and now again the Highlanders, seemed to prevail.

But the night was fast closing in, the darkness coming on a pace, and with the shades of night came disorder and confusion ; the English dragoons turned and took to flight across the open moor : their opponents held the bridge.

Suddenly the moon shone out, and the discomfited dragoons perceiving how small was the number of their assailants, rallied, and being reinforced by two fresh squadrons, tried to recover their lost ground ; but again the light failed them ; the tide of battle slackened, and though for some time longer Amyot could hear the sound of strife, the rush of flying horses, the cries of the wounded, the words of command, the leaders cheering on their men, before long the tumult lessened, the darkness settled down on the moor, and Amyot discovered that it was bitterly cold, and that he had best seek his home.

As far as he could guess, the Highlanders had returned to Penrith, the Royal troops had retreated to the edge of the moor, falling back on their main body ; but as he crept along under the hedges, he was again and again passed by rushing horsemen, or forced to hold himself still and quiet, while troops of straggling foot-soldiers marched by. Once he stumbled over a motionless body, lying with white face upturned to the skies ; a moonbeam lit it up, and Amyot shuddered as he gazed. The soul had parted in agony, and the pale countenance was still convulsed, the hands were clenched. Then he heard a horse struggling and

writhing in pain, snorting and kicking, and turning aside, lest the animal's feet should strike him, he heard another sound, this time a human voice, which was giving vent to a cry of pain.

'One of those Highlanders,' he thought. 'Englishmen don't cry like women; but I've heard that those savages cannot bear pain: well, I suppose they'll send somebody to look after their wounded—at least, I can do nothing.'

And as, in truth, the wounded horse's struggles, and the wounded soldier's moan, were causing his heart to swell unpleasantly, he was hastening to get away from the place, when a voice cried:

'Here, for the love of heaven, stop a moment!'

Glancing fearfully at the dead soldier's face, Amyot did stop, hoping that the wounded man, wherever he might be, would not, at least, look like him. Then he groped about in the dark, over mounds of earth and stunted bushes, until he fancied he could discern something like an arm which beckoned to him. Picking his way carefully, he was soon beside the wounded man, who, conscious of his approach, said:

'Stranger, will you give me a hand to recover my footing? I am sore hurt; yet, maybe, if once on my feet, I might be able to find my way to some inn; for to lie here in the cold will certainly make an end of me before morning.'

'Where are you hurt?' Amyot inquired, stooping down, and trying to pass his arm under him to help him to rise.

'I scarce know. A sword cut here, a bullet there, and my arm broken in falling from my horse, yet my legs, I think, are sound, if once I could struggle to my feet; nay, not so,' as Amyot used some force. 'I cannot bear that; it must be slowly. I feel strangely numb and stiff.' He groaned heavily, and his voice was choked and

thick as he said : 'Maybe 'tis of no use—I am worse than I thought.'

'I am very strong,' Amyot replied ; 'let me try to raise you slowly and gradually ; place your uninjured arm around my neck.'

The sufferer obeyed, murmuring to himself :

'I've done it before now ;' but to this remark Amyot paid no heed, being wholly engrossed with the effort he was making.

It succeeded ; the wounded man recovered his feet, but leaned heavily on Amyot, who said kindly :

'I fear you can never walk as far as the inn, and I could not quite carry you ; if you could make shift to walk a short distance, I could leave you sitting under the hedge, and run to my house, and fetch some strong lads to carry you there.'

'No, no,' said the other hurriedly ; 'that must never be—rather would I die here !'

'But why ?' Amyot inquired wonderingly. 'Count my house an inn, if so you will ; I did but name it because it is nearer by a mile than the nearest inn where you could be tended as you need.'

'But you are rash,' the poor fellow replied while he moaned with pain. 'I am one of the Prince's men, and to cut the matter short, you, Amyot Brough, will never house a rebel.'

Amyot started back, and had almost let the wounded man fall in his astonishment ; then, remembering himself, he said :

'If that rebel is Lance Kirkbride, I cannot leave him here unaided ; and, indeed, Lance, for one night there can be little risk. Come, say no more : try to walk, and let it be as I have said.'

'It were better to leave me here,' Lance replied ; but he did not resist further. With many a heavy groan and exclamation of pain, he struggled on stumbling in the



darkness, tripping over roots of trees, clinging to Amyot in desperation, until the latter was fain almost to carry him, so slow was their progress.

There was much shaking of heads in the kitchen of the farm that night, and some subdued grumbling. The young master's doings were enough to break the hearts of all quiet folk, who liked to have things go on in their ordinary course, and hated being mixed up with battles, wounded men, and such-like. Was this all the good he had done by running up and down the country all day, to go for to pick up a dirty, muddy, quarrelsome fellow of a soldier, and bring him home and put him into the best bed in the house? Folks should reap as they sowed; doubtless this fellow had done his best to break other folks' arms—it was but right he should be served the same; so Mike said, and so Deborah thought. But, happily for poor Lance, before an hour had passed, her woman's heart had softened towards him, and she had helped Obed, the old shepherd, to set his broken arm with as tender and motherly a touch, as if he had been Amyot himself, and even condescended to say that he had behaved under the operation almost like a Christian, and very nearly as well as a dog.

It was not until the morning that she discovered that the injured man was one of Mistress Kirkbride's sons, who had turned rebel, and then her consternation was extreme.

'Master Amyot, what wasta thinkin' of, ta ga an' fetch yan girt rebel heeäm? Whaariver sall we put un if any o' t' King's fooak come nigh t' place? He's ower big ta hide, an' if they light on un, they'll be fer larnin' un t' mind hes aan wark, an' let other fooak's aleean.'

'Perhaps the King's folk won't come nigh the place,' Amyot replied; but though he put a bold face on it, the same difficulty was pressing sore upon him, and he could see no way out of it.

Lance, too, had thought of it, and was urgent to be allowed to get up and depart ; but, much as she dreaded the consequences of his presence in the house, old Deborah could not but see that he was even less fit to move than the night before : his cheeks were burning with fever, his wounds were painful in the extreme.

'Nay, nay, bide quiet,' she replied to all his entreaties ; 't' hoose is weel out o' t' road, an' if summun cooms peerin' about we'll meeak oop some tale t' tell un ; bide quiet, an' dunna fret t' sell ;' and quieting him, she grew quite herself.

Not so Amyot : he roamed about like an uneasy ghost ; and it was not till the afternoon that he began to feel secure against unpleasant intrusion, and able to laugh at Lance's fears.

Then, as all seemed quiet, and no travellers could be seen on the high-road, he ventured to leave the house, and walk into Penrith to give Mrs. Kirkbride news of her son. Deborah bade him not be absent long, and enjoined him to tell the good lady that she need not come to Broughbarrow, since one rebel was as many as she could do with—more would perchance bring the roof about their ears. This errand Amyot performed with all the speed he might, but darkness had set in before he reached home again. It seemed to him, as he approached the farm on his return, that Mike and Deborah must be making more merry than was their wont. Through the kitchen window he caught sight of a roaring fire blazing in the hearth, and as he drew near he heard a hoarse voice trolling forth an ale-house song. 'Lance in delirium, or Mike got drunk,' was his first thought—his second, one of much more real alarm, which made him hasten his steps, and brought him to the door with rapid strides. He lifted the latch hastily, and found his fears most fully realised ; a lively scene was before him : half a dozen soldiers of the Royal army were seated round the fire,

their arms and caps on the floor, while Deborah with her frying-pan, and Mike with a side of bacon, were busily engaged in preparing their supper. The parlour-door stood ajar, but that it was also occupied, Amyot saw at a glance. Three tall officers were lounging around the fire, which they had caused to be lighted, while one of the lasses was busy spreading the table for their repast.

'T' young maister,' Mike observed, as Amyot entered and stood silent with amazement, gazing at the scene before him; the soldiers looked at him carelessly, but one of the officers, perceiving him from the inner room, came forward, and said courteously enough:

'We have taken leave in your absence, young gentleman, to seek lodgings here, for one night only; you are, I hear, a loyal subject of his Majesty's, and will, we hope, esteem it an honour to lodge his soldiers.'

Amyot bowed: 'Sir, my house is at your service, but I fear the lodging is scarce sufficient.'

'Oh! for that matter, the men are well enough where they are: your housekeeper has found us excellent quarters; we shall be lodged far better than most of our comrades.'

Amyot bowed again, feeling too uneasy to enter into much conversation, and was sitting down wearily, when Deborah, contriving to pass near him, whispered:

'Hoot, then, all's reet aboot yan chap, we've sided un oop;' adding aloud, 'T' bacon an' eggs is jest ready; ga in an' tak yer mecal wi' t' gentlemen in t' parlour an' lee un see es ya maister an' nowt else.'

It was not easy for Amyot to stifle his anxiety and curiosity sufficiently to do the honours of his house with perfect ease and equanimity; nevertheless, as there was some passable wine still remaining in the house, laid up there in the captain's time, his guests expressed themselves entirely satisfied with their entertainment, and gave their host much information as to the progress of the rebellion, their rapid march in pursuit of the Pre-

tender's army, and their expectations of seeing a speedy end to the whole affair. All would go well now the Duke had taken the command—the men would fight for him; there would be no more blundering, no more Prestonpans muddles; the Scotch would be taught loyalty at the sword's point. Carlisle, too, must learn a lesson—and much more to the same effect.

Amyot would have been in high spirits had not anxiety for Lance been the most pressing subject on his mind, and when he found that Mike was actually leading the officers to the very room where, in the afternoon, he had left his friend in bed, his wonderment could scarcely be concealed. On pretence of seeing to the welfare of an ailing horse, he called Mike to come with him to the stable, and when fairly out of all possibility of being overheard, he eagerly inquired what they had done with Lance.

'Na, then, Deborah, she telt ma niver t' let ya knaa. Them es knaas nowt can tell nowt, ses she, an' I'm t' secam way o' thinkin' masell.'

'But, Mike, you must tell me. I cannot rest without knowing; besides, I want to see him. I told his mother he should be well cared for; therefore I must see that he's well and comfortable.'

'Deborah 'll see t' un her aan sell; he's all reet, I tell ya; bet ya'll no see un till we're clear of them cattle,' pointing with his thumb to the kitchen, where the soldiers were already sound asleep. 'Please God, thear Dook wull sune want 'em, fer it's what we dussent. They've almost itten oop a side o' beacon an' eggs an' butter an' sich, an' what fer?—jest t' meeak theirsells meear crabbt an' cankert, an' boddersome than ivver. Sich mak o' foak dunna soot ma nowadays.'

And as Amyot could wring nothing more from him, he was forced to go to bed in utter ignorance of his friend's whereabouts, though pretty well convinced that his hiding-place was not far distant.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OF EVENTS AFTER CULLODEN.

THE dark cold days of that cold winter were coming to an end ; the grass was growing greener, the daffodils were again brightening the earth, and the primroses beginning to peep forth, and with returning spring young hearts must perforce wake to new life and happiness. It had been a very long dark winter at Blencathara House. Primrose could never remember any winter when everything had seemed so gloomy, and many was the day when she had accused herself of having been cross and troublesome, since, had this not been the case, mother would surely not have spoken so sharply to her. Primrose did not know how often suspense and anxiety makes the voice peevish, and the brow contract into a frown, or she would have comprehended why she found mother so hard to please, when week after week passed, and no news came to her from the north. True, there had been some bright days in January, after word had come of Prince Charlie's victory over General Hawley at Falkirk ; but that had been the last gleam of sunshine, and each day the widowed mother grew graver and more silent. She would sit watching the fast-falling snow with eyes that told of a vast anxiety, and Primrose had a strong suspicion that many a night she never took her clothes off, but paced the room through the long hours of darkness, finding it more possible thus to bear her load of misery.

But spring was at hand : the birds knew it, the young

lamb in the fields knew it, the flowers felt it, and Primrose's heart rebelled that she too might not bound and skip and sing with joy. Why should such terrible news come just when all nature bade her be glad, and when she had every mind to obey the call? It was hard, it was cruel, she said, as she stood beneath her favourite old yew-tree in the garden, and looked with loving eyes at the snowdrops that grew around its roots.

'They are so sweet, so pure, so heavenly; but no one notices them now Lance is not here, the boys are away, and the mother's heart is breaking; and I am selfish—I do not fret as she does; I have such a way of thinking things will come right, I can never be as sorry as I ought,' and even as if to verify her words, the girl's lips parted in a merry smile as she saw that her solitude was invaded by her tall boy-friend Amyot, who had passed through the house and sought her in the garden, directed thither by the maid who had admitted him.

'Your mother is too sad at heart to see me,' he said, 'but you, Miss Primrose, can still smile, I am glad to see.'

'It is my way to smile when I would fain weep,' she said; 'laughing is but a foolish trick with me—it means nothing—at least, if I know myself; but, Master Amyot, have you come to laugh at our woes? If so, I think you would have done well to stay away.'

'Indeed, I am in no laughing mood, though glad to think the war must end now. I came to know if by chance you had any tidings of my old friends. Nay, no news! then must we hope the best.'

'Yes, so say I; but mother can do nought but sit silent in her elbow-chair and listen, and if you, Master Amyot, had but knocked at the parlour-door, she would have started as if she had been shot; so great have been her fears for all these terrible months, that her brain seems on fire, and her eyes have a look as if they had not closed for years.'

'It is sad,' Amyot said; 'then must you too rejoice that the war is over, and her rest has come.'

'Ah, but we know nothing. And rejoice, say you!—how can I rejoice that our bonnie Prince is a fugitive, gone we know not whither—a price set on his head, and that barbarous Duke hungering for his life?'

'The Duke is not all his enemies paint him; his soldiers adore him, and your bonnie Prince, maybe, has his failings too; but do not let us talk of them and quarrel, as we always do; rather, tell me more about your brothers—when did you hear last from them?'

'From Lance, a month ago, soon after he had rejoined the army; he was nearly himself again, thanks to Mistress Deborah. Mother will love her for ever for her care of him, and I most of all for hiding him in the hay-rick, for it has given me many a merry laugh since the day when Lance told me about it; and, oh! it does one good to laugh in these sad times.'

'But your mother would ill bear the lecture old Deborah gave her about training up her sons to be rebels, and making them quarrelsome and the like; I tried hard to stop her, but she said she had it on her mind and it must out.'

'Mother would bear anything from her for her care of Lance; and I think she was more diverted than offended at Mistress Deborah's urgency. She laughed when she told me: poor mother, I have not heard her laugh since.'

'Ay, well; when they are home again safe and sound, and the Pretender has got his deserts, and peace is restored to old England again, we will all laugh and be merry as in the good old times. But, how now, Miss Primrose, why so solemn?'

'Can the old times ever be again? Mother said there would be executions and confiscations, and what not; and it is well known how all her savings have gone to help the Prince.'

'The mean villain!' Amyot exclaimed; but Primrose added, 'And willingly; she has given all willingly, and with little thought of recompense, though Lance did say it was putting the money out at good interest.'

'Not a penny will she ever see!' Amyot exclaimed.

'But herself, will she be safe? The Penrith people are so wondrous loyal to King George, that those few who have come boldly forward to support the right will scarce be forgotten by them, I fear.'

'Does your mother fear ill-usage from them? Then surely it were best that she should leave the town for a while.'

'But that she will not do, since here only will she hear tidings of her sons. But I trust none will molest her in this house; she will not stir abroad, and none of our friends come near us; it is but through the maids that we hear any news. You are our only visitor, Master Amyot; how long will it be ere you grow tired of our company, or fear to be acquainted with such desperate rebels, I wonder?'

'Long, I trust,' was Amyot's fervent response.

And then Primrose changed the subject, and would hear all he had to tell of his sister and grandmother, and the contents of the last letters he had received from Westerham.

'It sounds so pleasant and peaceful,' she said. 'Why did you come away from them all into this turbulent North?'

'I hoped to take service in the army, and it seemed to me that I had best go where work was to be done, but I doubt whether I had not better have stayed; my uncle, it seems, is making interest for a commission for me, and Joan tells me that he has good hopes he will succeed—Joan tells me it is more than I deserve.'

'Then do you think of returning to them?'

Primrose's face grew a shade more anxious.



'My uncle bids me stay where I am, since, if he succeeds in my behalf, I may be ordered to join one of the regiments now in Scotland, so I wait, you see.'

'I am glad ; and when you come again, if no bad news comes, I will ask mother to see you ; but not to-day—she is too cast down, and I must not stay idling here ; I must go to her : it is bad for her to be quite alone.'

'Then I will go ; but should any news come, will you send me word ? When Sammy brings you the milk, you could send me word if you have heard aught, or if I could be of any use. Do not laugh, Miss Primrose ; who knows ?—I might be of use, if only to journey with your mother from this place, should she choose to move.'

'If so, I will let you know,' Primrose promised as they parted, 'but I have no thought that we shall need your help.'

Amyot secretly hoped that she might, but he had no suspicion how soon his aid would be requested. Only two days had passed when the cow-boy, returning in the evening from his visit to the town, sought his young master, and delivered to him a small note, which ran as follows :

'Am I wrong, dear friend, to take you at your word ? My mother says, "Torment no one with our woes," and if they were only mine, I would say so too ; am I writing nonsense ? I fear I am ; well, then, if this falls into any hands but yours, I hope it will not be comprehended. But if your lad says truth, and he will be able to give you this, none perceiving it, I would make bold to ask whether you are likely to have business in the neighbourhood of Appleby to-morrow, and could give a lift to two poor beggar-women who are constrained to journey thither, and who will be on the road by the time the sun is up. One is but feeble, and I would be glad to think her feet need not bear her all the way. The travellers we looked

for have passed through the town, but made no long stay. It seems to me an idle waste of time to put my name to this, as it concerns none but you, who know it well.'

'Oop t' soom mischief agean,' was Mike's comment when his young master drove off in the small waggon well loaded with hay and straw the next morning. 'He waan't tell ma wheear he's gaen wi' all that stoof—arter soom o' these bodderin' rebels agean. Waal, they mud sow their wild oats, fooak say.'

Meanwhile, Amyot, well pleased with his errand, was jolting along the rough roads at a very leisurely rate, for the double reason that the nature of the road permitted no better pace, and that he was well convinced that he had started earlier than was necessary. It was a sweet-smelling morning; the hedges were still only just touched here and there with green, and a slight frost had left its bright spangles on the twigs: but the birds were twittering their new loves, and the world was waking to new life and hope.

'She said two beggar-women; could she have meant herself and Mrs. Kirkbride, or one of the servant-maids with the old lady?—surely Primrose would never call herself a woman; she is nothing but a child—not so old as Joan; and grandmother does not call her a woman yet. And where they can be going, I can't imagine, that they should start by this road; but it's all one to me. I am glad Primrose asked me to help them. And this road is wondrous quiet at this hour; even Primrose will see nought but fays and pixies.'

Half-an-hour passed in these musings, while the stout farm-horses moved slowly along, only occasionally quickening their pace when they came to a slope in the road, or a few yards of tolerably smooth ground. One or two workmen had passed on their way to their daily labour with a 'Good day ta yer,' and a grin which Amyot shrewdly divined to mean, 'That young fellow don't know much

about his business.' But as long as they asked no questions, he told no lies, and prudently refrained from entering into conversation with anyone.

Many a glance had he cast behind him, many a fixed gaze into wood and meadow as he jogged along, but still no female figure could his eyes discover.

'Primrose loves a joke ; and sometimes it seems to me she dearly likes to make a fool of *me*. Could she have sent me on such a fool's errand as this seems like to be? No—never !' Amyot said, the hot blood mounting to his cheek at the thought. 'But they may have been hindered ; Mrs. Kirkbride may have fallen sick, as Primrose feared she would. But what may that be—is it a trunk of a tree or a brown cloak—by the roadside? Gee-up, Fanny, and let's see.'

The brown object remained very still and motionless as the cart drew nearer ; and Amyot, keeping his eyes intently fixed on it, had almost decided that it was nothing but a stump of a tree, when another brown object emerged from the shelter of the hedge, and approached the cart, while a plaintive voice said :

'For the love of heaven, master, give a poor body a lift to the town. My baby is a sore burden, and my old mother is sick and feeble, and I am broken-hearted.'

A sob seemed to end the speech ; but the bright eyes that peeped shyly at Amyot's face from under the faded brown hood were full of laughter ; and the baby, so tenderly pressed and fondly regarded, was no stranger to Amyot, since years before he had seen it in Primrose's arms, and very roughly handled by Lance and his brothers.

Poor Mrs. Kirkbride was sitting a few yards off, so weary, so heart-sick, so indifferent to all that concerned her, that she could not summon even the ghost of a smile, as she let herself be hoisted into the waggon, and laid in as easy a posture as possible among the bundles of hay ;

yet she tried to thank Amyot, who could scarcely bear to look at her, so sorely had the sorrows and anxieties of the past few months aged and wasted her.

But Primrose's spirits rose again instantly.

'Never mother hated child as I hate you,' she said, addressing her old doll. Oh! the weary weight you have made yourself this dreary morn! Master Amyot, will you think me a brute if I leave the creature to end her days in a ditch, for I am much inclined to fling her from me. With those bundles to carry, I have no need of dolls. Why did I bring her, say you? Oh, to touch your heart, to be sure. It was a last thought; for I have not handled her for many a long day, not since the boys went to the wars: but taking a last look at the old toys I spied her, and I thought—what did I think?—oh! never mind—of course I thought you could not refuse to take pity on a child; but give me leave, and I will fling her into the ditch.'

'I can do without her, Miss Primrose.'

'Are you sure? I doubt you. What, dear mother, art comfortable? does the waggon jolt too much?'

'Nay, I am well enough, but tell him—tell Amyot about the boys.'

'Yes, dear mother,' and the girl grew sad and sober while telling Amyot that two days before Lance had suddenly appeared among their little household; he had relieved their worst fears by bringing the news that, without any harm except a few wounds of a trifling nature, all three brothers had escaped from the battle near Inverness, and would live to fight another day. 'But oh! Lance was in a terrible state,' Primrose said, 'he made me tremble all over by his rage, and the fearful things he said. I wish I could forget it, but I can't, and poor mother, she was glad to see him safe, but his words made her grow white as ashes—wars are dreadful things.'

'Was he so angry that the battle had gone against the

Prince? I thought they had almost lost hope before then.'

'Lance never had, and he said that had they made but a fair fight, it would not have seemed so shameful; but Lance *is* brave, and so are the other boys, let people say what they will.'

'And where are they now?'

'Ah, how do I know?—fleeing for their lives! for Lance said they had vowed they would not become prisoners, as many were—hundreds, I believe. They mean to go abroad, if they can find a passage in some French vessel; but how can we tell?—it will be long before we hear of them, and mother says we must not expect to see them again for years; she feels as if she had lost them entirely.'

'And why are you and she leaving Penrith, and why are you going to Appleby?'

'Lance thought we had better go away for a time at least, because you know the Penrith people are so very loyal, and besides, we are nearly beggars: Lance thinks Blencathara House will be confiscated, and he said we had better go right away and hide ourselves somewhere. Mother has an old cousin at Appleby, and we thought it would be best to go there for awhile, until things are quieter, and then perchance we shall go to London, and find some quiet hole to hide our heads. Don't look so dismal, Master Brough. I am gloomy now, but I shall soon be happy again; I can't be dismal long. I've tried, and I don't succeed.'

Amyot looked at the bright eyes which shone even through the girl's tears, and wondered much; and then he looked at the haggard face that lay back on the hay in the cart, noticing the deep lines and wrinkles, and the tightly compressed lips which told of bitter suffering long borne in silence, and then he wondered more; but he said nothing for some time.

At last he spoke. 'Shall you like to be at Appleby?'

'Oh, yes! I am glad to have mother right away from Penrith, though I fear it nearly broke her heart to go; but it seems to me she will best bear all she has to bear if she is in a new place. How far shall you be able to take us, Master Amyot?'

'As far as you wish to go.'

'Nay, my mother said I was not to be troublesome; you shall take us just as far as you will, and then the two beggar-women will go on the tramp again.'

'Mrs. Kirkbride cannot walk.'

'Yes, she can; she walked stoutly enough when we started, though I own she was getting tired when you overtook us. You little thought to have found us so far on the road, I reckon, Master Amyot.'

'That I did not, indeed. I was beginning to think you had sent me on a fool's errand, Miss Primrose.'

'You thought so ill of me as that?' the girl replied, colouring. 'Nay, I marvel not, for I am sadly silly, I know full well.'

And while they talked thus, the good horses plodded on their way, not unseldom finding their burden stuck fast in a rut, which required all their efforts, and all Amyot's energy to master.

Once or twice towards the middle of the day, Amyot let them rest for awhile, while they took their food; but Mrs. Kirkbride looked uneasy at those delays, and at last, when towards evening Amyot said he thought they were not far from the town, no persuasions would induce her to remain in the waggon; she wished to walk—she was determined; and Primrose, seeing her mother resolute, became again the timid child, and agreed without objection. The old lady thanked Amyot with agitated vehemence, and lading herself with her bundle, set forward at a feeble, but rapid pace towards the town. Primrose lingered but to say farewell, adding, 'We will never forget your kindness—some day, perhaps, we may meet; but who can

say where? I shall know you again, Master Amyot, and if you meet my brothers, be kind to them.'

'Stay,' Amyot said; 'I must rest the night in the town. I shall wait awhile here to breathe the horses, and then come slowly on; if your mother is weary, urge her to wait for me.'

'Ah, you do not know her!—but good-bye,' and Primrose darted away.

## CHAPTER XII.

WHEREIN TWO LETTERS ARE RECEIVED.

MRS. DARLEY sat by the window of her parlour, which window was open to let in the pleasant scent of flowers, and that she might exchange a word or two if she wished it with Joan and Miss Johnstone, who sat sewing in the garden outside. The old lady was sitting at rest, her hands lying idly in her lap—even her knitting had been laid aside ; but two letters lay on a little table before her, which she had just laid down, and her spectacles lay by the side of them.

She had read these letters several times, and each time laid them down with a half-smile on her face, which had made Joan long much to know their contents, but no hint had as yet been dropped by the old lady.

The door opened, and Mrs. Pomfret, then on a visit to her mother, entered the room, and sank into a lounging chair with the languid grace which, well or ill, she never lacked. She carried a tiny dog in her arms, at sight of which, Tory, who was crouched at Mrs. Darley's feet in an attitude of adoration, uttered a low groan of disapprobation. Tory had his own opinion about dogs that lived in ladies' laps, and that opinion was not a favourable one.

'How sweet and balmy the air is!' Mrs. Pomfret murmured ; 'if this house, madam, were but larger, and more suited to your rank, I should say I held you much to be envied.'

''Tis well it is but small, then,' Mrs. Darley replied,



with her quick repartee ; ' I never desired to excite any-one's envy, least of all my children's.'

' Dear mother, you entirely mistake me ; I do but venture to think you might keep a little more state.'

The old lady laughed good-humouredly. ' Have a care, Aimée, or we shall fall out. I have lived so long alone that I cannot bear dictation ; no, not a word.'

' Madam, dear mother—dictation !—and from me !'

' Well, well, never mind ; tell me in what the house is lacking.'

' Truly, it lacks nothing that would make for comfort ; it is but style, and, your pardon, madam, but the serving might be more attended to. Doddridge is scarce fit to be seen, and your own woman might pass for Noah's wife straight from the ark.'

' Good ; does she look so venerable ?'

' Indeed she does ; and your own attire, madam, is, to say the least, not as becoming as it might be.'

' *Va, va, ma fille, c'est assez, n'en parlons plus.* What, must I not speak French ?—is it high treason ? Well, in plain English, then—and English sounds very ugly sometimes—we will each go our own way : you love rich colours, *et moi, j'aime le gris* ; and for the house, be content to breathe the fresh air, and put up with the old barn. Art thou not glad to be away from London, and all the fearful doings there ?'

' Yes, indeed ; my husband wrote me word of the gaping crowds staring at the heads on Temple Bar, and people letting out spy-glasses at a halfpenny a look ; and he tells me that he is thought wondrous queer that he went not to see the beheading the other day. Truly I hope he will not be reckoned a Jacobite, but he had an old kindness for Lord Balmerino, and could not bring himself to face the sight, though it seems to me it was a pity. Such things do not happen every day, and it is well to be able to say one was there.'

'Then it was a pity you quitted town, my daughter.'

'I! Oh! I could never have stood the sight; besides, for me it would have been unseemly, but Mr. Pomfret goes everywhere. I marvel he stayed away; but, of course, he will hear all particulars, and I doubt not will give me full details when we meet.'

'I have a letter from your husband here, daughter Aimée.'

'From Mr. Pomfret, madam? You terrify me! Is aught amiss? Oh! where is my perfume?—my poor nerves, they are all on the flutter!'

'Aimée,' said the old lady, putting on her spectacles, and looking sternly over them at her daughter, 'Thou lovest English, so I will tell thee my mind in that very uncivil tongue—thou art a goose.'

'Ah, you never suffered from nerves, and know nothing of the misery they cause; but tell me, why has my husband written to you and not to me?'

'Because, maybe, he had no stomach to write about scaffolds and falling heads, and knew that I could content myself without such details, while thou, Aimée, wouldst feel thyself defrauded if he told thee not the ghastly tale. *Mais enfin*, he wrote to me on business, being, as I am, much concerned in my grandson Amyot, though the lad concerns himself but little about me.'

'Ungrateful young viper!'

'Nay, it is but a wilful slip. Your good husband writes to tell me that he has at last gained a commission for the boy, and has wrote to bid him come to town forthwith, for that it is likely his regiment will shortly go abroad.'

'Well, I am glad, and I hope he will fall into the hands of severe officers, who will teach him his place; for if ever lad needed discipline, it is Amyot Brough. And what does Joan say?'

'I have not yet told her; the child comes to me at

mid-day to read me the lessons, and then we have some discourse; I will tell her the news then. I believe she will be glad, for Joan has sense beyond her years, and knows what will be for her brother's good. I have another letter too, and that is from thy stepson, Arnold Pomfret; but that I guess thou wilt scarce care to see.'

'Arnold's letters are ever the same—prodigious wise and saintly; he is fast losing his wits. I often wonder whether his mother was quite in her right mind when she died, but I like not to ask Mr. Pomfret—he has never named her to me.'

Mrs. Darley smiled, the same tender, half-sad smile which had passed over her face as she read the letter; but she did not offer to show it, and merely said:

'Arnold is right enough about the brains; it is but an old head on young shoulders, and a mind full of sympathy with the troubles in the world, but hard perplexed to find a cure.'

'Then why not let it alone?' said Mrs. Pomfret impatiently.

The old lady's smile had gone by this time, but she gazed with a sweet, tender expression at her beautiful but fretful daughter, and replied in a slow and musical voice:

'La charité de Christ nous presse, étant persuadés, que si un est mort pour tous, tous donc sont morts.'

'Oh, yes; the love of Christ!—fanatics always talk of that; but my belief is God meant us to be comfortable, and Arnold makes himself vastly uncomfortable and dolorous; his parish must be a prodigious doleful place; he has asked his father and me to go and visit him, but Mr. Pomfret seemed not over-desirous, and I feel certain it would be the death of me, with my poor spirits and palpitations.'

'Worse than the spectacle of the beheading?' Mrs. Darley suggested; but Mrs. Pomfret made no reply, and

the subject of her stepson's eccentricities was dropped for the time being, Mrs. Pomfret soon after leaving the room.

It was a very pretty girlish figure which Joan presented when she came as wont to read to her grandmother at noon. Mrs. Darley liked soft colours, and dressed the girl almost like a Quaker, but as she had a clear skin, and a bright colour, no depth of hue was needed, and the pale blue slip, and white muslin apron and bib, with the little muslin cap restraining her fair hair, made her as elegant a maiden as even Mrs. Pomfret could desire. To her grandmother's eyes she was all that a modest girl should be, and Mrs. Darley was not a fond, easy-to-please grandmother. Joan had learnt to be careful that her curtsey should express all due reverence, to be mindful to be free with neither words nor looks in her elders' presence, not to forget that her person being comely was a choice gift to be guarded, and her clothes, being costly, must be carefully handled and discreetly put on. A careless curtsey, an awkward carriage, an apron awry, a thoughtless stare, a hesitating or too forward answer, were offences which Mrs. Darley never passed unnoticed, and Joan, though not by nature awkward or rebellious, had learned her lesson at the cost of some tears, and many hours of painful reflection in her own little chamber.

'I love not to be for ever saying the same thing ; it is weary work to me, and to all who hear me,' Mrs. Darley had been wont to say ; 'therefore, Joan, thou must learn to remember ; and to strengthen thy memory, I will have thee spend this forenoon in thine own chamber, and commune with thine own spirit awhile, asking thyself is it fitting that a young girl come into her grandmother's presence with a rent in her slip, and ink on her fingers, and with a reverence that testifieth neither honour nor affection. What sayest thou ? it was Tory that tore thy slip ? Nay, then, I asked not who tore it ; it needed not

that thou shouldest cast blame on thy dog, poor beast ; thou hast other slips, so that excuse will ill suit thy purpose. And since I must e'en set thee matter for thy meditation, I will add one other question for thy self-examination. Is it meet that a young girl answer when she is reproved ? And now go, and I pray thee give me rest from fault-finding for a season ; it takes away my appetite, and sets my voice in the minor key, ay, and no doubt adds a dozen wrinkles to my withered old face.'

Such had been Mrs. Darley's system, and, whatever may be thought of it, in Joan's case it had answered well. The thoughtful child of Broughbarrow Farm had grown up a marvellously sweet and unselfish maiden. While her grandmother's eye rested on her as she stood before her with the sacred book in her hands, prepared to read the lessons for the day, she said to herself, 'It is not strange that others should be attracted by her winsomeness.'

The reading over, Joan heard the contents of her uncle's letter with unfeigned delight, and prettily expressed gratitude.

'Then Amyot will soon be in London,' she said, 'and you, madam, will you permit him to come hither after the ungracious manner in which he left you last year ?'

'If he has time, and is not at once despatched to join his regiment ; but he will have to beg my pardon, tall man and commissioned officer as he is. It is long since you heard from him, Joan ?'

'Two months and more,' Joan replied. 'It was some weeks after the battle, and his friends, the Kirkbrides, had left Penrith, and he was feeling very lonesome. Oh, Amyot will be glad to hear the news, and to have his matters settled.'

'Thy Uncle Pomfret is coming this afternoon to conduct his wife home : he may have more to tell us. I trust Amyot's is not the same regiment in which his

cousin Guy is captain. Guy would be but a bad guide to Amyot, and yet the lad might perchance be taken by his merry tongue.'

'Amyot likes Mr. Arnold Pomfret best,' Joan replied, whereupon the old lady turned round quickly, saying:

'Ah! does he? and thou, petite, dost thou like his reverence Arnold Pomfret, whom some think half mad?'

'Oh! yes; we both like him; he is so—— grandmother, I cannot think of the word I need—so real, so honest. I never can think of him as a clergyman, because they are not what they seem to be, are they?'

'Fie, for shame, child, what heresy!' the old lady stopped her ears, but her dark bright eyes laughed, as she said to herself, '*We* both like him; that will do for the present. Now, child, you may go.'

Mr. Pomfret arrived in time for dinner, and brought Joan the enchanting news that her brother had come to London, and was staying at his house in Queen's Square; he had received orders to join his regiment almost immediately, but he hoped to be able to pay his respects to his grandmother before doing so. The regiment would probably be ordered abroad before long, but how soon was quite uncertain.

'Now that the Pretender is disposed of, we shall be able to teach our neighbours a lesson,' Mr. Pomfret said. 'The French think the world was made for them. I see no reason why we should not think it was made for us. We taught them to respect us at Blenheim and Ramillies; they agreed to give us what we claimed in America. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland are ours, but they can't get over it; they are jealous. They would shut us up in this little island, and bid us be content with it. Why should we? We have better fleets than Holland or France, our trade must grow; why should not England assert herself, and take the place that is plainly hers?'

'I am sure I hope she will, if it will make things cheaper,' said his wife; 'tea is such a frightful price.'

'I have a great respect for England, my adopted country, and the English, my dear husband's nation,' said Mrs. Darley; 'but I have ever thought they were quite too fond of asserting themselves; and though my colonel fought at Blenheim, I should have liked him quite as well if he had been defeated instead of victorious, and I think that, angel though he was, a little less of victory would have improved his character.'

'But you are entirely English now, my dear madam,' Mr. Pomfret replied gallantly. 'You will rejoice to see the power of our great nation felt, and her dominion grow and increase, so that when the population of our great cities becomes too dense, there may be homes for them elsewhere, in lands where they may still feel themselves Englishmen and Englishwomen.'

'Yes, yes, if we are in danger of being crowded, it is well that new lands should be found for those who may need them. I detest a crowd—not that we ladies can be squeezed to death, so long as our hoops continue the mode; but fashions change every day, and you poor gentlemen have no such defence. Tory, my good dog, I pray you sit not so close to my feet. You or I must go to America.'

Mr. Pomfret laughed.

'You cannot, I see, my dear madam, believe in either the numbers or the wealth of our nation. Your French blood makes you despise us, whether you will or no.'

'Despise you, *mais non*, but I feel for my poor people, whom you have robbed of Acadie, and whom you mean to spoil of much more of their possessions. There is only one thing I do not grudge you, which you got by your peace of Utrecht—it is a thing I never desired, and you English may have it and welcome.'

'That is an old subject of dispute, dear madam, but I

hold that, be it pleasing to our ideas or not, still, if others trade in negroes, it is but fair that we should have our share, and being great in commerce, it is but natural that we should make good profit by that trade as by others.'

'Money, money, nought but money,' sighed the old lady.

'Well, mother, we can't live without money, though I own that down in this quiet place you seem to have but little need of it ; but come to live in London, and you will find your purse soon grow light.'

'And take to gambling, as my grandson Guy doth when he likes not to trouble his father ; how much has he lost in the last month, I wonder ?'

There was an awkward silence after this remark. Mrs. Pomfret rustled her fan, Mr. Pomfret took snuff repeatedly ; at last he resumed :

'But we are not to be allowed to extend our commerce unmolested ; both French and Dutch are crying out that we are claiming a despotism of the sea, and mean to destroy the trade of other nations ; we must be crushed, say they, our Ministers must be cured of their "delire ambitious," as if they have not as great a right to be ambitious as other Ministers.'

'Well, well, Mr. Pomfret, do not weary us with politics ; have you nothing more entertaining to relate ? Everyone has left town now, I suspect ? Truly, I cannot stay there long if this heat continues.'

'Nothing much has been spoken of, save the executions and the flight of the Pretender ; no one doubts now that he has got safe to France, and we hope he has learned his lesson, and will not return.'

'Poor young man !' sighed the old lady ; 'I am glad he has got safe away, though, indeed, he has cost his country much sorrow, and many lives. Did Amyot tell you aught of his rebel friends in the North ? here is Joan dying to hear.'



‘He said there had been some hanging and confiscating in Penrith and Carlisle, and that his friends were like to be beggars, their house being confiscated, as indeed was to be expected ; they themselves, I think he said, had all escaped further mischief. The lad seems to have a kindly heart, and spoke with real pity of the troubles he had witnessed.’

Joan blushed and dimpled at hearing this praise of her brother—it was long since she had heard aught but blame of him ; she had always believed in him, but it was delightful to hear that others did not think him hopelessly bad, and her heart sang within her.

Before she retired to rest that night, Mrs. Darley wrote a letter, on which she bestowed some anxious, and not a few merry thoughts. Having no secrets from our readers, we give it entire :

‘It being plainly evident to me, my dear young friend, that you are in marvellous great haste for a reply to your letter, I proceed to put my thoughts on paper without loss of time, albeit I know not when an opportunity will present itself of despatching the epistle to that far-off wilderness wherein you pitch your tent. Well, if so, you must summon patience to your aid, as methinks you will need to do in a weightier matter than the mere answering of your letter.

‘And this leads me to the subject-matter that you suggested for my meditations, with regard to which I would strongly commend to you the need of being in no haste. And this the more, because, when last we communed of the life to which you have devoted yourself, you were entirely determined that the service of the Church would permit no earthly affections ; and if I did not wholly mistake your meaning, you were then minded to forswear for Christ’s sake all tender ties and earthly loves. You will remember that I smiled, and thought but lightly of your stern decision ; nevertheless, I honoured you for

the thought, and I had little notion that even then the love which you now confess, had taken root in your breast. How now, my son? did you so ill understand your own heart, that your words could so belie your thoughts? You will say, "Chide me not, since I own that I had thought never to be married, save to my flock, and do now confess my weakness." Yes, but I do chide thee: he that changes once may change again, and fickleness is my abhorrence. So I say to you, "Wait; give yourself to your work, and try yourself—whether it be not a passing whim, such as oft besets your brother Guy, who, butterfly-like, is ever caught by the last bright flower that he chances to light upon, and had even once thought to have honoured your fair one with his hand, and what he calls his heart, had I not warned him off with a voice like a screech-owl: I am ever diverted when I think of that day."

'But for you I have not such a fixed aversion, as you know perhaps too well. I could like you passably, were I but sure of you; and that will I be, ere you have my child. May you come to visit her, you ask. Nay, that you may not; but if your cure of souls permit it, you may come to visit *me*, and I will put you through as strict a catechism as ever did spiritual director; so, if you are minded to come hither, see that your confession be well prepared and honest, for I will have no evading of my questions; you know me of old, I think, and will testify that I am wont to have my will.

'And now that you have heard my mind, and are doubtless much chafed and vexed with me, let me tell you that it affords me great diversion to think that you have so soon descended to the level of ordinary weak mortals, and are even half persuaded that you cannot live if the good thing you desire be not granted. My good young gentleman, you are too impetuous; bethink you, ere you thus set your mind on earthly happiness. Not live with

out her ! fie, for shame ! you are indeed fallen from the pinnacle of lofty imaginings on which I last beheld you, and I must indulge myself a space with gazing at your humiliation.

‘ Yet it is unseemly and unchristian to laugh at others’ woes, and well do I perceive that the fall hath grievously damaged you in your own esteem ; for that I am not disturbed. You will seek for new steeps to climb again ere long, ay, and I like to see you climb—the falls are no matter, they grieve me not. But my sermon hath been marvellous long and tedious, wrote, like too many a discourse, when the eyes are heavy with sleep; ay, and it might all have been wrote in four letters—“ wait ;” and to stimulate you to this mighty effort, I would remind you that the child is but a child, and will be naught else for some while to come; therefore, say I again, there is no call to haste. And now, lest the cocks should crow ere I be laid on my pillow, I will bid you farewell, commending you to much deep study of your own heart, and to some gentle discipline of your unruly will.

‘ I am, most truly,

‘ Your sincere though severe friend,

‘ PAULINE DARLEY.’

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CONCERNING A CHRISTMAS ROUT.

'AND where did you say the Christmastide is to be passed, with your mother at Westerham, or with Arnold in his tumbledown rectory, or in our own home, my dear Aimée?'

'My mother has promised to come to visit us, and she will bring Miss Johnstone, my niece Joan, and her own women; Arnold, I trust, will also bear us company. So we shall be a merry household; my nephew Amyot must enjoy himself as much as in him lies, seeing that in January he will go to the wars, and learn what hardships really are.'

'Nay, they have a pretty time of it, many of these young officers,' Mr. Pomfret replied; 'good rations, plenty of cards—and the Dutch and German maidens are not uncomely. Guy leads a merry life, by all accounts.'

'Poor Guy, would that he could be at home,' sighed his mother; but she glanced at her husband, whose brow had contracted with a frown, and said no more. Deep play had brought Captain Guy into difficulties, and his father spoke his name with unusual bitterness. An easy-going father, allowing his sons much licence, and seldom interfering with their tastes and pleasures, and that partly from indolence, partly from indifference, Mr Pomfret had at last been roused to something like stern language towards his youngest son; he had paid his debts many times, but he vowed he had now done it for the last time, and Mrs. Pomfret had written and told

her son that she much feared his father meant what he said.

Merry Captain Guy said it was 'very hard, too desperate hard;' and then he joined a lively band of brother officers, who were whiling away a long evening at cards, and the stakes being inconveniently high, he lost another £500 before going to bed, and not being quite tipsy enough to be unconscious of his awkward predicament, had serious thoughts of shooting himself for one half-hour; but on second thoughts remembered that he had an elder brother who had more than once befriended him in his schoolboy scrapes, and might do so again. Therefore, the shooting was delayed for the present, Captain Guy having a faint notion that such a performance was rather a cowardly way of getting out of the difficulty, and determined to write without loss of time to Arnold, who was one of those lucky fellows possessed of independent means, having inherited property from his mother.

It was the receipt of this letter which had determined the Rev. Arnold to obey his father's request that he would pay them a visit at Christmastide. An old penniless tutor of his would gladly supply his place at Swynford, and set him at liberty to see his mother, and talk over with her the state of Guy's affairs.

Arnold was a little ashamed of the pleasure he felt in the prospect of this visit to London, after more than a year's absence from civilised society. It was impossible to conceal from himself that his stepmother's conversation, which, with all his high respect for her, he had been apt to find wearisome, would now be most pleasantly refined and elegant; his father he had always honoured as a man of cultivated taste and extensive reading, but now, as compared with the boorish country-folk among whom he had been passing his days, Mr. Pomfret appeared to his son a being belonging to another world, to associate with

whom would be a kind of intellectual paradise—and as he thought over the names of old friends to be visited during this short stay in London, Arnold instinctively began to count the days till Christmas, as when he had been a schoolboy going home for the holidays.

Mr. Pomfret had spoken of his son's home as a tumble-down rectory; but at that time he had never seen it, and only thought of it as Arnold had described it, an old rambling house in desperate need of repair. Had he seen it, his fastidious taste would have pronounced it utterly uninhabitable, since, in many of the chambers, the flooring had entirely decayed, and nearly half the roof had been blown away in a storm.

But the Rev. Arnold Pomfret, having a strong desire to fit himself to understand the sufferings and hardships of his flock by personal experience, had felt a great sense of exultation when he first examined his vicarage, and noted its many weak points and manifest sources of discomfort. Nor was it until a pig had pushed a frail door off its hinges, climbed up the stair, and taken up its abode close beside him during the night, and geese and ducks, and many other kinds of flying fowl had roosted in all the various chambers where the window-frames were glassless, and owls and jackdaws had built in every chimney, that he had reluctantly confessed to himself that a house in ruins did not necessarily incline the soul to soar above the world of time and sense.

An easy bed might doubtless lead to too much folding of the hands to sleep, but a night, disturbed by the scampering of rats and hooting of owls, had also its disadvantages, and revealed to Arnold the painful and humiliating fact that if a man cannot sleep at night, he will perchance doze by day; while a roof full of holes, implying much dripping of rain on the floors in wet weather, and doors that have so shrunk that no bolts will hold them shut, and other such small inconveniences,

instead of affording the soul room to soar heavenward, as might be expected, seem but to keep it more earthbound than ever.

How differently had Arnold Pomfret fondly dreamed ; but, alas ! for his theories, to become skilled in the art of sympathy, he soon found that he needed initiation into the pains of rheumatism, sore throats and ague fits—good things in their way, but not quite the kind of suffering he had prescribed for himself, and entailing the awkward consequence that while he was lying in his comfortless bed, watching the smoke wreaths that filled the room, counting the rats that gambolled over his pillows, and setting himself diligently to learn this grand lesson of sympathy, the hungry flock found themselves unfed, untended, unsheperded.

It was humiliating, but not the less comforting, to acquiesce in the old parish clerk's dictum :

'You bees too delicate a gentleman to live in this way ; we'll fetch along sum bits of glass and mend them winders, and we'll patch up the roof and make it water-tight, and the rats—well, I know a dog as will make an end of they, and next time you come across the bishop you should tell him as yer house is coming down about yer ears, and bid him see to her.'

But the bishop did not often come to Swynford, and Arnold had contented himself with these slight improvements, and with planning others in the future, when he went to spend his Christmas in London. How luxurious did the Queen's Square house look on the night of his arrival ! 'Surely it was wrong to live in such comfort,' was his first thought, instantly checked, however, as the remembrance of his hardly learned lesson came back to him ; and he shuddered at the thought of the house he had left, and wondered if he had done right to leave his old half-paralysed tutor in such a place.

It was Christmas Eve, and the late four o'clock dinner

was going forward when he arrived. Mrs. Pomfret, elegantly attired, at the head of the table ; Mrs. Darley, in her soft grey brocade and plain white muslin kerchief and cap, beside his father ; the elderly spinster, Miss Johnstone, on his left hand ; Amyot and a young brother-officer to the right and left of his mother ; and opposite the vacant place which had been left for himself sat Joan, in the seat she loved best, between her grandmother and her brother. How homelike it seemed ! The heart of a traveller from the arctic regions could not have bounded more joyously at his home-coming, than did Arnold's as he responded to the merry greetings which welcomed him.

'Half-frozen and entirely starved,' said Mrs. Pomfret ; 'sit there, son Arnold, and eat and warm yourself : between the Christmas log and your cousin's bright eyes you must needs thaw presently.'

And amid this merry buzz of voices the country priest was soon conscious that not only was his outward man thawing, but the cold, cheerless wall of restraint and endurance which had been growing round his heart was giving way, and social enjoyment was warming his whole being. Was he ashamed to own it to himself ? Blame him not, reader ; he had looked so much and so often on the dark places of this earth, and on the sad lives of those less fortunate than himself, that he could scarce tell whether he had any right to forget them for a moment and be happy.

'Give us some traveller's tale, cousin,' said Amyot ; 'the last from a journey has ever some adventure to relate. Did you meet with no mishaps as you came hither ?'

'Nothing worse than a terrible snow-storm, through which the horses struggled knee-deep, and we were near blinded by the snow which beat in our faces ; but that is a mischance scarce worth naming.'



'I love much a veritable tempest of snow and hail,' said Amyot's friend, Lieutenant John James Pownal, a young man of Canadian origin, lately arrived in England; 'but in your England the tempests are a bagatelle—I mock at them.'

'Why say in *your* England?—you are English, too, lieutenant,' said Mrs. Pomfret. 'You told us that your father is English, though your mother is French, and that though your English is not quite perfect, you wished to be considered an Englishman and nothing else.'

'Ah, it is true; but see you, madam, my England is across the sea, and your climate here—but it is abominable; there is nothing one can see of worse—how you can suffer it?—that astonishes me; but you are a wonderful people—more I see, more I admire.'

'But you have not seen much, Jack,' Amyot broke in; 'the parks, Vauxhall, Ranelagh, Bagnigge Wells, Marylebone, that's about all, isn't it? You scarce know London; and as for the country, why, you've not set foot in it since you arrived.'

'I am a soldier—I am to my king; I go where he will, be it to the end of the world, be it nowheres. I am all to him, my dear Brough.'

'Well, King George has a mind to send us to Flanders, I hear; how will that suit you?' asked Amyot. 'Cousin Arnold, do you not envy us our luck?—real war at last!'

Arnold Pomfret smiled. 'I had never a taste for bloodshed,' he replied. Then, turning to his father, 'Have you had late news from my brother, sir?'

'Late enough,' was the answer; and the family having by this time quitted the parlour and retired to the drawing-room, Mr. Pomfret drew his son aside, and related at full his vexation concerning Captain Guy.

When they rejoined the ladies the card-table had been set out, and the two ladies, together with Amyot and

Lieutenant John Pownal, were occupied with cards, while Joan, on a low stool by Mrs. Darley's side, was disentangling a skein of fine wool for her grandmother's knitting, and watching her brother with eyes which seemed full of pensive anxiety.

Mr. Pomfret quitted the room, and Arnold drew near to Joan, saying :

' We have scarce greeted each other, cousin, and I have had it in my mind ever since I arrived to congratulate you on your brother's good fortune. He seems wondrous content and merry.'

' It is what he has long coveted,' Joan replied ; and I am glad for him ; but for myself—yet that matters nothing.'

' For yourself there is much anxiety in store,' Arnold responded ; and as she met his glance of sympathy, the young girl's eyes filled, and she cast them upon her work.

' Hey now, what's this ?' said her grandmother, turning round suddenly ; ' my sport is spoiled. I'll play no more, daughter Pomfret ; here's a parson come among us, bringing the vapours and the dismals, and I know not what mischief beside. I thought gentlemen of your robe were called ministers of consolation, sir. Perchance you make it your practice to bruise that you may have somewhat to bind up ; if so, I take it you are a quack, and nothing better.'

' Nay, madam,' said Joan, dashing away the tears. ' My cousin said naught amiss—he did but wish me joy of Amyot's success.'

The old lady shook her fist at Arnold.

' He has but a melancholy mien,' she said. ' I mistrust him wholly. Joan is a soldier's grand-daughter, a sailor's daughter, and a soldier's sister ; she shall send her hero to the wars with songs, not tears. Fie upon you, Arnold, I know you were at the bottom of the mischief ; I tell you I see it in your face.'

' Sister,' whispered Amyot, as Joan, confounded at

having attracted so much notice, shrank away into the shelter of the deep window, and stood half concealed among the rich hangings, 'you do not truly grieve that I have attained my heart's wish! you were ever so unselfish, Joan, and so brave withal.'

'And so am I now, at least, for the most part; it was but the thought that came to me, how happy we all are to-night, and perhaps we may never all be thus merry together again; yet I am not truly sad—it is but for a moment.'

'We shall all be together again many a time in the next fifteen days, I hope; and on Friday, Joan, my aunt tells me she means to take you to the great rout given at her old friend's, whose name I ever forget, in Great Ormond Street. Jack and I, too, will be there, so we shall see you dance, which is what I love, and hear you praised, which, too, I love amazingly.'

'You are so silly, Amyot, Joan said, blushing. 'You do not truly believe all the fooleries men talk?'

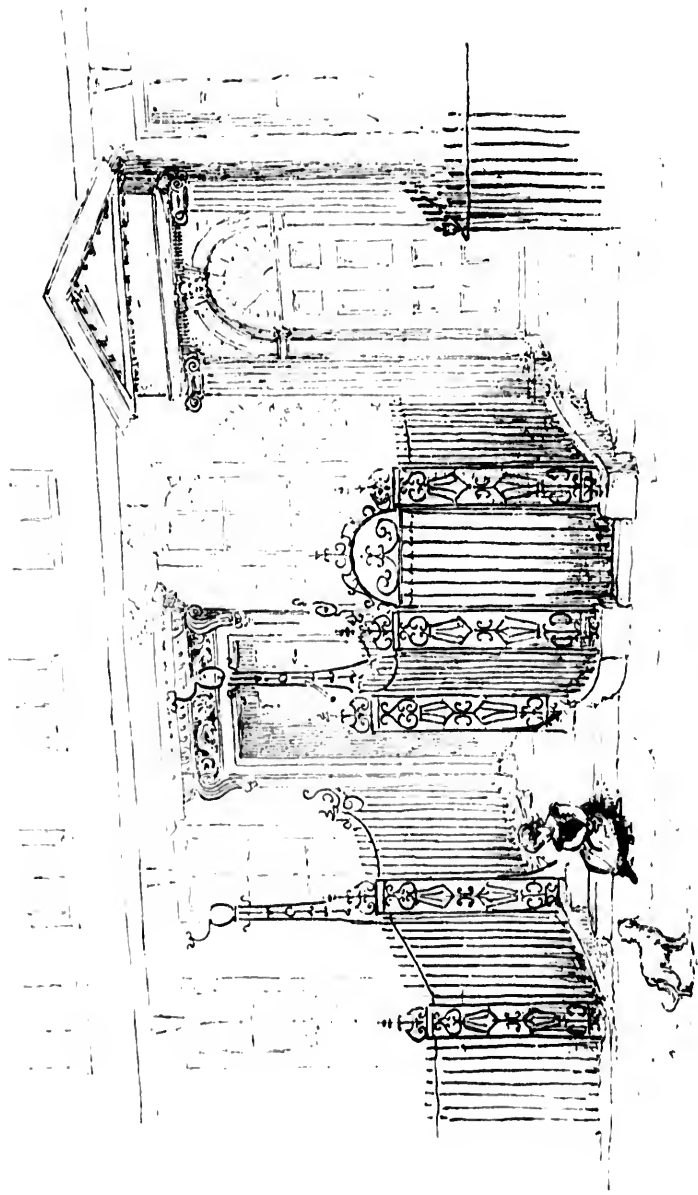
'Do I not! When they talk of you, sweet sister, I believe all they say; and if you will but wear your pale blue dress, which you think so fine, I shall win my bet with Jack for certain.'

'Amyot! that a man should bet about his sister's dress. You are so monstrous silly.'

'Nay, it is not your dress which our bet concerns—it is your fair face, sweet sister.'

'Then I trust you will lose your bet, and gain more wisdom,' Joan said, with her old dignity, as she withdrew herself from his embrace, and quietly returned to her seat by Mrs. Darley, who, scanning her tenderly, said:

'It is all well with thee now, little one. I marvel not that long stern face gave thee a fright—like a death's-head on a tombstone. We must teach him to smile again; he has quite forgot the secret, in that terrible land of ghosts and hobgoblins where he dwells.'



IN GREAT ORMOND STREET.

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The rout referred to by Amyot was destined to be long remembered by more than one of the family from Queen's Square, and by Amyot and his sister, perhaps, most of all.

It was the first assembly of the kind at which Joan had appeared, both Mrs. Darley and Mrs. Pomfret having up to that time considered her too young for any but small entertainments; but now that she might be called a woman, the case was different. 'It was time she should be seen,' Mrs. Pomfret said, and Mrs. Darley added: 'Time, too, that she should see for herself what the world was like.'

The world put on a very dazzling appearance to the young girl that night, for the rout was given partly to honour the officers of a certain regiment about to depart for Flanders, and the ballroom was filled with gay uniforms, and the lights and decorations were splendid.

Joan's wish had been to see, and not be seen; but this was not to be. One after another of Amyot's friends begged to be favoured with the honour of her hand for one dance, and Mrs. Pomfret was so well pleased at her niece's popularity, and so well contented to be free from the charge of her, and able to betake herself to the card-table, that Joan soon lost sight of her altogether.

At length, growing somewhat tired, she was about to beg her partner, Lieutenant Pownal, to discover where her aunt was, and to lead her to her, when her ear was caught by the sound of her brother's voice in hot dispute from a small room close by. Lieutenant Pownal saw her cheek grow pale, and guessed the cause.

'It is nothing,' he said reassuringly; 'your good brother, madam, he is a little excitable, he cannot suffer that one contradict him, and all the world cannot comprehend his character--there is all. I pray you be not disturbed for so little.'

'It can scarcely be a little thing to move Amyot so to

forget himself,' Joan said ; ' can you speak to him, sir, and tell him that his sister needs his company ?'

' Without doubt I might do your commands,' said the young man, with some hesitation ; ' but shall I not rather have the felicity to lead you to your aunt ? I can scarce leave you standing here, while I plunge into that crowd and seek out your brother.'

' Yet I might put an end to such an unseemly dispute,' Joan said timidly, ' if so be you could persuade Amyot to come to me.'

' It will be an uneasy matter, madam, but your commands do me great honour—behold a seat ; I fly to execute your orders.'

He disappeared, and to Joan's anxious heart he seemed to have been absent nearly half-an-hour, when the loud altercation gradually subsided, and she saw her brother making his way towards her, his brow contracted, a flush on his face, and his whole bearing sullen and angry.

' What is it, sister ; where is my aunt ? Could not Jack have taken you to her, instead of tormenting me with his importunities that my sister needed me, my sister was ill, in distress—a thousand other follies ?'

' Take me to her ; I know nothing of the ways of this house, and cannot walk through all these rooms by myself,' Joan replied evasively ; then, as he drew back, saying, ' Jack will take care of you,' she persisted : ' Nay : nay, brother, I need you ; come with me but a few yards,' and as he unwillingly complied, she went on hurriedly, ' What has befallen, Amyot ? why such brawling and angry words in a gay company such as this, and in another person's house too ?—surely you have forgot yourself—do not go back to that room.'

' Not go back !—forget myself !—Joan, you are a child ; there are things no man may endure, and the man you heard me talking with is an ill-bred rascal as ever breathed.'

'Then have naught to do with him,' Joan was saying, when her brother broke forth again as his eyes followed a figure which passed them hastily, and went down the stairs. 'Ha, has he got away, thinks he; not so fast, you old rogue, I'll keep an eye on you, and pay you yet. Now, Joan, to the whist-tables to find my aunt.'

He hurried her along, paying no heed to her entreaties that he would stay with her and forget his wrath at least for one night. 'I pray you, brother, spoil not all my pleasure thus,' fell on deaf ears, and he had no sooner discovered where his aunt was seated, than having found Joan a seat beside her, he mingled with the gay crowd around and disappeared.

Joan tried hard to stifle her uneasiness: her brother in this mood of stormy passion had ever been terrible to her, and as she pressed her hand to her head, and felt the throbbing of her temples, she wondered whether he had any just cause for his resentment, or whether his grievance was now, as it had often been before, purely imaginary. Mrs. Pomfret was too much engrossed with her game to notice her disturbance. She had asked her if she was over-fatigued, but being reassured on that point, had said no more, and Joan, engrossed with her own thoughts, watched the motions of those around her as if in a dream.

Suddenly she was awakened. Her uncle had brought his wife and niece to the rout, and left them after awhile, promising to return and escort them home: Joan now saw him making his way through the company, guided by the lady of the house to the table where his wife sat; she had been wondering how soon he would come, and a glad thrill passed through her as she spied him, for the gay scene had become intolerable to her since Amyot had so abruptly departed, leaving her in doubt and fear, and she fervently longed to be at home. But her gladness was but momentary—what was that strange look on her

uncle's face? Joan never remembered to have seen it before; had he been gambling and lost all that he possessed? His niece knew that such things had happened before now to richer men than he; but then she had heard her aunt say Mr. Pomfret did not lose money at cards. Had he been drinking? That, too, she believed, was not his habit, though many gentlemen of fashion went drunk to bed every night, and if others, why not he?

'Dear aunt,' she said timidly, 'here is my uncle.'

'Well, child, what then? are you in haste to go; why, mercy on us, Mr. Pomfret, what ails you?—have the French landed?'

'Mr. Pomfret, madam, is the bearer of ill-news,' said her friend, the mistress of the house, 'but I grieve to say it is private sorrow, which, though we may all share it, falls chiefly on himself and you.'

'On us! for pity's sake speak, Mr. Pomfret! Is it my mother?—tell me—I shall swoon away!' and she grew so pale that Joan sprang forward to support her.

'Nay, do not be alarmed, all may yet be well,' said Mr. Pomfret soothingly; 'It is briefly this: Arnold has met with an accident, being knocked down by some drunken fellow in the street, close outside this house, whither he had come to hand you into your chair and walk beside you home as he promised. The chairmen tell me that he had been standing there some minutes talking cheerfully to them, when some drunken young officers rushed out of the house, and one of them snatched a torch from a link-boy, and struck him a violent blow on the head, felling him to the ground, and the other seized his friend by the arm and dragged him away, so that we have no clue to the perpetrator of this vile outrage.'

And our son Arnold, what of him?'

'He was lifted into a chair and carried home, and there he lies, still unconscious; but the surgeon says he thinks he may recover.'



'He may recover?—when they talk in that fashion, they know there is no hope. Ah me, that I had never come abroad this night!'

'My love, do not reproach yourself for this mischance; rather, let me take you to the chair, which is in waiting, that we may the sooner be with our poor son. Our kind friend here will permit your sudden departure, and excuse the discourtesy.'

'Indeed, sir, I grieve at the cause most truly; but I would not detain you an instant. Most glad am I that you have but a short distance to traverse. Your charming niece will accompany you, doubtless. I must come and see you both well cloaked and hooded, that you may take no chill in leaving this hot room.'

A few minutes after, the anxious parents were at their own door, and Joan, burdened with a new fear, which she dared not to name, could scarce bear to look at her uncle, so sad an expression did his usually cheerful face now wear.

'I must rest awhile ere I see him,' Mrs. Pomfret said, sitting down on a couch in the parlour, where two wax candles, giving but a faint light in the spacious apartment, yet served to make her pale face look even paler than it really was. 'Go to him, if you wish, Mr. Pomfret, I will follow shortly. Joan, love, do you fear to look upon wounds and suffering?—if you knew how I dread it!'

'Can I do aught for you, madam? Fetch you a glass of water, or my grandmother's bottle of strong essences?—you look ready to faint.'

'I can scarce keep myself from sinking, Joan, yet your uncle, I know, desires my presence in his son's chamber; but oh, if he should be dying! Did you ever see death, child?'

'Once—long ago'—Joan's thoughts had travelled back to the dark evening, seven years before, when her father's lifeless body had been brought to his home; 'it was not fearful, madam.'

'You speak truly? Joan, you are a blessed child; give me your arm to mount the stairs.'

'Nay, stay a minute.' It was Mrs. Darley's voice, and the old lady entered brisk and lively as in her merriest mood. 'We want no sighing and moping upstairs, and you are such a poor creature, Aimée, that I have told your husband I shall send you to bed, and nurse your son myself.'

'You, mother?—an old lady of your age turning sick nurse? Nay, that may never be.'

'That may be, and that shall be. Joan, do your grandmother's bidding; take your aunt to her room, and leave her not till she is laid comfortably to sleep; then take your pale cheeks to bed. It hath been an ill rout for us to-night.'

'But, mother, tell me, how is my son?'

'Your son hath been in ugly company, as I shall tell him, if ever he finds his wits again; but I have hopes he will live to mend his ways. The surgeon has bled him, and that was a sight you like not, so it was well you did not come straight to his room.'

Mrs. Pomfret uttered a little shriek, whereupon the old lady stamped her foot impatiently, and said:

'Come, come, you would make a poor nurse. Go to rest now, and to-morrow, if God wills, you shall have a sight of your son in better case than he is at present. But I must return; there is none with him but his father, and that silly old housekeeper, who is sure he will die, and who knows but she may smother him, to make her words true, if I do not keep watch;' and she trotted away.

It was not an easy task to prevail on Mrs. Pomfret to go to rest. She would lie down on the couch, and so be ready if needed. She must see poor dear Arnold; she loved him as well—nay, better than her own son. Again, she dared not see him—he might be dying, and

she could not look on death. Joan was ready to sink with fatigue ere she had succeeded in inducing her aunt to go to her chamber, and allow her woman to undress her; and when at last that was done, and, true to her custom of exact obedience, she also had followed Mrs. Darley's direction, and sought her own room, and had crept cold and miserable into bed, sleep seemed further from her eyes than ever in her life before.

Would her cousin Arnold live? Joan wondered whether her grandmother had really the hope she seemed to have, or whether the old housekeeper, who had known Arnold all his life, would prove the truer prophet. Could he be even now dying? Could that strange power, called Death, be even now entering the silent house, and claiming a victim, while none perceived his approach? Joan held her breath and listened. The wind sighed in the chimney—a hollow moaning sound—the stairs creaked, a door swung to with a heavy thud; no other sound reached her ears, except the call of the watchman from hour to hour, and the voices of some link-boys, as they ran by the side of the chairmen, or lighted foot-passengers on their way. Soon all revellers had gone home, the quiet and silence grew more intense, and Joan wondered why she did not sleep.

'If I only knew, if I only felt sure it was not Amyot, I *could* sleep,' she moaned; 'for death is not a terrible thing, and Cousin Arnold, I am sure, fears it not. But then his poor father—and if it was Amyot, I could never bear it, I could never look at them again. Oh, brother, if you only knew how miserable you have made me!'

Thus she murmured to herself, tossing on her bed, till, no answer coming to her anxious questionings, she fell into a fitful slumber, starting and waking, and sleeping again; and thus the long hours of the night passed away, and the late winter morning came at last.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HUMILIATION.

'WHITHER away so fast, Jack?'

'To church. Will it astonish you so much to hear that I have the habitude of assisting at one service every Sunday?—but truly I know not where to go. One has told me there is a handsome new church called St. Giles-in-the-Fields, but I doubt if I can find the road there. Where do you go, good Amyot?'

'Well, I had half thought of going to the church near my uncle's house—St. George the Martyr, they call it—because there, perchance, I may meet my sister. Give me your company, Jack.'

'Willingly. A sight of your fair sister will much augment the fervour of my devotions; and truly, the parsons do little to aid us to—what do you call it in English?—raise our souls to God? Is that well said—*comme il faut!*'

'It is most entirely *comme il faut*—your English is most elegant, Jack; but you are starting in the wrong direction. Let me guide you.'

The service had begun when the two young men entered. The church was new, and the congregation most fashionable—far too fashionable to concern itself much with the prayers, doubtless considering that as the parson was paid to repeat them, he could of course perform his task unaided.

Amyot and his friend were led to a pew not far from the reading-desk. Many plumed hats turned as they

passed up the aisle, and more than one pair of glasses was raised to inspect them ; but neither of the young men could distinguish among the elegant ladies, the face and form of which they were in search.

'Strange that none of the family should be in church !' whispered Amyot to his companion. 'They must have overslept themselves.'

But his friend shook his head, firmly convinced that such an explanation was inadmissible.

It was not till near the close of a very eloquent discourse upon the necessity of laying up such a fund of good works as must secure popularity in this world, and also make an entrance into heaven certain, that Jack Pownal twitched his friend's sleeve and whispered :

'My eyes are better than yours : beside the pillar near the door I see an angel form. Let us lose no time, when he shuts his book, in making our way to the door.'

And Amyot, looking eagerly towards the spot indicated, discovered his sister, attended by her aunt's woman, and half hidden behind the pillar.

The sermon ended just at that moment, and they were soon outside, waiting for Joan. She had a preoccupied air as she came towards them, and started violently as her brother approached saying :

'Sweet sister, have you no eyes for me, and are you walking for a wager ?'

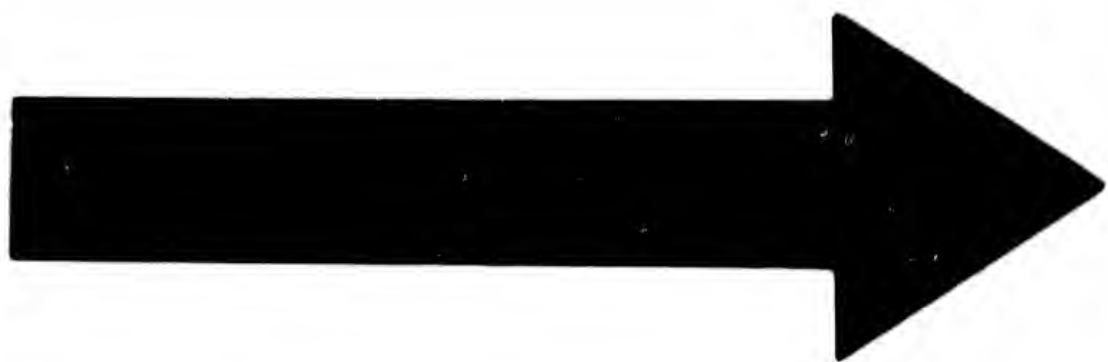
'Amyot—Lieutenant Pownal—I beg your pardon—I did not perceive you. But, oh ! brother, I am glad we have met : now you can clear up my doubts. Come with me a few steps from all this crowd, so that we may speak freely.'

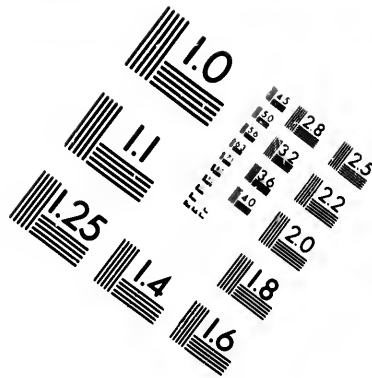
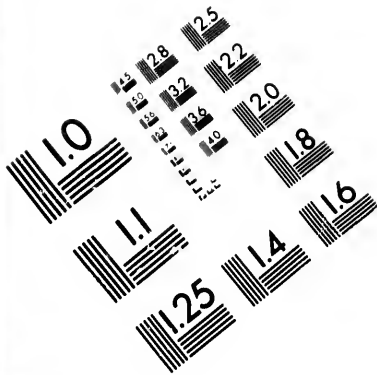
'Speak freely ?—aye, to be sure. What's amiss, Joan ?—you look wondrous grim.'

'Then you know nothing ? Oh, I am so relieved—so thankful !'

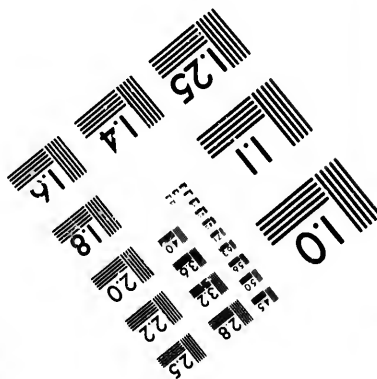
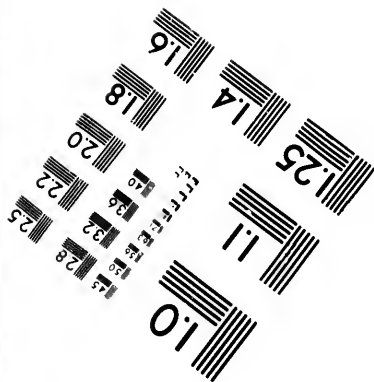
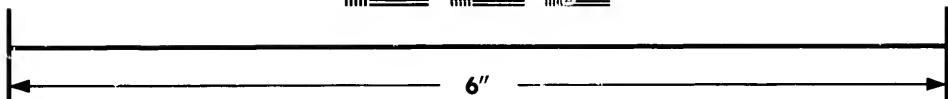
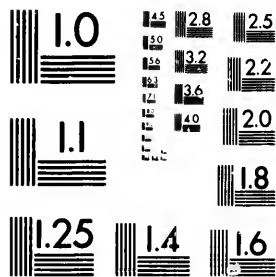
'Know nothing of what ?'

'Of my cousin Arnold's accident : how he was thrown





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down on Friday night, as he was standing waiting for my aunt to come from the card-party, and struck on the head and grievously hurt, so that we know not whether he will recover. My aunt is ill with grief, and my uncle is sad beyond description.'

'But how did it happen?' Amyot inquired, a look of some uneasiness passing over his face; while Lieutenant Pownal seemed inclined to speak, but checked himself.

'It happened only a few minutes after you parted from me so hastily. The chairmen who saw the mischance said some drunken officers, leaving the ballroom, attacked him savagely, with no provocation, and then, having done the deed, fled like cowards as they were!'

Joan's eyes flashed as she fixed them on her brother, and then waited breathless for his reply.

The colour rushed to his brow; he uttered a half exclamation as he met her indignant gaze; then his eyes fell, he dropped her hand, and, turning towards his friend, he said:

'Then you were right, Jack; and it *was* all a horrid, villainous mistake!'

'I fear so, indeed,' Jack Pownal said. 'I told you you had missed your man.'

There was a dead silence.

Joan looked from one to the other in despair.

'Tell me,' she said, at length. 'I cannot understand what you mean, brother. Was it you that struck that coward blow, and all unprovoked?'

But Amyot did not speak; his brow was bent, his eyes fixed on the ground, his lips compressed; the red flush had passed away, and an ashy paleness had succeeded. Thus he stood, silent and motionless, until anguish drew from Joan the passionate exclamation:

'You did it, you did it, in a fit of vile passion! Oh, I am glad, so glad that father and mother are dead, and no one left but me.'

Then he lifted his head, and, with white lips, said :

'Tell her all, Jack, for God knows it was a mistake, and, what is more, that I never meant to take anyone's life.'

'Miss Brough,' said the kindly lieutenant, 'might we not make a tour round the Square garden, and then I will recount to you the affair as it arrived ; your brother is not altogether the veritable rascal you believe him, and God is good, so be not too miserable. This is how the thing has arrived. There is a certain parson, a quite other man from monsieur your cousin, a beggar, a sot, a veritable demon, and he is for ever and always on the heels of your brother—he gives him no peace. Now, Amyot is not prudent—I speak it to his face—he has played with this demon, and the demon has cheated him, and he wants his money, and Amyot, you see, will not pay. He says he will fight, but no, the little parson fears to be killed—he is in no hurry to go to see his friends in the other world, although I do believe they must love him right well ; but no, he will not fight, and he will have his money, and I say to Amyot, " Pay him, and deliver yourself from him ;" but no, Amyot will not, and they quarrel, quarrel, as you, madam, did hear the other night. But you are unquiet, and I relate the affair in a manner so tiresome. Enfin, this is what did arrive. The parson ran out ; your brother conducted you to your aunt, and ran after him. I followed to see the mischief, and I saw Amyot seize a torch from a boy and strike a parson on the head ; truly, he meant but to frizzle up his perruque for him, and scorch him a trifle. But the parson was so exceedingly astonished that he started back and stumbled, and fell on the stone steps, and lay there as if dead ; I was affrighted : I seize Amyot's arm and drag him away, but I did say to him that very night that the parson was not the man at all, but larger—taller, I mean, by the head, at least. This is all my history, and I grieve exceedingly at

the calamity ; truly, I am in desolation for you, madam, and for my friend.'

'You are very good,' Joan said sadly. 'I thank you much, sir, for your explanation. It is something better than I feared, yet it is plain that my brother's passion is the cause of all our sorrow, nor can it be denied that he meditated harm to some one, though not to my cousin.'

'In verity, it cannot be denied,' Jack replied ; 'when in a passion, the good Amyot should be sent to Bethlehem.'

At last Amyot spoke :

'And now, sister, that you know all, what would you have me do ? It is an evil mischance, but I see no way to mend it. Is my cousin truly so much hurt ?' For Joan was weeping, and tears were so seldom her resource, that Amyot's worst fears were aroused by the sight.

'I scarce know ; my grandmother is hopeful, but my uncle's face is woeful to behold. Amyot, I know not what to counsel you.'

'Oh, for that matter, the counsel I need is soon spoken. I am not going to hide this deed of mine ; my uncle shall know all about it, soon or later ; all I need to know is, whether to go to him now and tell him, or wait till his grief be something lessened, and it may not cause him so much vexation to hear that I am such a ruffian. Tell me which will be best for him, Joan ; trouble not yourself for me. My aunt said once she feared she should live to see me hanged in chains, and, if I go on at this rate she is like to see her words come true. Nay, Joan, don't sob in that fashion ; truly, I meant to take no one's life.'

'It is so miserable,' Joan said ; 'not that I fear that uncle will not credit your story, but should my cousin die, how can they ever bear to look at you again ?'

'But we are not sure that he will die,' broke in Jack Pownal ; 'let us hope. Hope is a beautiful thing, and at this instant, we cannot dispense with her ; therefore let us say to ourselves, "The good parson will recover his health,

and all will be well." But for the moment, while all the world is so miserable, what shall the man do who was so unlucky as to break his head? Madam, I pray you, decide the question.'

Joan hesitated ; then she said :

'I dare not tell Amyot to go now to my uncle, he is so miserable ; go away now, Amyot, and come here to-morrow, if you can ; and to-day, if I can, I will tell my grandmother, and what she says, that you must do. She will know what is best.'

'That is most prudent,' said Jack Pownal ; 'you shall be obeyed, Miss Brough. I will charge myself with him, this great villain ; he shall break no more heads before to-morrow, and after that—well, his uncle must speak to the colonel, and have him taught discipline. Come away, you great rogue, you rascal, you murdering wretch, you ——'

'Stop,' said Amyot ; 'hold your tongue, Jack ; I want a word with my sister. Joan, could you not go home now, and find out how Arnold is, and give us some signal from the window of your chamber? We will watch at the corner of the Square.'

Joan agreed.

'If he is worse, or no better, I will wave this black ribbon from the window ; if better I will show this white handkerchief for a minute or two.'

She curtsied to Jack Pownal, and hastened towards home. The young men lingered, anxiously watching until, in a few minutes, the black ribbon floated from the window, and then they turned and walked silently away.

The short winter afternoon was closing in, and the darkness rapidly coming on, before Joan had any chance of seeking counsel from her grandmother, and by that time her misery had so increased by brooding on it, that she had well-nigh persuaded herself that the very worst consequences must ensue if Amyot told his uncle ; and had almost resolved to say nothing to Mrs. Darley about

the matter. Almost, but not entirely, for Joan's affection for her grandmother was deep, her confidence in her so sincere, that it was almost impossible for her to keep anything secret from the old lady.

Sitting on a low stool by the parlour fire, she had been debating the question with herself for three long hours, and with no certain result, when the door opened, and Mrs. Darley came in. Joan started to her feet with a smothered exclamation of delight, and hastened to seat the old lady, pale and exhausted with her long watch, in the high-backed chair beside the hearth. Then she brought a footstool for her feet, and a pillow for her head, with the gentle touch so pleasing to the old lady, who murmured :

'Bless thee, my child, art glad the wicked priest is better ?'

'Truly better—is my cousin truly better ? Oh, madam, I am so glad !—I think I never knew what gladness was before. And will he surely recover, do you think ?'

'Did I not say he would last night ? But why so monstrous glad, Joan ? He is naught but thy cousin—nay, not a true cousin either.'

'Nay, I know, but I count him cousin. I love him as such ; but that is not all, dear grandmother. May I tell you a dreadful story ?—and then you will marvel no more that I rejoice that my cousin is like to live.'

'Ay, tell me,' said the old lady wearily. 'Tis the old story, I suppose.'

'What old story, madam ?'

'Nay, never mind—tell me thine. Yes, sit down at my feet, and lay thy head on my knee. I am a silly old woman to-day, and like to have it so ; and now, what is it ?'

'It is about Amyot,' Joan began.

'Oh, Amyot ! I thought it had concerned thy cousin. Well, Amyot, what of him ?'

Slowly, and with some incoherency, Joan told her tale, to which the old lady listened with more than one exclamation of horror, and with a stifled sigh or two. When she ceased speaking, there was a silence for some minutes ; then Mrs. Darley said :

‘I fear that Aimée is right, and that the lad was not duly whipped when young. Such ungoverned tempers must prove something wrong ; yet Mr. Swinden was no fond fool to spare the rod. Well, sweet one, and to this weighty question, when shall Amyot tell his uncle, I scarce know what to say ; I will consider, Joan. I would I knew in what fashion the boy will tell it ; much depends on that. Mr. Pomfret is not always the pleasant gentleman that thou hast seen him.’ Joan’s lips quivered in the glow of the firelight ; her grandmother perceived it, and stroked her fair hair. ‘Thy brother is a sore pain to thee, child,’ she said. ‘How say you, shall I see him to-morrow, and school him how to address his uncle, and shall I tell Mr. Pomfret the tale he has to hear, and so prepare his mind beforehand !’

‘Oh, grandmother, if you would be so good !’

‘Ay, it will be better so ; and now that I can assure thy uncle that his son will live, perchance he will hear it with less anger ; but he is sitting beside the patient now, and may not be disturbed ; and thou, Joan, shouldst be with thy aunt. Leave me, child ; I am weary, and intend to take some rest.’

‘And, grandmother, may I know what my uncle says ?’

‘Thou wilt know all that it concerns thee to know ; and now go. If the lad is to be hanged, I will not fail to tell thee.’

The sight of that black ribbon, and the night of anxious doubt that had followed it, had wrought in Amyot a marvellous degree of self-reproach and contrition ; and when he appeared in his grandmother’s presence, it was with no thought of defending himself or

explaining away his fault. His passion fairly over, Amyot was ever apt rather to exaggerate than make light of its disastrous effects, and to declare that he was, without exception, the most desperate character in the universe. In just such a mood did he now stand before Mrs. Darley, and the old lady could scarce conceal a smile at the sight of her tall, strongly built grandson, overwhelmed with shame and confusion, listening patiently to her reproof, and entirely acquiescing in its justice.

'What's to be done with thee?' she said, gazing at his blushing face over the top of her spectacles. 'Truly, I think you English people a most stubborn set of beings. It is the roast beef and the strong ale. Thou needest to be kept on bread and water; nought else will exorcise the evil spirits which rule over thee. What! a poor starving wretch wants some money that thou owest him, and thou art so enraged that thou wouldst break his head; and so blind doe thy passion make thee, that thou dost not even know the man who has offended thee! Whence got you this mad temper, grandson Amyot, I pray thee?'

'Truly, madam, I know not. Glad would I be to be quit of it.'

'Like enough, like enough; when the mischief is done thou art mighty sorry! But hearken, thou young villain—wouldst have been as grieved had thy iron fist broken thy enemy's skull instead of thy cousin's? Tell me that, and then shall I know how much thy repentance means.'

'Dear madam, I have not considered that matter. My cousin's danger has put all other thoughts out of my head.'

'I thought no less. It is a poor brain thine, Amyot. Well, I set thee this lesson. Wilt thou study it? Yes, thou sayest. I doubt it. Once out of this scrape, thou wilt forget all thy sorrow and repentance, and plunge

straight into another. Nay, make no promises. I know thee. It hath been ever thus.'

'I am in no mood to hope well of myself, madam,' Amyot replied gloomily. 'When passion seizes me, I own I am possessed, and know not what I do.'

'Then I tell thee, grandson, that thou must learn to root out the demon that possesses thee, or we must seek a lodging for thee in Bedlam ; but if I hear thee speak more in this foolish fashion, I will add another to the many ill-names I give thee in my mind, and call thee coward. Yes, Amyot Brough, if thou canst not war against thyself, I call thee coward. What ! thou canst look at me now !'

'Grandmother, it is not I. When I am in a passion, I don't know what I am doing.'

'Talk not such silly stuff to me. Thou hadst full knowledge of all thine actions on Friday night ; thou wilt not escape me thus. And now what dost thou propose to say to thine uncle ?'

'Nothing but that I grieve from my heart. There is nothing else for me to say.'

'Well, doubtless thou wilt be glad to hear that Mr. Pomfret has no wish to see thee. So he bade me tell thee. I told him the ugly story last night, and found that he had guessed the whole. Art astonished ? Well, so was I. This was how it came about. Thy cousin revived much yesterday, towards evening, was quite himself, and talked cheerfully ; and his father—men will be fools—asked him about his accident—whether he knew who had struck the blow. Arnold was loath to speak, but at length confessed that he did. He was sure, he said, that some mistake was the cause, and he prayed his father not to urge him further, saying that it was one known to both, and much discomfort might arise if the thing were known. Your uncle had marked your sister's disconsolate state, and had little difficulty in



guessing who was in fault. To content Arnold he promised to keep the secret from thy aunt ; but he bade me tell thee he had no wish to see thee for the present.'

'And my cousin—did he say anything of me?'

'What should he say of thee? Send thee his respects and thanks for thy courtesy, maybe! Nay, he named thee not. It is likely that even as thou preferrest to think thyself mad, so he chooses to think thee drunk. And now thou hadst best seek thy sister, and bid her farewell ; and when thou art far away, and thinkest of thy cross old grandmother, remember that she is ready enough to be proud of thee if thou wilt let her.'

## CHAPTER XV.

### YEA OR NAY?

Mrs. DARLEY's confident assurances were verified, and in three weeks Arnold was himself again, and ready to return to his work. By common consent the cause of his illness was seldom mentioned. 'It has a vulgar sound to have been wounded in a drunken frolic,' Mrs. Pomfret said, and her stepson smiled and cordially agreed, the more readily that such remarks were wont to bring painful blushes to Joan's face and a gloomy scowl to his father's. The former was oppressed with a constant and ever-recurring burden of self-reproach, in that she had failed again and again to induce her cousin to listen to her timidly expressed regrets that one belonging to her should have done him harm. Arnold always turned the subject whenever she attempted to allude to his illness, though whenever Amyot's name was mentioned by her or anyone else, he was as much interested and as full of kindly sympathy as he had ever been. It seemed to Joan that he was more interested in the one letter she had received from Amyot since his departure for Flanders than anyone else in the house. More than once she asked herself if it was not possible that his memory had been impaired by his illness, though that she knew could scarcely be, since he had told his father all particulars of the accident with perfect clearness.

The day before that fixed for his return to Swynford, he came into the parlour where Joan was engaged in writing a letter. So intent was she on her employment,

that she did not look up when he entered the room. For some time he occupied himself with a book ; and after a while a lively conversation began between himself and Mrs. Darley, who was knitting near the window ; and Joan, amused, laid down her pen and listened.

This her grandmother soon perceived.

'Joan, thou idle child, finish thy letter and get thy seam. Thou hast been long enough busy over that long letter to thy good-for-nothing brother ! I would have thee better employed.'

Joan's fair face flushed ; she looked up suddenly, and her eyes met Arnold's, who said :

'Have you space, Cousin Joan, for a message from me ? It is of no great matter if the paper is full ; if not, will you give him his cousin Arnold's loving wishes, and tell him I look to see him at my house when he returns from the wars ?'

Joan's pen faithfully recorded the words ; then, having sealed her letter, she rose hastily to fetch her sewing ; and as she passed Arnold's chair, she said in a low voice :

'Cousin, I thank you with all my heart ; and so, I know, will Amyot.'

'Nay, the invitation is scarce worth thanks,' said Arnold lightly, as he opened the door for her ; 'if you had seen my house, you would wonder that I should dare to give it.'

'Arnold, you are a base schemer, and I will have none of your evil doings. You are winning the child's heart, and you dare to do it before my face !'

'I dare not do it behind your back, madam ; but, to tell the truth, I had not dreamed that as yet she cared for me. Do you truly mean what you say ?'

'Arnold, we had best look into this matter. Tell me what are your own thoughts, and I will tell you mine.'

'Then mine are quickly told : I love my cousin Joan—yes, more than ever I had thought to love anyone—and

every time I see her, I am more and more set upon winning her to be my wife. Those are my thoughts, dear madam—bluntly told, but the truth, and nothing but the truth; and now will you tell me your mind, much though I fear to hear it.'

'My good Arnold, I will be tender of your feelings; and, to begin, I will not scruple to say that I like you moderately well. You will not, I think, ill-use my child; you will not beat her, swear at her, or starve her. Nay, laugh me not to scorn, but hear me further. I am not questioning that you love the child, but yet there is such a thing as a selfish love; and I have no mind that my child shall be your wife merely because you want some one to make your home bright, look after your servants, and mend your linen: there are many homely wenches who can do all that, and are good enough for parsons' wives. I listened to your description of your house the other night, and I said to myself, "The child shall not live there;" so now your reverence has my mind—but nay, not altogether; I may have more to say by-and-by.'

Arnold Pomfret was silent for a minute, but only for a minute.

'I am considering,' he said, 'how best to prove to you that my love for my cousin is of a better kind than you deem. Yet I thought you knew me better than to judge me likely to marry merely to improve my bodily comfort. Yet I would not have you think that I had purposed to take her to my house as now it is, and as you heard me describe it. Much must be done to the old rectory before it would be fit for a lady's presence; and as soon as my church is somewhat more fit to be called by such a name, then I mean to set about the repair of the house.'

'And why not repair both at once?'

Arnold hesitated, and began to pace the room with his eyes fixed on the carpet. At length he said:

'You will always have a full confession, dear madam;

and indeed, were it only my own business, I would conceal nothing from you : but this much must I say, that of the money which I had destined for the repair of both church and rectory I have been forced to use a part ; and so I must defer the rebuilding of my own house for six months at least. Therefore, madam, you see that my cousin will not be hurried into matrimony, if she be pleased to favour my suit.'

'And this money? You have wasted it, Arnold Pomfret—I know you have! Do you think a careless spendthrift shall have my child? What call can a young priest have to spend such a sum of money, unless it be sinful waste? Ha! I have it!—This money has gone to pay Guy's gaming debts—I know it! My daughter Pomfret told me that his father would pay no more, and she lamented her son's hard lot—not so hard, it seems, since he has a soft simpleton of a brother who will come to his aid. Nay, nay, I doubt much whether you are fit to wed my child.'

'Since you but doubt, I must take leave to hope, madam. May I not approach the subject with my cousin herself? I leave London to-morrow in the early morning.'

'You are a bold man to talk thus to me. I tell you my mind is not made up. What says your father of this whim of yours?'

'He is well satisfied with my purpose, and bade me hold fast by it ; not, I trust, that he judged me likely to change, but that he foresaw some difficulties in the way. You, madam, he said, could ill spare your granddaughter.'

'He said that!' said the old lady, bridling. 'Men judge all others by the measure of their own selfishness. And your mother—what did her wisdom put forth?'

'I have not spoken to her of the matter, but am well convinced that she loves my cousin well, and will be right pleased to call her daughter.'

'Of course, of course. Well, Arnold Pomfret, listen to me. This forenoon I go a-driving with my daughter Pomfret; Joan will be at home; she has writing to do for me, and so you do not take up all her time, I care not if you have some conversation with her. The child has sense, and will not ascribe too much meaning to your words; and if my good Johnstone should chance to be of your company, it need not inconvenience you, since she has lost her hearing, and seldom comprehends except it be most specially ill-convenient. Nay, don't thank me; the maiden has not said "Ay" yet, and neither have I.'

'A terrible tedious drive, child, and a fog came up from the river before we reached home. I verily thought the man would lose his way; but the oil-lamps were lighted and the link-boys out as if it was night. But it's over now and no harm done, but that I am wearied of your aunt's shrieks and the jolting of the chariot. But I have good news for thee, Joan. I called to see Mrs. Wolfe in Old Burlington Street, and she has had tidings from her son James, who is with the army in Flanders; and he speaks of having met his old schoolfellow, Amyot Brough—"a likely young fellow," he calls him, and that from James Wolfe is high praise, as thou very well knowest. But how now, Joan; thou art not attending to my words. Art deaf to the praises of thy beloved Amyot?'

'Grandmother—madam, something has happened in your absence. I am almost afraid to tell it, lest you should think me to blame; yet I do not know what else I could have done.'

'What hast thou done, child? torn thy slip, or dropped ink on thy new apron, or quarrelled with thy cousin?'

'Grandmother, would you have me quarrel with him? Sometimes I think you would.'

'And so thou hast done it just to pleasure me. Thou

art a most dutiful grandchild. But what was the matter of thy quarrel, and who began it ?'

Joan dropped her eyes, and tracing with her slender foot the pattern of the carpet, said, while a smile played about her mouth :

'It has not yet begun, madam ; yet it seems to me that we are like to quarrel all our lives long, and that for a most silly purpose. Can you guess my riddle, dear grandmother ?'

The old lady sat down, and taking the girl's two hands in hers, said :

'Thy cousin Arnold has asked thee to be his wife, child—that much I guess ; but if thou wilt have nought to do with such a purpose, it had been better that thou hadst left the matter in my hands. A young girl should not be in haste to wound an honest man.'

'Dear grandmother, I did not wound him. What I said I cannot precisely tell ; but he was not vexed. How could he be ? Surely, he knew that what he wished and you wished, I would gladly do.'

'Then how about the quarrel ?'

'Dear grandmother, I was but joking. My cousin would have me believe that he holds me most singularly dear. It is his kindly heart that makes him ever think others so monstrous excellent. I was too abashed to chide him for his foolishness, but I told myself that since I, too, held him good and great beyond all other, we should for ever quarrel which should love the other most.'

'Thou silly child, art sure thou lovest that tall, grave-visaged priest ? What canst thou find in him to like, I ask thee ?'

But Joan's eloquence had exhausted itself.

'Indeed, madam, I cannot tell ; yet I do know this : he is quite unlike all others that I have seen.'

'You have seen but few, perhaps scarce enough to be sure that thou knowest thine own mind. One day I

thought thou hadst a liking for thy brother's merry friend, Lieutenant Jack Pownal.'

'Oh, madam, to speak of him beside my cousin Arnold!'

'Well, well, is it so? But listen, child; there shall be no talk of marriage until I give thee leave. Thy cousin has a house not fit to lodge a pig. He has much to do before he thinks of wedlock.'

'Grandmother, did you think I should be in haste to leave you?'

'*N'importe*. I must seek out another stray child, but this time she shall be ill-favoured enough to stay with me. Naught that is pleasant to gaze on will rest satisfied with my company, and I love not changes.'

Yet as the evening passed, it seemed strange to Joan that what had made so great a change to her personally, had wrought so little outward difference. Her grandmother and aunt talked of their drive, their visits, the fog, and other trivial matters; her uncle discussed politics with his son, and she, as was her wont, sat silent and listened; and yet it was Arnold's last evening, and to-morrow they would be miles asunder. Was it all a dream? Had she wholly understood his meaning? Joan shuddered at the thought. Surely, when that long dinner was over, they would have more of the converse which had been so sweet in the afternoon. What was that her uncle was saying?

'Come with me to the play to-night, Arnold. Your mother fears the fog, and will not venture abroad. You care not for the play, I know, but you might bear me company this last night of your stay in town.'

'Rather, Mr. Pomfret,' said his wife fretfully, 'should you stay with us, and not deprive me of my son's society, since I cannot go abroad.'

'That would I gladly, since I, too, detest the fog, and have no great esteem for this particular play; but I have promised to meet some friends there, and I choose to abide by



my word. But stay with your mother, Arnold, if you will.'

'If you will allow me, sir, I will drive with you to the theatre, and return at once; I start early to-morrow, and have still some preparations to make.'

And thus it was settled, and Joan breathed freely again.

'My son Arnold *is* a true gentleman,' said Mrs. Pomfret, when the two gentlemen had departed; 'yet he has an awkward mode of speech—why did he not pay me the compliment which in his heart he intended, instead of speaking as if all his thoughts were set on his baggage?'

'I, too, feel aggrieved,' Mrs. Darley said, her bright eyes full of merriment. 'I looked for a neatly turned phrase of politeness, and lo, I am forgotten entirely! Joan, how thinkest thou?—is not thy cousin a barbarian?'

'Poor Joan!' remarked Mrs. Pomfret; 'if she looks for courtesy from her cousin, she must have been monstrously disappointed throughout her sojourn here. In his eyes it is verily a crime for a lady to be young; he is a mighty strange person. I should have warned you, Joan, of his uncouth manners, and that you must not look for pretty speeches from him.'

'Dear aunt, he is always kind to me,' was Joan's reply, while her fair face and neck flushed rosy red, whereupon Mrs. Pomfret exclaimed impatiently:

'Kind, of course; but you do not take my meaning, child. Arnold has a fine presence and figure, but he lacks those elegancies in word and pleasant turns of speech which mark a man of good-breeding. Mother, your fair dove is but a wood-pigeon still.'

'Joan, while we poor women are left to entertain ourselves, thou hadst best amuse us by reading aloud. Fetch that book of verse thy uncle commended to thee, and give us something wise for our meditations. Thy aunt will soon improve upon them in her dreams. She loves a short sleep after dinner.'

Joan obeyed, and while Mrs. Pomfret, reclining on her couch, soon fell into a doze, her more alert mother sat erect, well pleased to listen to the musical voice that gave forth the pleasant lines with such correct modulations, and to feast her eyes on the graceful figure and fair face before her.

‘That will do, child ; it is pleasant verse enough, but thy aunt is in the land of dreams, and here is thy cousin returned to pack his effects ; perhaps he has need of our help—are there any small concerns to be set in order before your return to your wilderness, reverend sir ? We are well persuaded that nought but the care of your worldly affairs brought you home from the play to-night.’

‘I will not contradict you, madam, since my worldly affairs comprise other matters besides my clothes and books ;’ then, glancing from her to his mother, and perceiving that she had not been aroused by his entrance, he added in a lower tone, as he stooped over the old lady’s chair : ‘My cousin did not say me nay ; she has been very good to me, but I am not yet entirely content, and thinking over all I said to her, I fear I led her into the error of supposing that the scheme I had so much at heart, was wholly to your liking, therefore I pray you, madam, absolve me from the sin of this small deception, and say that you are well content.’

‘I never was in all my life—it is not my nature to be contented ; I am ever hoping for something better to befall, or striving hard to think well of things as they are. Therefore, Arnold Pomfret, it is useless to seek for such professions from me ; you must make yourself happy with having gained your end, which should be enough for any man.’

‘But it is not enough for me,’ he pleaded earnestly, ‘nor for my cousin either, I see it in her face.’

‘Then what will you both do ? Do you imagine I shall shower blessings on you just for the sake of adding

to your bliss, which seems to me as perfect as needs be. No, I shall hold to my right to grumble, and you must put up with it.'

Arnold withdrew his arm from the back of the resolute old lady's chair, and, looking sorely perplexed, placed himself at the opposite side of the hearth, leaning against the chimney-piece, and gazing at Joan's downcast face, in which the colour came and went, as she listened to this conversation.

At last she looked up suddenly as she felt his eyes fixed on her, and said timidly: 'Cousin, you do not know my grandmother, or you would be well satisfied to leave the matter thus.'

'Should I? Then enlighten me, sweet cousin, for I feel myself defeated in this combat, and scarcely know whether you are truly mine or not.'

'Then my grandmother has gained her object, and is triumphing over you. She delights to puzzle people, and now, I know, she is much elated. Dear madam'—Joan was now kneeling at her feet, stroking the white wrinkled hands—'you force me to let out your secrets: when you thought for one minute that I was unwilling to do what my cousin wishes, you were angry with me, and blamed me that I had wounded him; yes, Cousin Arnold, that is the truth, so now you know that she is well content. No, grandmother, do not pull your hand away! I want it, and Aunt Pomfret's dog has carried off your knitting.'

'Get up, Joan, and cease thy falsehoods, child; thy aunt is waking, and will be curious to know what all this turmoil is about. Arnold, we will make the best of this bad business; who knows but you may get your head broken in right earnest before the wedding day? Your roof is like to tumble in, I hear, and the staircase will scarce bear your weight. We will keep up our spirits, there is hope for us yet!'

## CHAPTER XVI.

CAPTAIN GUY.

'I do not love changes,' Mrs. Darley had said in prospect of Joan's betrothal, and as if to prove the sincerity of her words, the months that succeeded that event were passed by her and Joan in the most unbroken regularity and monotony at Westerham.

Returned there, the old lady lost no time in discovering that her grandchild's education was by no means perfect. 'What have I been about?' she said. 'Why, I have been bringing her up to be a fine lady, and she is going to become a parson's drudge, to mend and make, bake and brew, cure and cook, for a parish. We must begin all over again. Dear me! it would have saved a world of trouble if I had settled about the husband before I began the training of the child.'

And to repair her many deficiencies, Joan was set to study the art of housekeeping, and to learn by practice the many duties which would fall to her share as a poor man's wife; for 'though he has an ample income, Arnold Pomfret will always be a poor man,' Mrs. Darley averred and Joan agreed that it was highly probable.

And while the spring and summer of 1747 were passing away thus monotonously in the quiet Kentish village, Amyot was growing used to his military duties in Flanders, and, not a little to his surprise, discovering that even in time of war it was possible for one day's duties to be much like another, and for events and excitements to be rare.

Fortune did not smile on the British arms in this campaign, and much discontent was the consequence. Amyot, who had scarcely ever thought of the possibility of defeat, was much surprised that the French armies did not vanish like smoke before the allies, and much inclined to think somebody ought to be shot or superseded.

'We spend such heaps of time doing nothing,' he complained, as with his comrade, Jack Pownal, he sauntered listlessly along the streets of Maestricht one autumn evening; they were quartered in the town, and spent much of their time together. 'There's that place they make such a fuss about, Bergen-op-Zoom. Why can't they send us there?—it will surrender in no time to those beggarly Frenchmen, you see if it doesn't!'

'Yes, all the world knows that; but, do you see, mon cher, we are not in their confidence. They have their reasons, our generals, and no doubt they are very good.'

'No doubt they are very bad, I should say. It is the Prince of Orange and the Dutch who keep us doing nothing. It is a bad plan, tis partnership business; our Duke is brave enough, and clever enough—if he had his own way, things would go differently; but these Dutch are lazy—they're never to the fore when they are wanted.'

'Well, my dear Brough, it may be as you say; but after our one combat at Laffelt, I am not entirely convinced that it is quite impossible that we shall be beaten. Experience learns us many things, and you know the proverb, "The child that burns himself fears the fire."'

'Then, having been beaten once, are we never to fight again?'

'Softly, mon cher; but assuredly we will fight again—  
"He that fights and runs himself away, will live and will fight on another day." That is a fine sentiment, truly.'

'You *are* a brave fellow, Jack—you are more than half a Frenchman yourself!'

'But no, my brave fellow, it was not the French that saved themselves at Laffelt.'

'Neither was it the English!'

'Oh no, neither the one nor the other.'

'Well, for my part, I wish I had taken up my father's trade; they *can* fight like Britons at sea.'

'They haven't old Maurice to fight against—he would outwit them if they had.'

'Jack, you make me mad. No Frenchman could beat us if we had but fair play.'

'There you are wrong, altogether and quite entirely wrong. What did your friend James Wolfe tell you the other day, that a soldier must, before all things, be modest? You do not follow his advice. And yet am I much obliged to Messieurs the Admirals Anson and Hawke; if they had not made an end of the French fleets, we should be too entirely ashamed of ourselves.'

Amyot was silent; then, as if desirous of changing the subject, remarked:

'Have you heard that Wolfe has received a wound?—not a very serious one, yet they say it is likely he will return to England before winter. Some say the Duke goes soon, and that peace will shortly be concluded. We shall not carry much glory home with us.'

'Nay, our shoulders might support a trifle more; but we being nobodies, that will be no great matter. And, for the Duke, everyone can see it is no want of courage. A somebody, I know not precisely who, has said that he has not the talents for to make a great general.'

'Somebodies without names generally talk prodigious folly,' Amyot replied irreverently. 'But how like you the idea of a peace, and nothing to do, Jack?'

'It is not precisely to my taste; but, in fine, that will not endure.'

'Jack, you must go to school and learn English. Sometimes you talk like a native, and then again there is no sense in what you say.'

‘So, then will I try to improve. I will marry an English wife, and she shall chastise me.’

‘No, truly, she shall correct you, you mean.’

‘Correct, chastise, it is all the same thing, no difference at all. And you, Amyot, you shall learn French ; you have greatly neglected all your good occasions—*tiens!* it is abominable, shameful to reflect, that you have a friend who speaks the French like a native, and a grandmother who was lifted up at St. Cyr, and who is Parisienne to the ends of her fingers, and your accent is truly barbarous.’

‘Because I hate French—I am a Briton.’

‘You are half French, you big John Bull. *Allons!* you *shall* learn the French, and speak him like a native, too.’

‘Stop, Jack ; do you see that long fellow coming down the street ?’

‘What, the Captain Guy Pomfret ? I save myself ! he puts always his hand into other men’s pockets, and mine is inconvenient empty,’ and Jack darted off like a shot, while Guy Pomfret, perceiving Amyot, crossed the street, and accosted him with the familiarity of a relative and old friend.

‘Charmed to meet—haven’t seen you for ever so long—thought you must have fallen at Laffelt. No ! what luck—anything to do ? Come along and spend the evening at my quarters—some capital fellows coming. Cards—oh yes ; don’t play if not convenient, but give us your company.’ And Amyot, not quite willingly, agreed.

Jack, from a safe distance, had watched the proceeding, and ejaculating, ‘Very content you are not my cousin, Monsieur le Capitaine !’ departed in an opposite direction.

Three officers were lounging in Captain Guy’s quarters when he and Amyot arrived. All were strangers to Amyot, and eyed him somewhat suspiciously, until the

words 'My cousin' from their host explained his appearance ; then their manner entirely changed—they greeted him with rapture, courteously begged he would take a hand, while Guy pressed him to make himself at home, and play or not, just as he liked.

'Any news from the old people, Brough?' asked the merry captain, as Amyot seated himself at the table ; 'they never write to me—have dropped my acquaintance altogether ; shall drop theirs when I go home.'

'Close-fisted, aren't they?' said one of the company ; 'younger sons are apt to be counted troublesome.'

'Just so,' said Guy ; 'ought to be a law against a man having two sons.'

'Your cousin's an only son, I've heard you say.'

'Yes ; with a prodigious handsome sister though, going to marry my brother.'

'What, the parson?—mad, isn't he, Pomfret?'

'Not too mad to manage his own affairs, I am sorry to say. What's the matter, Brough?'

'I—I don't understand you,' said Amyot, reddening. 'Is your brother mad?'

'Oh, not what the doctors call mad, only a trifle strange here,' and he touched his forehead.

'Madder than you?' asked Amyot, whereupon the others laughed, and said that was not so bad a hit.

'Oh, we're all mad,' said Guy indifferently, 'but the disease takes different forms—go on, Amyot, fire away.'

The game proceeded more silently, and very much in earnest, and Amyot was beginning to think of the letter he should have to compose to his old lawyer at Penrith, when a heavy step was heard on the stair, which creaked and shook, as a hand fumbled at the door, and a private soldier put in his head with : 'By your leave, gentlemen ; I was sent hither to search for a certain Lieutenant Brough—do you know such a name?'

'That's he ; what do you want, man?'



'I was to give him this here,' said the soldier, 'and to say as I have a horse below.'

Amyot opened the folded paper, and read :

'I am starting for England in a day or two. Can you come and see me for an hour? I am detained in my quarters by a trifle of a wound, but would be glad to be the bearer of any messages for your friends.

'J. W.'

Captain Guy read the billet over his shoulder and scowled. 'How did he know where you were?' he asked.

'I cannot guess; but it is good-natured of him to make this offer. I pray you, excuse me, Guy, and you, gentlemen.'

'Nay, stay and finish this rubber—you must; hulloa there, you fellow, walk the horse about that he may not catch cold! Sit down for five minutes, Brough.'

The five minutes had grown to thirty before Amyot made his escape, uncomfortably conscious that his diversion had cost him more than was any way convenient, and inexpressibly glad of the excuse which had enabled him to leave his merry friends so soon. And as he started off in the direction pointed out to him by the soldier who had brought the letter, and felt the cool evening breeze blow on his face, he asked himself, how he could have been such a fool as to have been drawn into play with such sharp hands as were always to be found at his cousin's quarters.

'I am an idiot, and nothing less, always doing what I've vowed I won't; but how could Wolfe know where I was, I wonder?'

This question was easily answered when he reached his destination; as he entered the house, the sound of voices reached his ear, and in a moment he found himself

pounced upon by his lively friend Jack, who exclaimed : 'Arrived—our trick has then succeeded ! Were they very ferocious, your cousin and his friends ?'—while Wolfe, raising himself from a half-reclining attitude, joined in the laugh, and added : 'I warrant you've left a small fortune behind you ; how are you, Brough ? Will you forgive me for enticing you away from your amiable friends ?'

'I was glad enough to come,' Amyot replied ; 'but did Jack tell you where I was, since your messenger said he had no difficulty in tracing me out ?'

'Jack came here a while since, much concerned for you. I railed at him for deserting you in such a faint-hearted fashion ; but he alleged that Captain Pomfret being your cousin, he had scruples about interfering between you ; but I was less delicate, you see. But now, I pray you be seated. This is but a mean kind of room, and we have neither wine nor cards for your entertainment ; but Jack is a merry fellow, and the best of company when he chooses.'

'And when are you going home, captain ?' inquired Amyot ; 'and how came you by your wound ?'

'At Laffelt, I have but just come here. When am I going home ? In a few days, I expect ; your regiment may remain here through the winter, or be speedily sent to England ; but I shall certainly start before you. What commissions have you for me ? I shall make it my business to see your uncle and aunt ; and before long I shall hope to go to Westerham, to see my own friends, and yours too.'

Amyot charged him with some few messages, which Wolfe noted down and promised to deliver faithfully, while Jack Pownal paced the room, humming martial airs. At last, impatient at having no share in the conversation, he broke in, exclaiming :

'If you see the good Amyot's fair sister, you may bear

her a message from me, captain ; tell her that he does not conduct himself entirely to my taste, that he still loves play, that he still has pleasure in quarrels, and in fine, he is not always *bon garçon*. She should write to him and reproach him, for truly there are the moments when he gives me much of pain.'

'I will not forget,' said Wolfe gravely. 'And you, Amyot, have you no defence to make?'

'My sister knows Jack,' was the reply ; 'but he is wrong when he says I love play. I care very little about it, but I can't always refuse. And as for quarrels—I am the most peaceable fellow in the world when I am not put out.'

'Hear him ! hear him !' cried Jack. 'The most peaceable fellow in the world when he is not put out ! But touch him with the end of your little finger, and he will have your heart's blood ; that is what you call peaceable, do you ? Oh, you are a vain dog, and there is no mistake !'

'But, Brough, pardon my curiosity,' said Wolfe, when Jack stopped for breath. 'But will your estate bear the pull you are making on it ? For I know that it is impossible to be much in Captain Pomfret's company without suffering for it. His friends, too, are hard gamblers.'

'I know,' said Amyot, in a melancholy tone ; 'but I don't want to quarrel with my cousin.'

'Listen ! listen !' cried Jack. 'He not desire to quarrel. Why, it is what he loves best in the world. But, you see, he will only quarrel for a nothing.'

'But need there be any question of quarrelling ?' said Wolfe.

'It would be difficult to avoid it—terrible difficult,' Jack said, shaking his head. 'The captain has a fashion of talking quite extraordinary. I save myself, that is what I do.'

'Run away, you mean—talk English, Jack. Well, Brough, if you can't fight, let me counsel you to do the same.'

'I'll keep out of his way whenever I can ; but running away, or refusing his invitations altogether—I cannot well do that.'

'You had better do so—it would be your wisest plan,' Wolfe began, when an unusual bustle outside attracted his attention, and Jack exclaimed :

'What is happening there below ? Shall I go to see ?'

'Some drunken row,' Wolfe remarked. But at that moment a heavy thud was heard outside the door, which was speedily burst open, and Captain Guy and two of his companions rushed into the room. One of them, stumbling on the uneven floor, made a headlong plunge, and lost his footing altogether. The other two, not being altogether steady on their legs, seated themselves without ceremony—one on the table, the other on the bedstead—and burst into a loud roar at the sight of their companion's prostrate figure. Then they looked round the room, and stared at the three friends as if uncertain who they were.

Amyot was the first to speak.

'What do you want, Guy ? The captain here is ill ; you might have used a little more ceremony if you wished to see him.'

'Wished to see him ? oh, who ? I forget who we want ; my memory is bad. Who was it, Solmes !'

'The young blade who owes us money. Don't know who he is—nor care either—but you should know ; you brought him in, and let him run off in that mean fashion—one of your brood, no doubt ; they're all a mean lot.'

'Don't know what you're talking about,' said Captain Guy, whose intellect was not of the clearest ; 'why doesn't that fool get up ; somebody put him on his legs, will you ?'

'Look here, Guy,' broke out Amyot hotly, 'if he touch him, I'll pitch him out of window, and you after him; get off that table, and take yourself off. If you want me, I'll come with you.'

'No, you won't,' said Wolfe in a low voice; 'Captain Pomfret, my friends and I are engaged, particularly engaged, as the man outside should have told you; but perhaps you did not ask him.'

'Can't understand; don't know who you are, or what you want. This table is precious unsteady; have you never a chair to offer a gentleman?'

'Not one,' said Jack. 'Your friend there seems drowsy, captain,' for the other officer had sunk back on the low bedstead in a heavy drunken sleep, 'and your other friend is in still worse case—he has fallen quite flat on his nose, and smashed him.'

'No; has he? Well he came to get some money. Now it'll go to fee the surgeon, and he owes it to me. Who owed him the money? Can't make out; somebody here, I s'pose.'

'Captain Pomfret, allow me a few words in private,' said Jack, approaching with a deferential air; 'just a little word in the street outside, where these gentlemen shall hear nothing; I assure you it is vastly important, and much to your advantage.'

'To my advantage? Then I am your man, to follow you to the ends of the earth,' and Guy rose with such alacrity that, his sight being not of the clearest, he had nearly measured his length over his prostrate friend, when Jack seized him by the arm, and with some difficulty piloted him safely to the door.

There were some loud words, and something like a scuffle in the street below, but in five minutes the young lieutenant returned triumphant, saying:

'I have done his affair: now to be rid of these two insensibles; they are entirely at our mercy. What shall

we make of them?—a bonfire?—or pitch them out of the window, as said Amyot?’

‘Get rid of them,’ said Wolfe, wearily, ‘especially that fellow who is settled where I greatly desire to be. Can’t you two take them up tenderly, so as not to disturb their slumbers, and put them out into the street, where they can wake at their leisure? Don’t rouse that fellow Solmes—he is apt to be dangerous when in that condition.’

‘Come along, Brough ; gently, my dear fellow—let him think the mother’s arms are still around him, and that he is again an innocent. “Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber”—so, so, my pretty ; never lift the little head ; but plague you, you are made of lead ! Amyot, you boast of your great strength—exert it, I pray you, or I shall fall with fatigue.’

‘You ought to be greatly obliged to us, Wolfe,’ remarked Jack, when this task was accomplished, ‘for having rid you of so much lumber, for verily my arms do ache, and Brough is in still worse case, giant though he is.’

‘Rather,’ said Amyot, ‘ought I to be beholden to you both for having endured so much annoyance on my behalf. I wish you had let me kick Guy out.’

‘Ever the same ; he will make himself be hanged one of these days,’ groaned Jack ; while Wolfe added cheerily :

‘Don’t think of that, Amyot ; it was my doing, seeing I sent for you from their company. But we are well rid of them ; how can we hope to beat the French with such men as they ? Let me pray you to forswear their company, for the honour of old England, if for no other reason.’

‘I will,’ said Amyot ; ‘that is, when I have discharged my debt to them ; and now, captain, we’ll relieve you of our company, of which I should say you must be heartily tired ; but, in truth, I never thought those noisy fellow

would follow me, and I am sincerely sorry to have been the cause of such vexation to you.'

'Thanks to Jack here, they didn't trouble us long,' said Wolfe good-humouredly, as they took their departure; Jack remarking :

'Do not deceive yourself, captain; he'll be scampering after these rogues again in a day or two, and I, what shall I do?' and he threw up his hands with a gesture of despair.

Amyot laughed.

'Why should you trouble yourself about me, Jack?' he said, when they were again in the dark street, groping their way to their own quarters. 'Why not let me go to the bad, if you think I am so set upon it?'

'I did never say that, never; on the contrary, I think you are a brave *garçon*, real good fellow—like you much, love you with all my heart, but find you big fool, all the same.'

'Strangely contradictory,' said Amyot; 'explain yourself, Jack.'

'No, that is what I never am able to do; why, say you? Because I am an unreasonable being. Why do I like you? In verity, I cannot say, but all the world likes you, so I am in the fashion, only all the world does not tell you frankly you are a big fool.'

'Are you sure it is the case, then?'

'Sure! but yes; I can prove it to you so evidently that you will say, "Jack, my friend, I am a fool—you are right." And see you, this is why: First, you have not more money than you find convenient—you have confessed to me that you wish to spare it for a certain purpose, which purpose is one reason why I love you with all my heart; yet when that unlucky captain comes in your road, you go with him quite amiably, like a lamb, though you know quite well he will put his hand in your pocket; say, are you not a fool? Then you listen like a good child when that wise Wolfe talks to you like a grandfather; you will do all that he says, you will be

good officer, good gentleman, good Christian ; then you meet a man who is no good officer, no gentleman, and very bad Christian ; and you too are a *vaurien*, a pagan, an idle dog ; but I tell you truly, that you are my friend, and I love you with all my heart.'

'You are a queer kind of friend, Jack, if I may make bold to say so.'

'Do we not say all what we will to each other ? is it not thing understood ? Perhaps it is also true, that when I say these unpleasantnesses, I walk a little farther off, because I like not black eyes, nor bumps, nor bruises ; but I am prudent, I—and when you make yourself hanged, which assuredly you will some day, I do not think it will be my head that you will have broken, so am I quite content.'

'Whose will it be, think you ?'

'Nay, how can I tell?—that rascal captain will have blown his brains out before long, so I do not think it will be his. *N'importe ?* there are always heads fit only to be broken, provided you fall on one of these.'

Amyot was silent : a softened mood was on him. Jack's raillery often wrought this effect, and he listened humbly. At last his friend spoke again :

'And now will I tell you why you are brave *garçon*, and I love you *de tout mon cœur*.'

'No, Jack, you need not tell me that.'

'Yes, but I will. It is because a man can tell you the truth, all short, aim straight, and fire right in the face, and you will bear it.'

'For the simple reason that you aim so straight you shoot me dead—I have never a word to say,' Amyot replied ; 'but enough of that. Stick to me, Jack, if you can.'

'Stick to you ? without doubt ! You are out of heart to-night, my boy, because of this unlucky money, but we'll find a way out of that scrape—never despair !'



## CHAPTER XVII.

### CONCERNING A COUNTRY WEDDING.

MORE than a year passed before Mrs. Darley would admit that Joan was at all fit to be the wife of 'that poor parson,' as she always persisted in calling Arnold Pomfret.

'I meant her to be a lady—a useful lady, but still a lady; and now that I perceive she is to become a parish drudge, I feel that I have failed, and must needs begin all over again.'

It was in vain that the Rev. Arnold urged that he had no thought of taking Joan out of the sphere in which she had been born, in vain he pleaded that he needed a companion, not a slave; the old lady would listen to none of these arguments. She knew what would be the end of it all. The money—of which she admitted there was plenty—would all go to feed beggars and build churches, till the parson and his wife had not a crust to eat nor rag to cover them. Joan must become such a notable housewife that she could make clothes out of nothing, and wholesome food out of the coarsest materials.

And, primed with these arguments, more than a year had passed before she allowed the marriage-day to be mentioned; then new reasons for delay suggested themselves. Amyot would certainly return from the Continent in the spring, and, good-for-nothing though he was, it was scarce decent for Joan to be wedded while her one and only brother was absent.

'All the world will say they have quarrelled, and quarrels are not in my way,' she remarked.

So again Arnold was silenced, and Joan, quite uncertain what she most wished, agreed that she could not dispense with her brother's presence at her wedding.

The spring brought Amyot, and again Arnold claimed his bride. But no; the child had been working too hard; she must have rest ere she entered on that new life in which she would never know what rest meant. Arnold urged that his house was now completely restored, the garden was perfect; only the mistress was lacking.

'The house completely rebuilt! Then must it have been done in too great haste. Pull it down and build it again.'

'Dear madam,' Joan entreated, 'you are too severe. Were it not better that I told my cousin that you cannot spare me, and that, since he is in sore need of a wife, I pray him to think no more of me——'

'I cannot spare thee! Who put that notion in thy silly head? But this is ever the manner of young maidens nowadays. May they not have their wills, they fancy their elders are much beholden to them, and cannot do without them. Hearken to me, Joan, and answer not again. I, and none else, will fix thy marriage-day; and as for that unruly priest, thou mayst write and ask him, how does he preach submission to his flock, being so self-willed himself?'

And Joan, being well trained, did not answer again. Nay, more—she delivered Mrs. Darley's message to her expectant bridegroom, with some little note and comment, which drew from Arnold the dutiful reply that he was much enraptured that Mrs. Darley had at last consented to fix the day, and that it would be a real kindness if she would shortly acquaint him with her intentions, that he might make arrangements accordingly.

'He shall know in due time,' was the old lady's reply. 'Thou hast yet a set of aprons to complete, child.'

'Grandmother, I have enough garments to clothe a parish. In truth, I am ashamed that my cousin should find me so overstocked with apparel. He must needs think me much set on dress.'

'Well do I know what will befall when thou arrivest at thy new home. There will be much laughter concerning the silly old woman who provided the things. Then there will be great arrangements for clothing the naked, and by the time I see thee again, thou wilt be in rags thyself.'

Joan's face grew sad.

'Grandmother, you do not think it. Could I be so undutiful—could Arnold be so ungrateful, as to mock at you?'

'Nay, silly child; I was but joking. Well, to make amends, I will write to Arnold, and tell him when he may come to fetch thee. Being a dismal sort of person, he will best like the month of November and a good thick fog; but, being silly and frivolous, I shall fix the month of roses, for the reason that I like sunshine, and care not to wet my feet.'

'June, dear madam! I shall be loath to leave Westerham then; it is so lovely here.'

'There, nothing will please them! We'll stop it altogether. Write and tell Arnold that you will not be wedded after all. In truth, it is time the matter was settled.'

And now I find myself approaching that most awful time in a maiden's life, when she decks herself in virgin white and goes forth to meet her bridegroom; and, good reader, pardon me, my heart fails me, my pen well-nigh drops from my hand. For, woe is me! I know not how she was apparelled. Was it silk or satin, cambric or gauze? Truly, I cannot say. Whatever it was, it

became her well, as Mrs. Pomfret testified, and she was no mean judge; and Captain Guy, who had returned from the wars, and had not yet fulfilled the destiny foretold for him by Jack Pownal, swore with many newly-acquired oaths that it was a shame that such a girl should be a parson's wife.

'Hush, hush, Guy!' murmured his mother. 'He is *your* brother, which makes all the difference. And I am well pleased to have such a sweet daughter, though I do agree with you that she should have been a soldier's rather than a parson's bride;' and she glanced at him with a look which he well understood, and which drew from him more scowls and muttered imprecations.

The war had not improved his temper, his mother thought. He had been cut off from female society, and had grown more rough than she had ever fancied possible to him. Did others notice the change as much as she? Certainly, his grandmother looked coldly on him, and even that rough-mannered Amyot now dared treat him with small respect.

Looking round on the company grouped around the altar—for these remarks had been exchanged during the marriage ceremony—Mrs. Pomfret said to herself that surely Guy's was the handsomest face and figure there. His elder brother's was a fine face, but so grave, almost sad; Amyot's dark eyes and heavy brow were apt to wear a sullen look, unless lighted up by keen interest or amusement, while Guy's face was ever expressive of his merry temper, except when, as on this occasion, some vexation had banished the smiles. And this vexation, what was it? What did he mean by the muttered exclamation, 'Arnold always said he should never marry—a parson should not have a wife.'

But little recked the newly-wedded pair of the angry face that watched their bridal. The sun shone down on them, roses strewed their path from the church porch, and

kind smiles greeted them. Old people gazed at the bride's shy, but happy face, and prayed 'God bless the sweet child.' Strong men looked at the parson, whose arm had often interposed to stop a deed of cruelty, but whose lips had as often spoken words of kindness and sympathy, and hoped that 'a long life would be his, a cheery home, and boys and girls to tread in his steps.' The children shouted, and hoped that more ladies would be married very soon, since feasts and comfits and holidays were the consequence. And what Guy thought was of little matter.

'Dear grandmother, how can I thank you?' said the young bride, as the old lady folded her in her arms when the moment of parting came. She had been her lively, bantering self until that minute, but at last her composure threatened to give way, and her lip trembled. 'It has been such a happy home ; and, oh ! it is hard to go.'

Something like a sob escaped Mrs. Darley ; then she raised her head, and turning to the bridegroom said :

'There, take her and use her well. I like not scenes, and the child is overwrought, so we will not make gloomy farewells. See, the dog is like to break his heart,' for Tory, decorated with blue bows for the wedding, was watching his young mistress, as she took her leave of her home and friends, with evident sympathy, expressed in low whines and doggish remarks.

'Why, Tory,' said Joan, as Amyot took her hand to lead her to the chaise, 'how foolish of you ! We are not going to part—I told you so long ago. He is going with us, brother, my husband has consented,' and as the new title passed her lips, she turned with glowing face to Arnold, who replied with earnestness :

'Yes, indeed ; my wife's old friend cannot be left behind.'

'She is forced to leave many old friends—myself among the number,' Amyot replied ruefully. 'We bear you a grudge, cousin. What did you say, sweet sister ? I am

to drop that title? Well, in due time perhaps—at the present moment I feel more bitter towards him than I can well express. Come, parson, take your seat and be gone, ere I cry “To the rescue,” and this morning’s work be all undone.’

And thus Joan departed, amid smiles and tears, and the company consoled themselves as friends are wont to do on such dismal occasions.

Mrs. Darley was the first to recover her cheerfulness, and as was her habit, relieved her feelings by rallying those around her.

‘Amyot, thou makest a mighty lamentation about what concerns thee but little. Seeing thou art bent about wars—which, I thank God, for the most part the English are wont to carry on in other folks’ lands—it cannot much matter to thee in what quarter of this small island thy sister dwelleth. Captain Guy Pomfret, when I invited you to my grand-daughter’s wedding, I fondly imagined that you would bring a cheerful countenance to grace the occasion—but behold, a face of gloom and ill-humour, the like I am not wont to tolerate in my house. I pray you find some physic for your woes, whatever they may be, lest my guests imagine that you envy your brother his winsome bride, and see in you another Cain. My daughter Pomfret, what ails your son, that he should thus spoil our feast? In former days we called him “the merry captain.” Sure he is much changed for the worse.’

‘The climate of Holland, madam, I am told, is not favourable to the spirits,’ Mrs. Pomfret replied; while her husband, eyeing his younger son with little favour, observed:

‘Years, madam, bring experience of varied kinds; my son’s has not been of a cheerful nature. My nephew, I rejoice to hear from his superiors, has found his true vocation in the army.’

'Ay, ay,' said the old lady; 'those who are born to fight, should go where fighting is the fashion. There is good sense in that, and my old friend Marshal Saxe has taught my young Briton a lesson of humility. It is very well, Amyot. There is an old saying written in a certain Book which ever speaks the truth: "Before honour is humility," therefore be glad that thou hast had a lesson set thee which may perchance lead on to that which will better suit thy liking. I would I had an excuse to write to Marshal Saxe, then would I let him know what good service he has done us. But he has long forgotton me, and it is not an acquaintance of which I am altogether proud. What—grandson Amyot! hast not forgot thy old trick of blushing?—six feet and some inches high, and thou blushest like thy sister!'

From the above conversation, it will have been discovered that thus far in his military career our hero had acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his commanding officer, and had by so doing reinstated himself in the favour of his uncle and grandmother; but he was not altogether convinced in his own mind that he had found his right place in choosing the army for his profession.

'As long as there is any war stirring, I shall like it well enough,' he remarked to his friend Jack Pownal, as they sauntered with no definite object in view along the Strand, soon after their return from the Continent; 'but if we are quartered long near London, with nothing but drill and exercises to do and think of, it will be dull work at the best.'

'Never contented!' Jack exclaimed. 'In Flanders it was always the same—why could we not fight, take towns, do something, perform some great action? You are a most uneasy person, good Amyot, but I have always a response for you: find occupation for yourself, learn French, study mathematics; then, when we have a town to take, you will know something about it.'

But Amyot shrugged his shoulders.

'I am too old to go to school in that fashion, but all the same, I want occupation ; this is an idle life, at the best.'

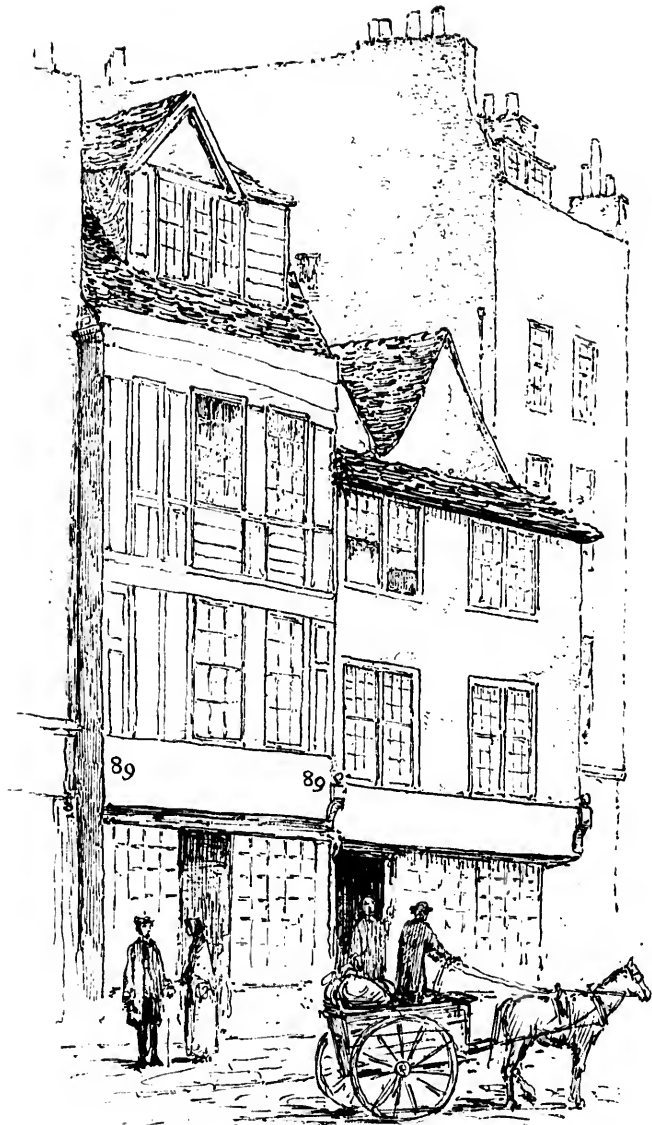
'Well, go back and be a farmer then—plough the fields, put in the seed, and then put the hands in the pockets, and wait for the things to grow ; lament one day because it will not rain, wring the hands the next because it pours down cats and dogs. Go to the market and try to cheat your brother farmers, come home and cry out how abominably you have been cheated your own self ; there is a life for you, how full of occupation, of excitement ! No, my friend ; if you want employment, you must open wide your eyes and look for it ; you are not still a child, with schoolmasters to set you your tasks, but an unlucky young man with enough of money to be idle if you will, and since you are not obligated to work to earn your life, you cry out and lament that there is nothing for you to do. There is your hard case—it is that you have some money.'

'If you knew how the old lawyer grumbles when I want some, you would not talk much about my money ; but, Jack, stay a minute—I have had a glimpse of a face that reminds me of an old friend, and I would wait in hopes of seeing it again.'

They had turned into Drury Lane, and Amyot's eyes, ever on the look-out for something new, had been examining certain old houses on the opposite side of the street.

'Your friend, if it be your friend, would live as near the stars as possible,' Jack remarked, as he saw that his companion's look was fixed on the topmost story ; but Amyot had not heard him ; with a sudden stride he crossed the street, and the next minute was making eager inquiries at the door of the house. Jack was evidently quite forgotten, and accordingly he waited but to see that his friend had





IN DRURY LANE.

gained admittance, and turning about, went in quest of other friends or other employment.

It was evening before they met again, and then, with very little difficulty, Jack drew from his truant companion a full account of what had passed in the interval. At first he had assumed an air of reserve and mystery, but this Jack soon dispelled by his jokes and raillery, and then, with his usual impetuosity, Amyot broke forth :

‘Jack, I’m in a bad way.’

‘That’s no new thing. What is it now? What has arrived? Has the famous captain caught you again? Had I in the least suspected that it was his physiognomy that so moved you, I would have strangled you before I would have permitted you to enter his den; but he is altogether like to a spider—one is caught before one knows as he is near.’

‘But one has not been caught this time.’

‘Not at all?—then am I very glad, altogether content; whatsoever misadventure has arrived to you, if that captain is not in it, I will deliver you, you will see.’

‘Jack, you cannot. I am done for, for ever and for ever.’

‘Nay, but tell me, are you to be hanged so soon? I always said it must arrive some day, but so soon!—truly, it is a pity!’

‘A great pity, but hanging is not my fate—at least, not yet.’

‘Then what for do you make such a commotion? Tell me! I swear I will deliver you!—you do not know all that I can do.’

‘This much I do know, that you cannot deliver me now, for I won’t be delivered; so now, Jack, to my tale.’

Yes, to the narration; but I am not quite certain yet that I will not deliver you, whether you like it or no—*cela dépend, mon cher.*’

‘Yes, and it may depend. But listen: when I rushed

away from you, and addressed myself to that stout old woman who stood in the doorway—you saw her, Jack, did you not?—I asked her whether a Mrs. Kirkbride lodged with her. Now, my boy, are you not surprised?’

‘Your old friend from Penrith, the loss of whom, and a certain charming child you have often bewailed to me? Yes, I see. Well, what said she?’

‘That a Mrs. Kirk lodged in her top story. That was enough for me. I said I begged to be admitted, was an old friend, etc., whereupon she said, “Young sir, you speak untruths most boldly. Old you are not, and as for friends, Mrs. Kirk has none.” Whereupon I begged to be allowed to correct myself, and explained that it was three years since I had seen the lady, but that her friend I was, and no mistake. She looked at me somewhat suspiciously, but she bade me follow her, and up we went. Jack, I have been wont to think that the farther we mount from the earth, the nearer we are to all things light and cheerful; but the staircase we ascended led us into many dark places, and finally into a little room most singularly dark and dreary.’

‘And had you no hindrances to surmount, no explanations to offer, ere you were admitted?’

‘None. I followed so closely on my guide’s footsteps that I entered the room almost as soon as she. You will tell me that such a proceeding was ill-mannered, and I question it not; but, to tell the truth, I was much afraid that my old friend would not admit me, if, as I much suspected, she was in hiding. I heard some movement, and a low voice say, “We see no visitors;” but I was before them, and they could not turn me out.’

‘Them! You spoke of an old lady. But perhaps the child, your old playfellow, was there too.’

‘Jack, I will knock you down. The child, forsooth! Say, rather, the most lovely maiden that ever saw the

light. It was her face and form I—— Well, what ails thee, Jack ?'

'I will deliver you ! I will deliver you ! Truly, this is worse than the captain ; but I will find a way out of it ;' and Jack strode up and down the small chamber, stopping at each turn to shake his fist in Amyot's face and reiterate, 'I will deliver you ! Better be hanged than in love at nineteen. It is ruin and destruction. But I will not permit it ; it shall never be !'

Amyot gazed at his friend's excited face in bewilderment. Then, seeing he was much in earnest, he laughed uneasily, and said :

'Well, Jack, to proceed. But have you heard enough ?'

'Nay, tell me all ; then shall I best know how to manoeuvre.'

He sat down and eyed Amyot sternly, and the latter went on :

'Mrs. Kirkbride is sorely changed : thin and old and wrinkled—almost heart-broken, I should say—and her sorrows have made her bitter ; and Primrose—sweet angel!—must have a hard time with her. I tried to draw from them the tale of their life since I left them, so long ago, on the Appleby road ; but Mrs. Kirkbride coldly said there was nought to tell, and Primrose, while she looked as if to her there was much, dared not contradict her. Then I inquired after the three brothers, and heard—what think you, Jack?—that the eldest, Lance, of whom I have often spoken to you, had escaped to France, and is now serving in the French army ; that he fought at Laffeldt. Think of that ! My old schoolfellow in the enemy's ranks. How little I ever dreamed of such a thing ! Primrose uttered a little cry when she heard that I was in that battle ; but the old lady said, "Ay, to be sure, what else could be expected ?" The second son has gone to India, and they have heard nought of him

for a long while, and the youngest they know nothing about at all.'

'A fine brood of young vipers! And you think to renew your friendship with such people? What are they doing in London, I pray?'

'That I did not ask; but both the old lady and the young one were doing some marvellous fine needlework, such as they would never wear in that place; and when I ventured to ask Primrose about their means of subsistence, she said, colouring, that they were something straightened, but that their wants were few, and they had enough. I verily believe that she scarce spake the truth in so saying. But, Jack, tear your hair as you will, rage and storm at me to your heart's content, it avails nothing. One thing have I sworn to myself, and that is, that Primrose, and none but she, shall be my wife.'

'And yet, if I do not much deceive myself, when you told me the child's story long ago, you made me to comprehend that she was the destined bride of that young traitor, Lance. How will you make these two plans conform themselves?'

'Lance is a traitor; he shall never wed Primrose.'

'And she, too, is a rebel; and so I say you, Amyot Brough, shall never wed her.'

'Jack, we shall quarrel yet.'

'No, we shall not quarrel. I quarrel with no man except my country's foes; nor is there need of us to talk more about it. I do not have the pleasure of the young lady's acquaintance, and therefore I do not say she is not fit for you; but I know that you shall not marry for a long time yet. You are ruined if you do, and so I say it must not be. What good is a soldier who is married? You must wait, my boy, you must wait; and in the meantime these two young rebels will marry themselves, and will quarrel like the most part of married people do; and when

you are a general you may begin to look round you for a wife, but not till then.'

'Thanks for your advice, Jack ; but as we are not to quarrel we will say no more about it.'

And the two friends parted to go to their several quarters, feeling more out of humour with each other than they had ever done during the whole course of their friendship, Amyot remarking to himself, 'I will not provoke him by talking about Primrose ; but now I have found her out, I shall not care so much about having nothing on earth to do ;' and Jack reproached himself for having lost his temper, saying, 'Yes, but he shall talk about it ; it will be better for him ; and if I hear all, I shall better know how to manage him.'

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### OF A CERTAIN HOUSE IN DRURY LANE.

AMYOT had told his friend that the room where he had seen Mrs. Kirkbride and Primrose was a very dismal one. Coming in suddenly from the full sunlight outside, it might certainly seem so, but Mrs. Kirkbride was apt to say that she found it far too light. 'Her spirit dwelt in darkness,' she would say, 'and the sunshine was hateful to her eyes.' And if ever the sun showed a disposition to send his reviving, life-giving rays fully into the interior of the room, she would pull the old curtain over it, and essay to shut out every glimmer of brightness.

But there were certain short intervals when the sun was permitted to light up every corner of that dark abode—when he was courted and entreated to enter in, the little casement being thrown wide open, and the curtain drawn closely back. At such times Primrose had the room to herself; Mrs. Kirkbride was abroad, making their few purchases for the day's provision, and loitering about wherever news might be picked up, in her ever hungry desire to gather some tidings of her absent ones.

These brief intervals in the monotony of their day were amazingly enjoyable to both. Primrose would dance about their small chamber, sweeping and dusting, stopping ever and anon to peep forth into the fresh air and take in full draughts of wind or sunshine—ofttimes singing at her work with as bird-like a voice as when she had watched the fairies on the Beacon Hill, or sat and nursed her doll under the old cedar in the garden at home.

Did she think much of those days? No ; true to her principle of making believe that life was always bright, she had shrunk from looking back much, until Amyot's unexpected visit had revived the old memories, and set her unconsciously singing the old songs of her childish days ; and then—must it be confessed?—Primrose's bright eyes would swim in tears, and the song would die away in a low sob.

Did she therefore wish that this visit, which had proved such a marvellous break in their dull lives, had never occurred, or did she endeavour to discourage her old play-fellow when he reappeared again and again, until the stern landlady ceased to question him as he passed up and down the narrow stairs, perhaps thinking it no business of hers, or, more likely, considering that 'miss' had found an admirer in the tall young officer, who always inquired so politely if Mrs. Kirk was within?

But it was not long before Amyot discovered that there was a specially convenient hour for these visits, for he, too, liked the sunshine, and was happiest in that room when the window was open, and the sounds could be heard from the street below. There were many advantages to be derived from thus timing his calls, which almost compensated him for the disappointment of not seeing Mrs. Kirkbride. The landlady, too, was often absent at that hour, the sole guardian of the house being her deaf old husband, who, if he asked questions, seldom heard the answers. Primrose, too, was more at leisure, being more free to converse when moving lightly about at her household labours, than when seated at the fine embroidery which often seemed to engross her thoughts as well as her fingers ; she could also speak more freely in her mother's absence ; and for these reasons, among others, Amyot, who was much set on pleasing himself at this particular period of his history, continued to choose these morning hours for his visits, quite undisturbed by any remarks



which Lieutenant Pownal might volunteer on the subject. What did it signify that his friend should growl and grumble, so long as Primrose smiled to see him ?

But there came a day when the old man, seated in the doorway, attempted to interfere with his pleasure.

'The old lady be gone out, and the young miss is much engaged, and she bade me say she could not see you. Nay, young sir, it is true ! I make *no* mistake,' he added, as Amyot, muttering it was all a mistake, was endeavouring to pass him.

'Then go upstairs, and say I will not detain her for a minute, but I must see her to-day. Go, I say.'

'It will be of no use,' the old man answered, but he went, Amyot, as at his first visit, following close upon his heels, and entering the room before the old man knew he was there.

Primrose stood still, startled at sight of him, a cloth in her hand, with which she had been wiping the cups they had been using at their breakfast, a look on her face half of pleasure and half of alarm, as she faltered forth :

'I bade him say I would not see you.'

'And I did say so ; but these young blades will have no guide but their own will.' And the old man stumped down the steep stairs again, grumbling as he went.

'What did he mean, Miss Primrose ? Why did you deny yourself to me ? What has happened since yesterday, that you should refuse to see me ?'

'I do not know whether I should answer that question. I know little of London fashions, but I think it is not strange that I should sometimes find it inconvenient to show myself to guests so early in the day. I beg you, Lieutenant Brough, to accept this excuse, and if you find any occasion to visit us, let it be later in the day.'

'But why ?' persisted Amyot. 'Later in the day you are always closely occupied ; now you are more at leisure

to talk with me. Tell me, Primrose, is it not because your mother wills it, that you ask me thus to come when she will be at home ?'

'You are curious, sir. Well, and if it be true that my mother desires your company, can you find anything to displease you in that ?'

'I *should* find much to flatter my conceit,' Amyot replied ; 'yet it seemed to me that when I called and she was within, my coming only vexed her.'

Primrose's lips parted as if to reply, but she checked herself, and turned with redoubled energy to her cups and plates. At last she looked up with something very like distress on her face, and said :

'For old friendship's sake, Lieutenant Brough, humour me this once and ask no questions, but do not come here at this hour. And leave me now before my mother returns—she has enough to vex her, poor thing !'

'And I would be the last to cause her vexation,' Amyot replied warmly ; 'yet, seeing that we were playfellows as children, it seems unreasonable to set such limits to our meeting with each other. Yes, I will go, Primrose, in one minute,' for the young girl made a gesture of impatience ; 'but just tell me this : is my coming here a trouble to you, and does it vex your mother ?'

'Everything is a trouble to her, yet I would not have you concern yourself for that, since it does her good in spite of herself to see new faces, and hear some more lively talk than mine ; but you must not bring us any more gifts of fruit or flowers—that is what she will not brook—fancying that you take notice of our poverty, and pity us.'

'And for yourself, Primrose—nay, do not snatch your hand away—is my coming here displeasing to you ?'

'I have already told you, sir, that it is most unpleasant to me to see you at this untimely hour, when the room is in disorder, and I am busy ; for the rest, when my mother is at home you will be kindly welcome.'

‘And that is all you will say?’

‘All! what more would you have? Do you look for me to beg and pray you not to desert us, never to forget us? Truly, I think that we are likely to do you so little good that you had better to forget us. But must I again be so uncourteous as to beg you to go?’

‘No; but this one thing I must say. There is a report that my regiment will shortly be ordered to Scotland; I do not know whether it is true, but if I should not be able to come again, you will not think—’

‘I will think no harm of you, rest satisfied of that; you have been a good friend to us, Amyot Brough, and but—good-bye, you are going.’

And Amyot found himself, much against his will, descending the steep stairs just as Mrs. Kirkbride appeared at the bottom. She stepped back on seeing him, and scarcely noticing his courteous greeting, followed him to the door, saying:

‘I wish for a word with you, Amyot Brough; we will walk a few steps together. Nay, do not interrupt me—I know what you would say. Primrose has given you my message; you meant no harm—of course not—but young men are thoughtless, and, I fear, selfish. I think too well of you to deem you guilty of anything worse than thoughtlessness. What were you saying—nay, let me not hear that: you are but a boy, and she is the betrothed of my son Lance.’

‘But, madam—’

‘Nay, I must go no farther; but you will know best whether you should come to visit us again. You are a gentleman, Amyot Brough, and will take no mean advantage, though my son is a rebel.’

She turned, and hurried feebly back to the house, while Amyot walked on and on, turning over in his mind her last words, and asking himself how much they meant. More than once he stopped, half resolved to go back, ask

to see the stern old lady again, and ascertain whether anything beyond the childish talk of olden days had passed between Lance and the young girl; then again he checked himself, feeling by no means certain that he should get anything like a definite answer to such a question, and much preferring not to have his newly-born hopes entirely dashed to the ground.

'You are but a boy,' Mrs. Kirkbride had said, and Amyot could not quite forgive her for those words. Lance, he knew, was several years his senior, and Amyot dreaded to have this, his rival's undeniably stronger qualification for matrimony, brought up, and, as it were, flung in his teeth.

It was in a very unsettled and dissatisfied mood that he returned to the barracks, to be greeted by the news that the 20th was ordered to Scotland, and would depart almost immediately. He fancied he could discover a look of triumph in Jack Pownal's eyes, as they discussed the coming change at the mess-table. Jack, who had some mysterious device for getting into everyone's secrets, must surely have discovered his state of miserable uncertainty, and be rejoicing that he should be extricated from the awkward position in which he found himself. To Amyot, this move of the regiment seemed the knell of all his hopes, for in spite of Mrs. Kirkbride's reminder that as a gentleman he would certainly take no mean advantage of Lance's absence, he had been consoling himself with the notion that during this long absence of her affianced husband, Primrose might transfer her affections, if indeed they had ever been given, to another and more worthy object—that other, need we say? being himself.

While, therefore, he sat in gloomy silence, listening to the lively talk at the mess-table, many wild plans were passing through his brain. At one moment he was half resolved to ignore all his promises, see Primrose again the next morning, and discover for himself whether she

could ever love him, and for his sake refuse to hold herself pledged to Lance. To Amyot's mind it was of course perfectly clear that nothing beyond a brother and sister's affection could exist between these two, so long separated. At another moment such a plan was discarded as the height of folly and madness. Primrose had certainly at present no notion of his feelings towards her. She would be startled and horrified at such a sudden revelation, and his cause would be lost. Then another idea occurred: he would sell out, abandon his profession, linger near her, and by slow degrees win her to listen to his suit, and then together they would all seek a home in Jack Pownal's native country, that boundless land of which he so often spoke, where all the troubles of the Kirkbrides would be forgotten, and even Mrs. Kirkbride would begin life afresh.

How much of these conflicting emotions and distracting thoughts might be read in his face, Amyot cared not to consider; but when the party dispersed, and he found his arm taken by Jack Pownal, with the remark, 'Come for a stroll by the river before it grows dark,' he began to wonder whether the latter had any idea of what he had been thinking about.

During the last few weeks—nay, I should rather say months, for I forget how time speeds away—some restraint had existed between these two attached friends. They had lounged about the streets together, together they had frequented theatres and other public resorts, they had spent hours in each other's company, but both were conscious of a barrier to the free and open confidence which hitherto had existed between them. 'Tis all his mad fancy,' thought Jack, and 'Tis all his obstinate prejudice,' said Amyot to himself; and thus the silence and estrangement had gone on and grown deeper.

But there was something of the old affectionate ring in Jack's voice as he uttered this invitation, and Amyot,

very sore at heart and gloomy in spirit, warmed towards him as of old. The two sauntered along by the river-side, watching the sunset over the water, and amusing themselves with the talk among the watermen, who were counting their gains, and grumbling like true Englishmen over the badness of the times and the number of idle soldiers which this peace lately made at Aix-la-Chapelle would turn loose on the country.

'True enough that,' Jack remarked; 'and idle soldiers are veritable devils, as they say. These fellows have a plenty of good sense.'

'I've half a mind to fling soldiering to the winds,' Amyot replied in a moody tone; which remark brought Jack to a standstill.

Whirling round suddenly, he faced his friend with the question:

'And why, I pray you?'

'Oh, that is not so easy to say. But if soldiers are such devils as you say, had one not better quit their company?'

'That may depend upon many things. Suppose you are a devil too, then they are best company for you. Suppose you are angel, you may make an effort to reclaim them. Suppose you middling good fellow, there is no reason why you should not rest good fellow to the end of the chapter.'

'Nay, I think there are plenty of reasons why I should not, whatever you may do. But never mind that. I tell you, Jack, this move North is not at all to my taste. Scotland is a vile place—dulness and dreariness beyond description, so I have heard. I hate the idea of being quartered there—for years perhaps.'

'Do you? Well, having much envy to see all I can see, I am quite content to go to Scotland; but if not, I should say to myself, "Jack, you are under orders to go, and go you must." Therefore, even if it is necessary to sit

on the summit of an iceberg, or, worse still, to put myself to bed in a swamp—even if I must regale myself with nothing better than black bread, or pass my time among naked savages, I will still say, "Jack, you are a soldier. Go wherever one sends you. Make no grumble, like the most part of the English ; it is their most villain defect."

Amyot laughed.

'Well, you are scarcely likely to find icebergs or naked savages in Scotland, Jack. The two things will hardly go together. But men may be savages without being naked, and the manners over the Border are brutal enough, I verily believe.'

'They have an ugly habitude of wearing petticoats, one has told me. Never mind, I like to study the customs of nations.'

'That's a custom you will come too late to study. The Duke set himself to cure them of that trick after the rebellion. Now they are punished if they dress themselves in kilts. He thought it made rascals of them. I don't see why, but he had his reasons, no doubt.'

'Well, *n'importe!* I shall find some diversion, without doubt. But you, Amyot, you come from the North—almost from Scotland. I astonish myself that you are not full of joy at returning thither.'

'I have grown used to London, and like it.'

Jack looked hard at him

'And yet when you came into the barrack-yard this morning, before one had told you about this march to the North, you had an air the most desolate in the world. One would have said that you found London the most gloomy city in the universe.'

'I suppose I may be vexed sometimes without disliking London on that account?'

'And why were you vexed? Tell me what had arrived. Come, I know whither you walk every morning, and wherefore you go so early ; and I tell you frankly I

do not admire you for it, Amyot. Nevertheless, I would know what has arrived. Has the old lady returned suddenly and put her nails into your face, as arrived once to a friend of mine ?'

'Indeed, no ; nothing of the kind.'

'Truly? Did she take the broom and sweep you down the stairs, and tell you to absent yourself for ever and for always ?'

'The old lady was quite civil to me.'

'But she returned. Ha ! I know she returned. And she said, " Mr. Lieutenant, if you have anything to say to my daughter, say it in my presence ;" or perhaps worse, " don't say it at all." Ha ! I have guessed right. I read it in your face !'

'Jack, you are a plague.'

'Only a plague? Ah, then, I congratulate you. I tear open your wounds with a merciless hand ; but you neither break my head nor burst forth into oaths and curses. You will recover, my boy—you will recover.'

'Recover from what?'

'From your senseless passion for this beauty who belongs to another. Amyot, listen to me : to fall in love at nineteen is bad—very bad ; for a soldier, it is mad—quite mad ; and therefore you must cure yourself, so am I truly glad that the mother returned.'

'But if I say I will not cure myself?'

'Then do I say still you must ; but the circumstances will cure you, you will see. We go to Scotland ; you will not see your beauty for months, her betrothed will return, and all will go well. But I am sorry for you, Amyot. You are an unlucky dog—always in the miseries !'

'But what if I don't go to Scotland?'

'Ah ! there you have no choice. You are your King's, must do his orders : and they are very lucky orders for you, as I believe.'



'But if I give up soldiering?'

'Then assuredly will all your friends give you up. But you talk the nonsense. Listen, I will tell you your story—your own—and you will laugh at your own self. When I first knew you, there is now two years or more, you were mad to obtain a commission: nothing else would serve you—fight you would, and fight you must. Truly, I have never seen such a rage for anything as I beheld in you. Well, behold, you have your desire—behold you an officer in His Majesty's 20th Regiment; you are quite enchanted, all goes well—there is fighting to do. Monsieur the Lieutenant goes to the wars; truly his Generals are not very discreet, they do not win so many battles as he thinks they ought—it is even said they lose one and are defeated entirely; but about that monsieur is not very sure; he does not quite believe that an army in which he fought could be beaten; but *n'importe!*—the war is complete: peace is made—a very silly peace. But what will you have? Generals and Kings are naturally silly—it is only lieutenants who are wise, and nobody would take our lieutenant's advice. Behold him, therefore, again in London—no fighting to do. What misery! Truly he might quarrel with his friends: but his friends are silly too—they will not quarrel. What to do? He will tumble into love—plunge himself into it up to his neck—nay, what do you say?—over his ears and the summit of his head; he is quite drowned, soaked, saturated with love: he runs the streets by the sunrise to gaze at his mistress; for her he is wanting to do his duty, late at parade, never where he ought to find himself. His colonel sends for him, he cannot be found; the officers swear, and there is a veritable tempest; but, *n'importe!* he has well amused himself—his beauty has smiled on him. But behold all changed: the sun grows dark, the stars are falling, black clouds cover the sky, a harmless old woman becomes a dragon, and Monsieur the

Lieutenant is chased from the gate of Paradise. Again, what misery! He will abandon all—his profession, his friends, his prospects of distinction—and he will go seat himself on a doorstep in face of a certain house in Drury Lane, the head in the hands, until the sun does once more shine, or the dragon dies. Behold yourself, Amyot: is it not a picture of you?’

‘You are ——!’ exclaimed Amyot, struggling to repress a laugh.

‘Well, what am I?’

‘You are the most plaguy fellow I ever knew! What is the use of these endless jokes?’

‘But, my dear fellow, you deceive yourself. I am not joking. But not at all. It is very solemn and serious that I am. For assuredly the case is solemn enough. Here is my friend, whom I love with all my heart, ready to do the most foolish thing that one can imagine, and for what? For an idea—and the most silly idea in all the world.’

‘There we differ, Jack.’

‘No, we do not differ. If anyone else had conceived this most senseless idea, you would agree with me. See here, you have not the least reason in the world to think that the young lady cares for you.’

‘No; but I will make her care for me.’

‘Bah! by deserting your duty and dangling about her door. If she likes you the better for that, she must be a poor-spirited girl. A precious pair you would be.’

‘Jack, you know nothing about the matter: you have never been in love.’

‘*Dieu merci! non.* Once, like you, I thought I was gone, but I staggered on to my legs again, and am none the worse. Shake yourself, my boy, and follow my good example.’

‘And go to Scotland?’ said Amyot with a dismal face.

‘Then if she is ill, or in trouble, how shall I know?—she will never write to me.’

'Oh! that's easily managed. A little money, a few soft words, and the landlady will let you know if she is in any trouble. And, who can say? we may march South as suddenly as we are going North; and then——'

'Enough, Jack. I'll see them again before I decide: say no more now.'

'As you will; only let me not leave my friend sitting desolate on a doorstep in Drury Lane. I should be too much ashamed of him.'

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ACROSS THE BORDER.

'AND yet, if I'd known, if I could have divined how altogether mad he would go,' lamented Jack Pownal, 'he might have stayed in London, turned tailor or tinker for aught I cared, have made love to the lady of Drury Lane, and spend his days and nights dangling after her, and I'd have left him to his fate. But who could have guessed it? But he is a veritable fool; it is impossible to call him by any other name.'

Thus saying, and making lively demonstrations of tearing his hair, the kind-hearted fellow stood ruefully watching his friend as he mingled with a noisy rout of hard-drinking, turbulent spirits, himself the wildest of them all.

For these were dark days with Amyot. The colder the climate, the hotter grew his blood, some averred. Certain it is, he was to be curbed and restrained by none. Jack Pownal's raillery, which had hitherto often availed to bring him to his senses, now fell on deaf ears, or, if listened to, was met only by haughty answers and requests to be let alone. At times, it is true, another mood prevailed: desperate fits of gloom and self-reproach would seize upon him, generally succeeded by even wilder bursts of frantic folly and outrageous licence, and it was in the midst of one of these that Jack, gazing at him with perfect amazement, uttered the above lamentation.

And yet, perchance even Jack could not entirely read the truth. Amyot, as he went swaggering along the

streets of Stirling, his head thrown back, bold recklessness in his gait and bearing, had yet a certain consciousness that men despised him, and with right ; and that women, if they did not fear him, at least held him in small esteem. Yes, he might not have all his senses about him—the whisky at the tavern near the Castle was strong ; but he had wits enough left to be aware that at a certain turn in the road there might chance to lie in wait a tall, rough-tongued, but strong-armed young countryman, who had a wrong, not his alone, to avenge. It had been easy work so far to win a young maiden's heart, as to rouse the wrath of her true but rustic lover. It was an old story, and Amyot could not boast of any great prowess or originality in the device : it had amused an idle hour in his life, as in that of many others, and the notion of some impending danger from the anger of the offended swain, had also its charms. Jack Pownal was not far wrong when he said quarrelling was of all things what Amyot loved best in the world. Such small excitements gave a zest to life ; without them, Stirling would be unbearable, the army the dullest of professions ! And with the whisky in his brain, the fiend in his nature awoke. What had been a thoughtless prank at first, now gave him a cruel pleasure. He revelled in the thought of that rough fellow's pain, looked right and left to see if by chance he was in waiting to complain of his ill-treatment, and meditated the words of cool disdain by which he would make him feel the abyss that separated him from a gentleman, and teach him to account himself honoured in that he, an officer in His Majesty's army, had deigned to notice his fair one. 'The clod of a fellow might bluster, it would but add to the sport : Jack was a fool that he could see no fun in such pastimes.'

Some such thoughts, not very lucid or brilliant, passed through Amyot's heated brain as he strode along a back street in Stirling one autumn evening. He was whistling

or humming a lively ditty, and thought himself in a very lively mood, but his ideas had a tendency to become misty, and before long he ceased to look out for the approach of the injured lover, whose threats had suggested the possibility of an attack, and whom he fancied he had a great desire to encounter. He had just fallen in with a brother officer of kindred spirit, who, like himself, had come out to while away a tedious evening, and was hungry for something stirring—a row of some sort, it mattered little what. They sauntered on, talking in noisy fashion, blustering and jostling the passers-by, who, as it seemed, had not the manners to yield obsequiously to the military gentlemen, as they of course expected. There was some murmuring, some whispering: “No better than we—ay, may be a trifle worse, for all their airs. Have at them, Jock! What, Sandy, man, haven’t ye a hammer all handy like! A crack over the head would take the conceit out of them, and do them a trifle of service;” and the brave defenders of their country were beginning to find their misconduct somewhat roughly copied, when the gathering crowd was suddenly broken in upon, and as it were driven back by a tall, powerfully-built young smith, who, elbowing his way towards Amyot, seized him violently by the collar, and howling forth furious imprecations and threats, strove, with desperate energy, to fling him on his back in the mud.

Taken by surprise, and not perfectly sober, even Amyot’s stalwart form could scarce stand such a precipitate onslaught. He staggered, fell against his companion, who, well content at these symptoms of coming disturbance, only flung him off, and sent him reeling against a door post, while his assailant, still clinging to his throat with one hand, dealt furious blows at him with the other which for a moment almost stunned him and deprived him of sight and sense. But it was but for a moment. Rallying his tremendous strength, he wrenched

himself free, and recovering his firm footing, he grasped the young smith with both hands, dragged him a little apart from the crowd, and flung him with all his force on the pavement at his feet. The young fellow fell with a frightful crash, and lay still as a stone. The crowd cried 'shame,' but Amyot, mad with rage, and blind with passion, ready to meet all who came, was by no means inclined to listen to his companion's whispered hint that the rabble, if they wished to fight, had best have the field to themselves. 'Rabble or not, they should lay no hands on him,' he shouted; and the other's entreaty, 'Nay, but, Brough,' fell on utterly unattending ears.'

The early evening had closed in by this time, the dirty street had become dark—it was but dimly lighted here and there by flickering oil lanterns, which cast an uncertain and sickly light on the angry, poverty-stricken crowd in that unsavoury district—men fresh from their work, hungry and discontented, for times were hard; women with dishevelled hair; children with rags in place of clothes, all pinched with want, and ready enough to rise up against one better dressed and better fed than themselves. And from the midst of them came a low, wailing cry, as from a low hovel of a cottage crept forth a feeble old man, bent with age, groping his way with both hands and piteously calling for "Jamie, my son, my son;" while at the doorway stood a poor woman, scarcely less infirm, vainly seeking by the flickering light of a candle to discover what was passing in the road outside. It was from this house that the young smith had rushed to wreak his revenge on the young officer, and at the tumult that succeeded, the fears of the poor old couple had been excited, and they had crawled out to find their son.

'Come away,' urged Amyot's companion as the crowd drew back to let the old man pass, crying, 'Eh, Robin, have a look at him; there stands the wretch who

killed him—your one son, and all ye have to look to in your old age.'

'Come away, or it will be the worse for you,' persisted the officer; 'they're busy with the old man now; in a minute they'll be at you again. Nay, Brough, I find no fault with you: the fellow attacked you first; but these low rows are apt to be troublesome. And see who comes here—two of our fellows, if I mistake not. Whew! it is plaguey dark, but I swear it's the new major. Brough, I say, let's get out of this.' And as Amyot stood unmoved while the crowd surged around him, he contrived to push his way through the midst of it, and regaining the more open thoroughfare, slipped away, having had his fill of excitement for that time at least.

Meanwhile two officers on horseback were endeavouring to make their way along the blocked-up street. It was not easy: the horse of one became restive, frightened by the dim and uncertain gleams of light: it reared and plunged and dashed among the crowd, and was with difficulty subdued by its rider, while the other, drawing rein where the crowd was thickest, just beside the prostrate form of the young smith, over which the old man was bending in grief too deep for words, asked in quick, eager tones what had happened. There was no lack of response, the bystanders being one and all anxious to tell the tale; and while they vied with each other in their zeal to give the gentleman the information he requested, under cover of the confusion, and screened by the compassionate darkness, Amyot found it convenient to make his escape. He was not pursued, reached his quarters safely, and meeting his companion, who had also returned, was congratulated by him on his good luck.

'I thought verily they'd have hung you to the nearest lamp-post in their rage,' he said. 'Did the major spy you out?'

'Not he,' was Amyot's reply; carelessly given, then



suddenly bethinking himself, he asked, 'Did you say it was the new man?—they were expecting him to-day. Have you heard who it is?'

'Major James Wolfe,' answered the other; 'and there are tales'—he shrugged his shoulders—'which sound not altogether pleasant for such as you and I.'

'Major Wolfe!' said Amyot, a sudden animation in his tone, which made his friend ask, 'What, do you know aught of him? They say he is little known in these parts—a stranger, in fact, to most of us.'

'I knew him in Flanders—yes, and before that,' Amyot replied, and then he turned away, and in very sober fashion went to his room. A sudden desire to be alone, not very usual with him, had all at once seized upon him, but he was not to be gratified, for seated in his chair, entirely at his ease, as was his wont, was Jack Pownal.

He sprang up as Amyot entered, exclaiming, 'Have you heard the news? Wolfe's here!' Then as Amyot nodded, but without echoing his tone of gladness, he exclaimed, 'What, does not *that* content you? But it is altogether most lucky. What will you? There is no contenting your savage temper.'

'Hold your tongue, Jack! I'm in no mood for your foolery. Major Wolfe and I are scarce likely to be friends.'

'That depends,' said Jack, seriously. 'Yes, that depends on a few little things—bagatelles—but not altogether of no consequence. Well, we shall see;' and finding his presence not altogether welcome, he went off whistling.

And Amyot sat down and thought. Yes, it was not his habit to indulge in much reflection at this period of his career, but for a few minutes he thought, soberly, regretfully, almost bitterly, of the past.

A few days passed away, and the scuffle in the town had been discussed and almost forgotten, Amyot and his companion having maintained a discreet silence, the

young townsman having, it was said, recovered, and Major Wolfe not caring to make strict investigation concerning disorderly conduct at the very moment of his arrival, and possibly perplexed by the accounts he had heard. The dull round of garrison duty continued with little variation. Amyot and many others grumbled at some symptoms of a stricter system of discipline, but the bright spirit and genial temper of the new major early won him popularity, and these complaints were little heeded.

Wolfe had greeted him as an old friend, and essayed to resume the acquaintance where it had been dropped when last they parted, but Amyot was cold and surly, and evinced no great desire for intimacy; and thus it came about that a coldness arose, which at one moment threatened to put an end to all friendship and concord between them.

The colonel was absent in London, which he doubtless found more enticing than Stirling in winter time, the lieutenant-colonel had just been appointed governor of Nova Scotia, the young major was commanding officer, when the garrison of the Castle was startled by a sudden tragedy which must needs find a place in this history since Amyot Brough was not a little concerned in it. This was nothing less than the suicide of a young ensign, who had but shortly before joined the regiment. It had been noted by many at the mess-table one day that between him and Lieutenant Brough there had passed much anxious and somewhat angry converse into the nature of which few deemed it necessary to inquire, seeing that much hard play had passed between them, and it was commonly believed that the boy-ensign held himself unfairly used. He had few friends in the regiment, having, as before mentioned, but recently joined it, and having from the first attached himself almost exclusively to Amyot; and so, as it fell out, none knew much of his

concerns, or of the particular grievance which drove him to desperation. 'He had,' to use Jack Pownal's words, 'a most obstinate and lamentable inclination to go to ruin, and the society of all better fellows was distasteful to him.' Jack had always been sorry for him, but '*enfin*, if a man will go to ruin, what will you have!' and Jack had shrugged his shoulders, and abandoned his case as hopeless. Others had done the same: the young major, had he come earlier upon the field, might have been more persistent and successful; but, alas! he knew little more than the young ensign's name, when the whole regiment was startled by the news that the report which had rung through the barracks late one dark evening meant that the poor lad had thought to settle the difficulties that were distracting him by putting a pistol to his head, and was now lying in a pool of blood in his own room.

There had been the usual inquiries and formalities. None doubted the manner or the cause of the lad's untimely end. Such things were common enough; nevertheless since the lad was so young, and might have had such a different fate, there were not a few who looked askance at the man who had led him on to ruin; nay, perhaps had goaded him to that dark deed by his cruel words and threats.

And as for Amyot, though in justice we are bound to say that when he first stood amid the crowd of officers and men that had rushed to the young ensign's room, and stood awstruck at the horrid spectacle there, his whole being had quivered beneath the shock of horror and remorse; yet no sooner was the first keen pang of self-reproach passed and over, than the consciousness that others held him blameworthy, and were inclined so to treat him, restored all his habitual pride and haughtiness. He would endure no hint of censure, manifest no special regret for the dead youth; nay, more, when others seemed saddened and sobered, he would be, or at least put on the

appearance of being, in even more than his wonted spirits. Men stared, Jack Pownal railed at him, but with no effect. But on the second day after the catastrophe, Jack suddenly strode into his room, and with a countenance indicative of strong emotion, began :

'Eh bien, Amyot, has anyone told you what has arrived ?'

Amyot shook his head, and Jack, walking to the window, continued speaking with his back towards his friend. 'Oh, well, without doubt it will make no difference to you, but I come from a sight most truly piteous, heartrending : it breaks the heart only to think of it. Oh, not yours, my dear fellow : I know well that you have not the pain of such a disagreeable possession, but *enfin*, I have not told you. It is the mother that has arrived : the poor lad's mother ; and as it seems she has no other son, no other child, and no husband—no anybody, as it would appear ; and she is so foolish as to think this little affair a most terrible calamity : very silly, no doubt, but—do you see ?—it is her notion, and as I said, my heart breaks when I think of her.'

'Truly, you were always tender hearted, Jack ; but what is this to me ?'

'Oh, nothing of course, nothing in the world. But as I said, I was there, at the major's quarters, when the poor lady arrived, and I saw it all. She would see him, her son. Yes, but she would. The major talked and talked, and I talked, but *n'importe !* she had her way, and in verity, if she did not get her death blow then, my name is not Jack Pownal. May I never see such a sight again. Well, but you are impatient : much business to attend to, no doubt, and I detain you. One minute, my good fellow. The poor lady has heard of a certain friend of her poor son's : truly I know not what she has heard of him, but him too she will see ; and it is to seek him that I am come. Lieutenant Brough, you will find her at the major's quarters.'

'Jack, this is some of your foolery. What can the old lady want with me? I detest scenes. I'll not go.'

'Your pardon, Lieutenant Brough. The major requests your attendance.'

'Major Wolfe wants me to entertain his guests? Let him do it himself.'

Jack wheeled round suddenly. 'And that is your response? Oh, well, I can report it if you will.'

Amyot was silent, with folded arms and knit brows, pondering the unwelcome summons. Jack grew impatient. 'It is all the same to me,' he said. 'I bring a message, I take back the response; but I like to be precise. Your answer then, short and sharp; I have wasted enough of precious time.'

'You need waste no more. I have heard your message, and since one cannot well deny a lady, I will go presently. Happily I am not so soft hearted as you.'

And Jack glared at him and departed, muttering, 'One can't deny a lady! Oh, no, friend Amyot, I know thee better. 'Tis not to content the poor mother thou art going; no, nothing of the sort. And yet who could refuse such a request. To see her son's dear friend! Does Wolfe know all? But assuredly he must; few have spoken well of Amyot since this affair.'

It was, as Jack had said, a piteous thing to see the poor, bereaved mother, and Amyot's cold-blooded indifference was not proof against her anguish. Her repeated entreaty, 'Oh, sir, tell me why he did it,' might be met at first with polite expressions of concern and regret, but such attempts to avoid replying could not be persisted in when her agony burst forth with passionate vehemence, 'You must know, since you alone were with him the evening before, and you, they tell me, were his friend.' Amyot cursed his folly in having allowed himself to be drawn into such a scene, and was even meditating a precipitate retreat, when the major interposed, soothing

the agitated mother. 'Lieutenant Brough will, I assure you, madam, tell you all in his power. The subject is so painful, and he is doubtless fearful to increase your sufferings.'

'That cannot be,' she broke forth, while Wolfe, addressing Amyot, desired him to speak, 'or I,' said he 'will do it for you ; and seeing that I must needs speak from hearsay, may scarce do you justice. But in any case the lady *must* be satisfied, and to spare her feelings, I may well be indifferant of yours.'

Then seeing there remained no escape, Amyot, still somewhat sullenly, told the tale. She listened breathlessly, but the exclamations, 'A gamester ! My son a gamester !' interrupted him more than once ; and when the words, 'He took his losses much to heart, and maybe also some words that I spoke carelessly and with heat—which, believe me, madam, I much regret'—ended the dismal story, she wrung her hands in bitterness of soul, saying, 'Tis plain enough he lost, and knew well that I had no means to pay his debts ; but this I ask you : sir, who made my boy a gamester ?'

Amyot made no reply, and she went on vehemently, 'He was a good lad when he left home—weak, maybe, but nothing worse. Ah, me, that ever I let him go !' Tears drowned her voice, but she lifted her head once more to say, 'I cannot think—my brain is on fire ; but it seems to me that my son has had no friend, but an enemy. Yes, sir, a most bitter enemy. Major Wolfe, forgive me : I care not for longer converse with this gentleman ;' and she rose hurriedly, and left the room.

There was a long silence when she had gone. At last Amyot rose to depart, but Wolfe stopped him. 'There must,' he said, 'be some few words between us on this most miserable affair. The present is as good a time as any. Lieutenant Brough, I have heard your story, and that of others, and am bound to say that I hold you much to blame.'

'I blame myself told the lady so,' Amyot replied; 'but nevertheless no one can say that this fellow's mad act is to be laid at my door. I said nothing to drive him to it.'

Wolfe shook his head; then seeing that Amyot was about to break forth angrily and roughly in self-defence, he stayed him with a peremptory gesture, and sternly, and vehemently upbraided him with treachery to his friend, wanton cruelty, and selfish frivolity. He spoke rapidly and severely, leaving no time for interruption or excuse, and Amyot quailed beneath his fiery indignation. At last he stopped suddenly, asking, 'What can you say to this? How is it possible to view the affair in any other light?' and Amyot answered nothing.

Then the major changed his tone. 'A year or two ago, if I remember clearly, a certain evening at Maestricht, you had not so entirely devoted yourself to this detestable habit of gaming. What has so changed you, Amyot?'

'I care little for cards,' said Amyot, sullenly; 'but one must have something to do in this hateful place.'

'A pitiful reason,' replied Wolfe, bitterly.

Amyot glanced at him from under his heavy brows. Those clear blue eyes looked straight at him; there was kindness in their gaze, and something, Amyot thought, of pitying contempt; but at that moment he was humble enough and miserable enough to welcome the look that seemed to offer friendship, and to accept as his due the touch of contempt.

'Look here, Amyot,' said Wolfe, after a minute's pause; 'let there be an end of this.'

'Of what—cards? I'm tired of them, and many things besides;' and having made this confession Amyot folded his arms upon the chimney-piece, and laid his forehead upon them, perhaps to avoid the major's gaze, perhaps to conceal his own confusion.

Then for a few minutes Wolfe spoke of other things,

changing the subject so abruptly as to astonish Amyot, until the latter, having resumed his former attitude, and forgotten his emotion, the major as suddenly recurred to it, saying, 'Then it is decided: you forswear this detestable habit of yours, and will find yourself other amusements. But I was near forgetting: let not these other amusements lead to the breaking of heads among the townspeople, else may I have other pledges to demand from you,' and Amyot, not a little disconcerted at this allusion, murmured some hesitating promise, and took his leave.



## CHAPTER XX.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

HAVING by no means a fixed belief in the notion that a sudden restoration to the paths of honour and respectability can be perfect and entire, I do not think it necessary to explain that the blemishes which I have been at some pains to describe in my hero's character were not wiped out so speedily and thoroughly as some sanguine souls may have hoped and expected. Nor, inasmuch as I hold it certain that my readers can well imagine the difficulties that beset his path, do I feel bound to describe at length the varying scenes of this portion of his career, or to spend much time in lamenting his failures or glorying in his triumphs. Years afterwards when his admiration for Wolfe had become one of the most vehement emotions of his passionate nature, and the name of the hero was only spoken by them with lowered voice and saddened countenance. Jack Pownal said to him, 'That was the most lucky thing that ever befell you, Amyot, Wolfe's coming to Stirling.' Are you not grateful to me for having dragged you away from London? Then we all went to school again, and you learned to leave off saying you had nothing to do.'

And at such reminder Amyot's thoughts would go back to the day when he had let fall this expression in the presence of Wolfe: he could never forget the sudden glance of the keen blue eyes turned upon him with a scrutinising gaze, and the promptness of the remark:

'Lieutenant Brough, if you are heavily burdened with your time, will you oblige me with your company this evening to supper?—we have met but little as yet, and we will have a talk over old times.'

The talk thus begun had not been confined to things of the past. Wolfe rallied him about his complaint of having nothing to do, laughingly reminding him how such remarks had been characteristic of him in their schooldays, and then had burst out into a vehement remonstrance, beneath which Amyot had felt strangely subdued and unable to reply. Officers were for the most part, Wolfe averred, the most ill-educated of human beings; among them, a man who read anything was noticed and remarked upon as a most singular being. Even their military duties were too often treated by them as something of slight importance, to be omitted if possible—at any rate, to be performed with utter indifference. 'And this being the case, even while not doing the work ready to their hands, some,' continued the young major, stopping in his walk up and down the room, 'talk of having nothing to do.'

'But, major,' Amyot replied, reddening much under the implied rebuke, 'there are some who, with the best intentions, have not wits enough to set themselves to work.'

'Is it so? I doubt it—rather, I should say, diligence enough; but I will accept your explanation, and then I ask you, will they—or why not say plainly, you—let yourself be set to work?'

'Gladly, major; there is nothing I desire better than some work to while away the time in this dreary place.'

'Work done to while away time, I scarcely understand; but if you really want some hints, I am ready enough to give them, presuming, of course, that having given yourself to the profession of arms, you wish to excel in it,

and do your country some service. And first, I have had it on my mind for some days past to attempt something in the way of a lecture concerning your various military duties, and the easy way in which you perform them.' He then proceeded to detail the points in which he had observed negligence, and after a moment's pause resumed : 'But those matters leave you abundant leisure, even when performed to the very utmost of your ability, and what you desire is employment for these vacant hours. Now, it seems absurd to observe, that to understand your business you must study, since that is clear enough ; but you think, I perceive, that the art of war should be learnt simply from the practice of it, whereas much and most important knowledge can be gained from the records of past exploits.'

'From books ?' said Amyot. 'Well, major, I've read a few.'

'I can tell you of many that probably you have never seen. You know French and Latin, I suppose ?'

'My Latin is nothing to boast of, and my French something less.'

'Then you have much to do. Study French, by all means. Our friend, Jack Pownal, will help you. And as for books, let me propose a few. To study the order and economy of the lower branches of an army, nothing can be better than the King of Prussia's "Regulations for his Horse and Foot." Then there are the "Memoires of the Marquis de Santa Cruz ;" "Les Memoires de Goulon ;" "L'Attaque and la Defense des Places," par le Marechal de Vauban ; Folard's "Commentaries on Polybius" ; and of the ancients, you must read Cæsar, Thucydides, Xenophon's "Life of Cyrus," and "Retreat of the Ten Thousand."'

'Major, you take my breath away.'

'I am not surprised. But stay, you may find it more diverting to read the lives of Gustavus Adolphus and

Charles XII. of Sweden, and of Zisca the Bohemian. Much military knowledge can be picked out of them. There is, moreover, a new book, called "*L'Art de la Guerre Pratique*," which I believe is good, and a small book, which will be useful and easily read, called "*Traité de la Petite Guerre*." When you have read those I will tell you of some more.'

He smiled as he concluded this list, saying :

'That will give you something to do.'

'Not a little,' said Amyot, who had begun by noting down the titles of the books, but had soon stopped in dismay, as one after another was rapidly poured forth.

Wolfe, however, after a minute's pause, resumed.

'What do you know of mathematics? While in Scotland I intend to improve my knowledge in that direction, since, without some knowledge of mathematics, a man can never thoroughly understand one considerable branch of our profession—the construction of fortifications and attack and defence of places.'

'I ever hated mathematics,' sighed Amyot.

Wolfe eyed him with some amusement.

'I seem to you a severe taskmaster,' he said. 'You have led a more easy, comfortable life than I. I was bred to work. My father has been a diligent man all his life, and I, his son, should be ashamed to show my face in his presence did I not love work ; while you have been your own master for many years. But now, having enough considered how we may improve ourselves, let us talk of somewhat else.'

And then the conversation wandered in various directions—to the late war in Germany, to the peace, to the prospect of fresh troubles ; and Wolfe asked his young companion what news he had to give of his cousin, Captain Guy Pomfret, 'whom,' he remarked, 'I have not met since that evening last year in Flanders.'

Amyot told of his meeting with his cousin at his sister's wedding, and then Wolfe observed :

'You are a lucky fellow to have a sister. Do you remember my one brother, Brough, in the old schoolhouse at Greenwich?'

'That I do. He was my first friend there, when I felt homesick and miserable, and hated all the lads because they laughed at me.'

'He was a good lad. How long ago that seems ! Let his brother be your friend now, Amyot ; not such as he would have proved—so true, so loving—but the best that in him lies. I would it were better.'

And with such words as these, James Wolfe secured that firm hold on Amyot's allegiance which lasted until death, an allegiance enthusiastic as it was humble, pleasant to the one, most wholesome and saving to the other. For in the bracing, stimulating atmosphere of Wolfe's presence, Amyot, and many besides him, became suddenly conscious of a strange new power at work. His eye seemed everywhere : its clear, straight-forward glance checked idleness, and saw through pretence of every kind ; his constant energy shamed indolence and indifference ; his voice, stern and ringing when raised in denunciation of vice and frivolity, would yet soften into tones of hopeful encouragement when his aid was sought, his counsel asked, or sympathy needed. To be sought out, his friendship solicited by a man so deservedly popular, served to recall Amyot to his better self, checked him in his frenzied pursuit of pleasure, and suggested new and higher aspirations. He had hitherto found no difficulty in avoiding censure from his superiors, Jack's jesting attacks he had laughed off or disregarded, but beneath the flashing severity of Wolfe's anger, he fairly quailed and trembled.

'Ha, ha !' laughed Jack Pownal one day, when he met his friend coming out of the major's quarters ; 'you were

late last night, and he would know the reason, and it was not altogether and entirely a thing to be admired, and enfin, mon cher, he has told you in very fine language what he thinks of you. I see it all—the whole scene; and I hear it too, and I feel'—Jack laid his hand on his heart—'I feel how terrible it is not to be such an officer as Major Wolfe. I pity you, my friend, for I comprehend entirely how humiliated you are, and how you are not sure whether it is on the head or the feet you are standing.'

'Nonsense, Jack; he may say what he likes to me: there is always sense in what he says.'

'But without doubt, mon cher, and very glad I am that you have the wits to comprehend it. It is I that must always be grateful to Major Wolfe, since he has found a muzzle to fit you: 'tis what I could never contrive to do.'

'You are right there, Jack; I can take that from him that I would bear from no one else—not even from you.'

'I am well content,' Jack replied; 'and as he is like to be commanding officer here for some time, we shall all have to take what he chooses to give; and if we are not the most orderly, moral regiment that ever was known, it will not be Major Wolfe's fault. Have you heard the last new thing he has ordered? No? Then where have you bestowed your eyes and ears? It is thus directed by our most sagacious major: "Officers to visit the soldiers' quarters frequently; they are not to trust the sergeants' reports. They must also watch the looks of privates, and note if they are pale. And the major begs that young subalterns will not incline to think they do too much." Truly, if it be not sin to say such thing, I find that *un peu trop fort*. Why should not the sergeants be taught to do their duty? Instead of which, it appears that it is necessary we do it for them. And as to privates looking pale, that is no affair of mine.'

'Hold your tongue, Jack! The major knows what he is

about, and if he says it is your business you will find it best to make it so. I marvel whether he found me looking pale, for I have leave for a few days to visit my old home, though I had not thought to ask for it.'

'You pale! You have the colour of a full-blown peony. You are not about to die of love, Lieutenant Brough. Is the old sore healed quite and entirely? The sighs have grown less heartrending of late. Ah! fickle young man, have you found a Scotch beauty, or is your worship wholly at the shrine of Major Wolfe?'

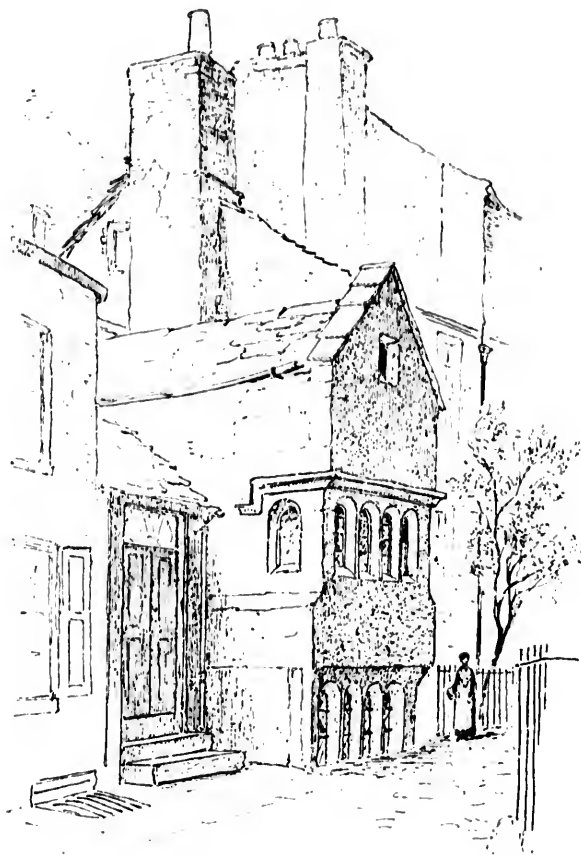
'My purpose is not changed, Jack; but you are right, and I must wait.'

'Wise young man! and to console you, let me tell you that men say that the major—long may he live!—is in like plight with you. That he too tumbled into love of late. Truly, it is profane to speak thus of such a man, but so do men say. It is much to be desired that he may have had more sense than you, and have set his love on some fair one not yet betrothed; but who can say? The wise man himself was monstrous silly concerning women; at least, so said that Scotch divine last Sabbath. But what did you say about this leave of yours—when go you, and when return?'

'I have leave for ten days; I go to-morrow. Much of the time will be spent on the road, but it will be a pleasure to see the old place.'

A greater pleasure than he had at first imagined. Each step that brought him nearer to that old home brought back some pleasant memories—well remembered spots around Penrith, familiar faces gazing from the shop windows, made his heart beat fast, and brought the bright glow of expectation to his face. On this occasion he was more speedily recognised than on his last visit; and the young officer met with far more consideration than the lanky boy with his bag over his shoulder, who had alighted from the coach at the Griffin five years before

Loitering some time in the town, visiting his old lawyer, and another old friend of his father's who dwelt in one of the oldest houses in Penrith, he gathered much information concerning the events immediately following



OLD HOUSE IN PENRITH CHURCHYARD.

the rebellion ; the names of those who had suffered for their share in that disastrous affair, who had been hanged, and whose property had been confiscated. This and much



more he learned while sitting in the window of his old friend's house, looking out on to the churchyard, towards the spot where his father lay buried. 'Of the family that used to live at Blencathara House,' his friend said, 'we have heard little or nothing. The sons were all in the rebel army, and may have been killed; the old lady and daughter left the town suddenly, and no one knows whither they went. You, Lieutenant Brough, knew them well, and will be sorry to hear such news.'

Yes, he was sorry, but hoped they were well. Doubtless the ruin of the cause to which they were so much attached was very painful to them, and they judged it best to leave. Then Lieutenant Brough asked after other friends, and shortly took his leave.

So long had he lingered in the town, that the news of his approach had reached Broughbarrow ere he made his appearance, and old Mike was standing on the threshold looking out for him. When he arrived, the greeting of the old man and Deborah was hearty, but somewhat more embarrassed by shyness than on the former occasion. The lad had turned into a fine-grown man, no chance now of his sitting down in the kitchen; he would expect his meals in the parlour, and to be served and waited on like the gentleman he was; and this conviction was a little too great a burden for Deborah, who had grown old and stiff, and whose helpers were awkward lasses that could not make themselves fit to appear in a gentleman's presence, and who, as likely as not, would do nought but stare if so be he spoke to them.

Full of these oppressive fancies, it was hard to be as genial in her welcome as she meant and wished to be, and Amyot had little idea what a weight he lifted off her mind when, seating himself by the chimney-corner, and shaking his head as Mike threw open the parlour-door, he said, 'No, indeed, my visit is to you and Deborah; I am at home here. That room would drive me wild with melancholy. Are you sure it is not haunted?'

'Na, na! Deborah has seen nowt uncanny: it beea' jest es ya left it, a trifle dampish mebbe.'

'Well, I don't want to get rheumatism, so here I stay; and now tell me all that's happened.'

All was not much; but before long, with many mysterious looks and signs, the worthy couple proceeded to inform their young master that they had led but an uneasy life for some time past: so that when they had heard that day of his arrival in the town, they had felt it a real relief, and only wished that he could stay a longer time with them. The reason for their uneasiness was simply this: there was in the neighbourhood, though Mike could not exactly say where they had their dwelling place, a gang of most desperate robbers. Of their numbers, also, he had no certain knowledge. Some said there were a hundred, others said but three or four. Probably some figure between the two would best tell the truth; but whatever their numbers, or whence they came, was of little matter. Their deeds were right awful, and the women folk, as Mike assured Amyot, had not had a quiet night for many a week, so greatly were they in dread of these same robbers.

'And what do you suppose I can do?' Amyot inquired when he had heard. 'If you do not know where they hide, I can do nothing; indeed, single-handed, it would be ridiculous to interfere with a band of desperate men.'

'Ay, sewer anuff, we wud hae yer tak ccear o' yersell, bet I hasna telt ye a.' Fooaks has beean tellin' me es these robber creatures hae an eye t' oor hoose. Neea doot they think ta thersells es nowt bet yan auld man an' auld woman leeve heear, they'll easy dew es they moind; bet whiles yer t' heeam, yer maister heear, an' soa I shall sleep easy sa lang as yer in t' hoose.'

'But what are they likely to do—these terrible villains—when do they come? Is murdering their fashion, or robbery, or a little of both?'

'I has heeard nowt fer sewer aboet murderin'. It is t' stock es they cum arter—t' sheep an' t' pigs, t' cows an' hosses, an' sich. I's heeard es they 'tacked a farm tuther neet, an' carried t' young ducks an' t' gezzelins, six or seven girt swine, in t' farmer's ane cart, an' druv awa' six cows and four good nags, an' nowt has been seean o' 'em since.'

'Well, that sounds pleasant. I wish they'd fix the day for their coming here, and I'd try and give them a welcome. Do the farmers let them carry off their stock in that fashion without any resistance?'

'Na, na; theear's a gey lot o' scufflin' an' outcry, bet ta rogues tie foak's hands ahind ther backs, and let 'em squall; sum wha wuddent bea quiet noway, has beean mickle yurt.'

'It will not suit me at all to have my hands tied behind my back, and watch them carrying off my goods,' said Amyot. 'If they don't come to-night, I'll see what can be done before to-morrow evening, and as it isn't too late to-night to do something, you, Mike, should go to all the cottages where the men live who work for us, and bid them come here for the night: tell them I've come home, and want to see them. Bid them to supper.'

'But, maister,' said Deborah, 'twa on 'em leeve awa' on t' fells—Mike can nivver ga sa fur.'

'Well, no. I did not think of that; I'll go out myself, and see if I can find three or four stout fellows who will come and stay the night here, and mount guard by turns. Is old Tommy Fell still fit for work?'

'Ay, ay, es hearty as iver, an' he'd like a scratch wi' t' robbers: they stole hes pig tuther neet.'

'If I'd only a dozen of our men from Glasgow, I'd like it, too,' said Amyot, as he sallied forth; 'but if they should come a hundred strong, I run a good chance of havin' to look on with my hands tied behind my back. Still it is scarcely likely they would come in any number

to plunder a farm-house kept by an old fellow like Mike.'

Encouraged by this idea, Amyot pursued his walk, and was so successful in his quest, that when the evening closed in, five strong labourers and a young farmer from a short distance had assembled round the hearth, ready and eager to have a fight with the robbers. Stories were told of their desperate doings, but when Amyot inquired whether the magistrates took no heed to the matter, no one seemed able to give him any information, the young farmer alone appearing to think there was any reason to expect magistrates to trouble their heads about such people; yet he, too, was of the same opinion as one of the men, who declared that unless the whole gang could be caught at once it would be uncommon dangerous for the magistrates to molest them, as they had always made a point of revenging any insult or injury to one of their number.

'Then some have suffered for their pranks: who were they, and how were they taken?' asked Amyot, but again no one could answer the question.

'What makes you feel so sure, Mike, that they are thinking of coming to Broughbarrow?' have you had speech of any of the rogues?' was his next question, at which Michael fired up.

'Mea ken thae villains; I niver seeat eyes on 'em es I knaa! Whya does I think es theear cummin' heear? cos fooaks ses soa, an' fooaks es maistly reet. Ses Jemmy Stokes t' mea laast weeak, " 'Tis yer turn sewerly, Mike," an' Deborah she's heeard all manner o' noises fer many a neet past.'

'No doubt,' said Amyot, smiling; 'there never was such a house as this for queer noises: I remember them when I was a child.'

'T' maister dussent Felieve us,' said Mike, looking much offended; 'tell hin, sum o' these fooaks dewens, Mr. Wilson; mebbe he'll giv' heead t' ye.'

Nothing loath, the young farmer related all that he had heard of the various robberies that had been set down by the neighbourhood to the account of this much-famed gang of thieves ; and the others added their contributions from time to time, until the hour grew late, and most of the parties settled themselves to sleep.

Amyot was very weary with his journey, but he felt it incumbent on him to keep guard, since he could not let his friends be more attentive to his interests than he was himself ; but little used as any of the party were to much night watching, the group around the fire soon became a very drowsy one, while Mike and Deborah, feeling more safe than they had done for many nights past, retired to their chamber, and slept profoundly. In the kitchen the talk gradually flagged, then ceased entirely, and a profound silence reigned in the house, and Amyot, keeping himself awake with some difficulty, soon perceived that all around him were sound asleep. The hours dragged slowly by, the fire died down in the hearth, the book which he had taken to while away the time grew marvellously unedifying, and before long he was forced to walk about to keep himself awake. The tall clock struck two. Amyot shivered, and wished he had not allowed the fire to go out ; the night was unpleasantly cold, and a red log would have been a cheerful sight, and most grateful to the weary watcher. Tired of pacing the small room among the figures of his sleeping companions, he at last fetched a rug, and wrapping it round him, seated himself once more in the chimney-corner, and before he had had time to discover that sleep had overtaken him, he was snoring as loud as any of his companions.

He was roused by a mysterious whisper, and a touch on his shoulder ; and starting up with a mighty jump, he almost overturned Deborah, who stood beside him, saying :

‘Whisht : dew ye no heear it ?’

‘Hear what ? No, Deborah, I hear nothing.’

'Noo, noo, listen! I'se heeard it ower and ower agen.'

'What is it like?'

'A scratchin' an' a fumblin' in t' shippen; likely theear arter t' nags.'

'I haven't as good ears as you, Deborah; but if you feel so sure, I'd best go and see.'

'Na, na; ye mun tak' Mr. Wilson wi' yer, an' yer gun, an' bea saartan yer shoot un deead. If yer see un, giv' un neea time t' tak' a hit et ye.'

'No, no, pity to wake him; ' but Deborah was not to be contradicted.

She stepped across to the young farmer, and with some difficulty roused him; and assuring him that the robbers were in the backyard, urged him to go out with the young master, and see if it was not so.

The young man was brave, and made no difficulty; and in a few minutes the two were standing in the dark outside, listening, while Deborah, holding the door a crack open, watched what would befall, ready to give the alarm, and rouse the other inmates of the kitchen.

'Turn t' lantern towards t' shippen,' suggested Wilson, in a low voice.

Amyot obeyed. All there was quiet, and nothing was to be seen. A restless cock, disturbed in his dreams, imagined the day was breaking, and attempted a sleepy crow; a silly young one followed his example, but no other sound broke the intense stillness of the night. The moon was just about to set, and threw but little light upon the farm buildings.

'What could she mean?' Amyot exclaimed, in an undertone; 'nothing could be more quiet. Shall we walk round the house in order to reassure her, and look into the stable?'

Wilson assented. The shaggy colley came and rubbed his nose against Amyot's feet, and having paid his

homage, returned to his usual post. They stood for a moment in front of the house, and looked over the streamlet to the Fells, rising against the sky, hard and cold. Then they turned towards the meadows, where the lambs and sheep were sleeping, or moving sleepily about, no one molesting them ; thence towards the pigsties, where the fat creatures lay stretched among their straw safe and sound, and finally to the stable, where the stout farm horses were standing motionless side by side, while the horse which Amyot had ridden, feeling unsettled in its new home, and not altogether satisfied with its quarters or companions, fidgeted and shook the halter that secured him, and scraped the wall with his fore-feet.

'Yon beast has doon the mischief,' young Wilson remarked. 'See how he kicks and scrapes. Your old woman's window looks this way—that is the noise she has heard. Steady, my boy, steady ; what ails thee ?'

'That's it, and no mistake. Wilson, we may go napping again. Poor old thing, she is easily dismayed. Tell me now, is there any truth in these stories about the robbers ? I hate to be befooled.'

'They're true enough as far as I know,' said the young man rather sulkily ; 'but I reckon we'll do no fighting the night ; it will be light before long.'

And thus convinced, they returned to the house, reassured Deborah, and after talking awhile, allowed themselves to doze peacefully until sunrise.

The next day, being fully resolved not to be made a fool of, Amyot walked into the town, saw the parson, and other trustworthy persons, and asked their opinion of the tales which had so much disturbed him the night before. The clergyman charitably assured him that most people were less wicked than their neighbours represented, and that he did not believe these robbers meant any great harm. Another worthy gentleman had never seen any of these same robbers, and declined to express any

opinion concerning them ; they had not robbed him, and he fancied they were not a bad sort of people after all. A third said that as long as they only robbed the farmers, he should not trouble himself about them ; if they meddled with the gentry, the case would become serious.

Amyot reddened at this invidious distinction, and was once more inclined to listen to the worst that could be said concerning them ; but, consulting the laundlord at the Griffin, he was assured with many strong expressions that they were a merry lot, seldom did much harm, and always paid for their victuals and drink as well, or better, than the gentlefolk. Feeling but little the wiser for all his trouble, Amyot returned home, debating with himself whether or not he should secure a guard, as on the previous night, and much inclined to think no more of the matter, if only he could persuade Mike and Deborah to do the same.

Alas ! for all his wise precautions and sundry consultations ! He reached home to find Deborah wringing her hands, and the lasses crouching underneath the bedsteads, while Mike was nowhere to be seen, the stable-door wide open, and the horses gone.

'Oh, Maister Amyot !' sobbed the poor woman, 'wha wud hae thowt it ? Ta cum in broard daylect—sich imperence—bet I'll nivver git ower it. It'll be my death, I knaa.'

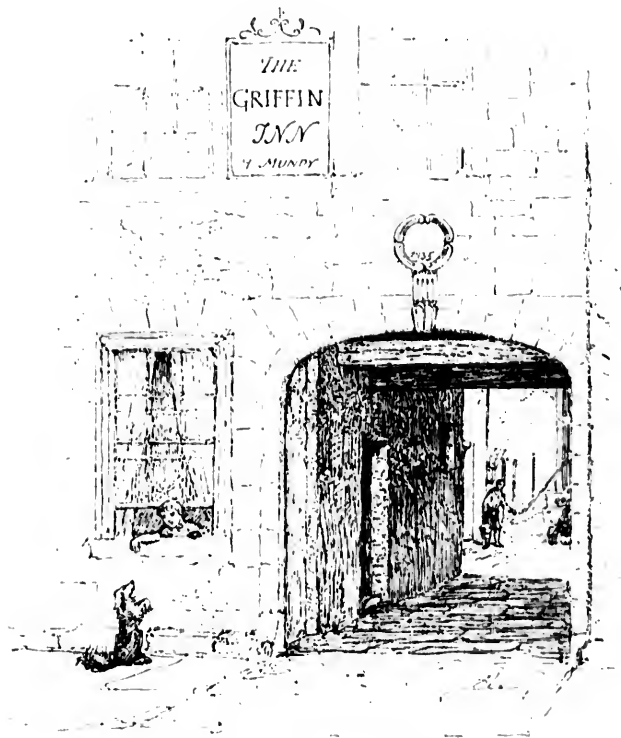
'Where's Mike?' was all Amyot could say when his speech returned to him. Not hurt, I hope ?

The poor colley was lying dead, or senseless before the barn-door, and Amyot's thoughts had already conjured up a terrible picture of the faithful old man lying or dead. But, at the name of Mike, something like a gleam of satisfaction, or revenge, lighted up the old woman's face.

'He's thecar,' she said, pointing to a dark passage which led to various out-buildings. 'Na, he's no hurt,



bet he's summat ta tak' cear on. Will I tell yer? These murderin' villains all made off, I knaa net whya—they heeard a noise or summat, an' off they ran, an' yan tuk ta wrong rooad, and roon doon theear. He knaad nowt about t' trap-dooar into cellar, an' tummelt reet in. Mappen he's brok' he's neck, bet he's been makin' a



THE GRIFFIN INN, FENRITH.

terble girt uproar; bet Mike an' I we ses, "Ye bide theear, sir!" and we fetched girt steeans an' heaped 'em on trap-dooar. Mike's a settin' on 'em, an' I telt him ta bide theear till yer cum heeam.'

'And the others?' asked Amyot.

'They're gaan reet awa', an' taken a' t' nags wi' 'em, an' a sheep or twa slung across t' horses' backs. They might a dune meear ill, Maister Amyot, bet it's bad enoof.'

'And what must we do with the prisoner?' asked Amyot.

'Whya, I thowt when yer cumed heeam es ye'd shoot him for saartan. Bein' a sodger, it wud cum natrall ta yer; bet, if yer plaze, Mike an' me 'll gaa oot o' t' road. Shootin' a man beean quite so coomfortable es stickin' a pig, though I can't see whya—pigs bein' harmless enough, an' this un beean a terble girt sinner.'

Amyot laughed.

'You needn't go out on the road, Deborah. Shooting men in cold blood isn't my trade. We must send for a constable.'

'Oh, sewer then, Mike 'll be sittin' theear till he's thin es a bacca pipe. They constables niver meddle wi' sich es this un; ye'll net git em ta cum.'

'Nay, but I must try.'

'And Mike?'

Amyot went off down the dark passage to the spot where Mike, looking the picture of despair, was sitting on the trap-door.

'Oh, Maister Amyot——' was all he could say.

But Amyot stopped all lamentations by saying:

'Never mind, Mike; things might have been worse. But can't we make that fellow secure, and set you free? Here—we'll heave a few more weights on the trap-door, and leave him to reflect.'

'He's reet down miserable. Mebbe he's yurt hisself,' said Mike. 'Bet he's beean crying an' sobbin' loike a child—villain though he bea, I cud scarce bear to hear un.'

Amyot stood in much perplexity.

'We must send for a constable,' he said; 'but, as

Deborah says, it may be hours before one comes. If he is much hurt, it seems hard to let him lie here unaided, and yet——'

'Tis his aan fault,' said Mike ruefully.

'Did you see him? What sort of a fellow is he?'

'Nothin' in any ways perticler,' said Mike. 'Hark to un, maister.'

The moaning and sobbing were truly piteous. Suddenly it ceased, and a choking voice from the depths below struggled to make itself heard.

'Is that Amyot Brough?' it said. 'Old man, take the lid of my prison away and let me speak to him.'

'Na, na. Loike es net he's gotten a pistol and wull shoot yer, maister.'

'Scarcely,' said Amyot. 'Get up, Mike, I must speak to him. I seem to know his voice, but who can he be?'

## CHAPTER XXI.

### QUERY : A FOOL OR NOT.

'WAS I a fool, Jack?' inquired Amyot, when, a few days later, he related the whole story to his friend on his return to Glasgow.

'Truly, I do not know. You have a marvellous tender heart. For such a blubbering, weeping rascal, I believe I should have had small pity. Had he wounded himself severely by his fall?'

'He had put his shoulder out of joint—that we soon righted for him.'

'And was that all the reason for the sighs and tears that so moved your kind heart and the heart of your old man? I warrant I should have had a wish to give him more to cry about.'

'I believe he thought he should be hanged, and could not relish the notion of such an end.'

'In that I might have some sympathy. It has always seemed to me a precious uncomfortable way of ending one's life. But your North countrymen are called long headed; why had he not well considered the end of the road before he started on such a course?'

'Ay, Jack, you speak like a parson. That question I didn't think to ask him; but this I ask you, was I wrong in not giving the rogue up to justice?'

'The world would be better without such *canaille*; but I know not. What did the major say when you told him your tale?'

'He laughed immoderately at me for leaving my possessions undefended while I went to seek for help, but he said nothing of my letting the rogue go.'

'Did you tell him the reason—that he called himself the brother of the beauty in Drury Lane, and pleaded that he was your old schoolfellow?'

Amyot nodded.

'And Wolfe said nothing?'

'Nothing, but that the rebellion had made many honest men rogues.'

'But tell me, Brough, when you had extricated your prisoner from his dungeon and eased him from his pain, was he as filled with gratitude as you expected, or did he attempt any ruffian tricks such as the old man had feared?'

'Not a bit of it. He is a mean rascal—offered to betray all his comrades, turn King's evidence, swear anything I liked.'

'And you listened to him? I detest that species of rogue.'

'And I too, Jack. Old Mike, being broken-hearted about his horses, questioned him as to what was like to become of them, and found that they would be sold at a certain market; so we gave the constables the task of attending there, and Mike and some other fellows were going to identify the beasts. My old lawyer will see to the business, and it is not unlikely some of the rogues may come to the gallows. I had to return here, as you know.'

'And your prisoner, he has saved himself to America; and you, for love of the fair Primrose, found him the money to transport his worthless person thither. In truth, there are some people who do not know what to do with their money. When did you arrange this precious design?'

'The day before I started to return. This rascal Percy

Kirkbride dared not come again into the town, and I had to take him the money I had promised. He was weak, too, and could not promise to walk far ; so I went to seek him in his haunts under Helvellyn, on the shores of the lake. A marvellous lonely place these rogues had chosen ; but when I looked at those great silent mountains, so little trodden, I did not wonder that no one had tracked them, nor do I pretend to know whereabouts they had their hiding-place.'

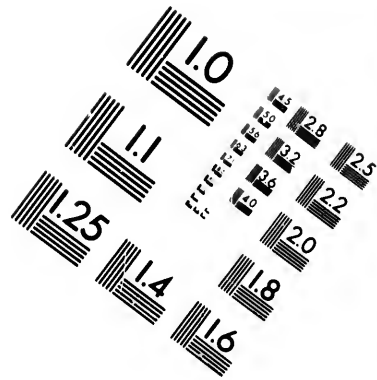
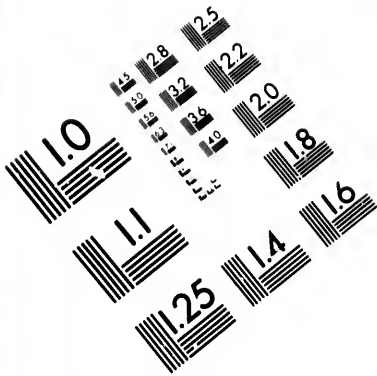


SIVBARROW CRAG.

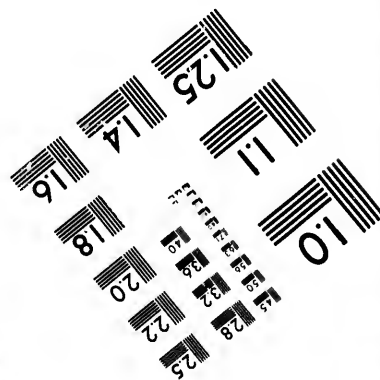
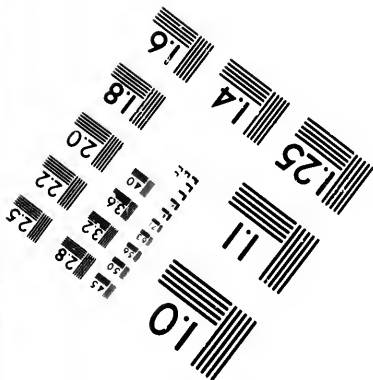
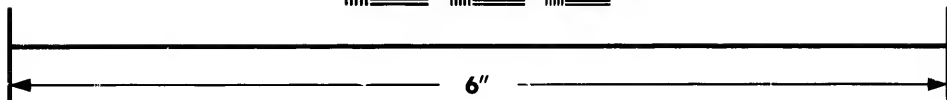
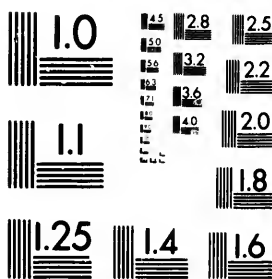
'And you roamed about, playing hide-and-seek on these mountains, looking for your friend? Truly, the fair Primrose ought to know it. Had he given you no address in the wilderness, told you of no rock where you might deposit it—the treasure you brought him?'

'Yes ; he named a certain crag overhanging the lake, and there I found him. He was miserable enough, poor fellow !—cursed the Pretender, his brothers, who had led him to join the rebels, his mother, and all belonging to him ; wished I had shot him that day, as Deborah sug-





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gested, and much more foolery of the same description. He was always a despicable fellow—a bully and a sneak ; but I thought of his mother, and I didn't grudge the money.'

'He'll never go to America ; he'll be hanged in England yet. See you, Amyot, he will let himself be persuaded by the next rogue he meets, and your money might as well have been flung into the lake.'

'I think not. He seemed really glad to go, and vowed that as soon as ever he could get to the coast, he would try to find a vessel to carry him to Nova Scotia. He is afraid to go near his old gang, lest they should discover how much of their plans he had betrayed, and he said bitterly he hadn't a friend in the world.'

'Well, you will see. For me, I have no great trust in such men's promises, they do not know themselves what they want ; and as for holding to their word, they do not know what that means. Well, you have had a busy time for your holiday, and, as is ever your way when I have you not under my eye, you have dispensed much money. But I am content to see you again. Yesterday, all day long, I feared you would fail to return within your leave, and then, my boy, I would not have rejoiced to be in your case. The major has been hard on such offenders lately.'

And then Percy Kirkbride and his affairs were forgotten, and the conversation turned to the garrison gossip, and to the news conveyed by letters from London, which Amyot had found waiting for him on his return.

It would be long to tell, and wearisome to read, did I enter fully into the years which Amyot spent in garrison-towns in Scotland—years never forgotten nor altogether regretted by him, but filled up with a monotonous round of military exercise irksome to detail. They brought with them but one regret, the absence of all tidings of Primrose and her mother. Once he had ventured to write to her,

but the concise little note with which she replied to his inquiries was but small temptation to write again, and the regiment remained quartered in Scotland for nearly five years. From time to time during that period Amyot reflected that when they did meet again, Mrs. Kirkbride would not be able to call him a boy ; but if ever he made this remark aloud to his friend Jack, the latter treated with scorn the notion that his love was still unwedded, and assured him that there could be no doubt the rebel Lance had by this time reappeared and carried her off.

‘So console yourself ; and if you must have a wife—a strange necessity, it seems to me—look well at these tall Scotchwomen. Their stature will be commodious to you and as the major saith, they love to meet a man who has a small estate.’

But to these suggestions Amyot turned a deaf ear, and early in the year 1750 came a letter from Joan which made him restless and uneasy, and set him pining for leave to go to London—leave which he saw little likelihood of obtaining.

The letter ran as follows :

‘Having just returned, dear brother, to our home, I feel much in the humour to write to you, and the more so, because pleasant and enlivening as our stay in London has been, there was to me the one great desire ungratified, that of seeing my dear brother. My uncle tried to console me by the assurance that any place was better for young men than London, the which notion he has acquired from the many evil ways of my poor brother-in-law and cousin, learnt, as he imagines, during a long idle time in town. Still, I longed for you, and chiefly that you should see your little nephew, and that he should learn to know his uncle. You will laugh at a mother’s folly, and so I will not tell you what pretty ways he has, nor how I love to think he is like you. One thing only troubles me about him, and that is, that he is but delicate, and in that

respect most unlike to you, dear brother. He thrives right well when away from Swinford, but the doctor says our low marshy land breeds fever, and he has warned me that I may not always keep my darling, so I try to love him moderately, but feel I succeed but ill.

‘But you will desire tidings of others besides myself and my child, and since it is always my desire to satisfy the cravings of your curiosity, I will endeavour to tell you something concerning all our friends. My best and dearest is much benefited by his holiday, and hard at work as ever. My grandmother looked well, and sweeter and prettier, if possible, than of old. She has found a young girl to live with her—to fill my place, she says, but truly it makes me stand aghast to see in what light she must have held me, if this young person has stepped into my shoes. She is a wild Irish lassie, untrained and unmannered, with rough locks, and shoes for ever down at heel. Miss Johnstone is distracted by her, but my grandmother says it is rare sport to see the two together. My aunt is but delicate, my uncle well in health, but much distured by reason of Guy’s wild ways, and here it were well to tell you that he has lately married my aunt’s woman, Félicité, which few can hope will be for the happiness of either. And now I pass to another matter which will, I know, be of great interest to you, yet I speak of it with much hesitation and doubt, for fear lest what I say should greatly distress and move you. You remember, dear Amyot, the letter you wrote me in which you laid before me all the longings of your heart towards your old playfellow, Primrose Kirkbride. I was glad to have your confidence, and I promised you that when next in London I would strive to see Primrose, and make myself known to her. This, as you know, is my first visit to London since my marriage, and I have not forgot my promise. My husband was agreeable to my purpose, and accompanied me on my errand. We found the house you

named, and were admitted, and since I know it will be pleasant to hear it, I do not hesitate to say how amazed I was at Primrose's beauty. I could not keep my eyes from following her as she moved about that poor little room, and truly I wonder not that your head was turned. Also her voice pleased me marvellously, and all she said was most discreet. But the poor mother ; oh ! Amyot, I could weep when I think of her ! Surely she must be terribly ill or terribly heart-sick, for never in my life have I seen such fevered eyes—they seem to burn in their sockets—while the face is wasted and lined, and the flesh has such a strange hue that it is scarcely like a living person's. The poor thin hands moved restlessly about, and the mouth quivered perpetually. We talked of you, and I gave her your message about her son Percy, and that you had seen him, and heard from him that he was about to sail for America, and then I saw two tears run down her cheeks ; I was quite glad to see them, for they made her face look more natural. She bade me thank you for the news, and said it was kind of you to think of sending word. Of Jasper they had heard. Of Lance, but little ; while we spoke of him, I watched Primrose, and, dear Amyot, I grieve to pain you, but much I fear that she cares for him—I can scarce say why, but so it seemed to me ; yet my husband, I feel bound to say, thinks otherwise. Still, I ask you, is it not most likely that a woman should be best judge of such matters ? So if you will be guided by your sister, Amyot, I would have you strive to think as little of her as may be, since to set your heart on her must surely end in disappointment. She has, I fear, something to bear from the poor mother, and everything about them spoke poverty, yet there was something reserved and proud about them both, and I failed entirely to accomplish anything for their relief. Did they live near us, so that I could see them often, it would be easier far, by little gifts, to help them. Primrose

assured me she was well, but looked far otherwise, and when I spoke of my country home, and the coming of the spring flowers, which in the dark winter days I love to dwell on, she said : " Yes, mother and I both yearn for the country." Then my husband ventured to urge them to pay us a visit, and Primrose looked longingly at her mother ; but she refused at once, and said the fatigue would kill her : therefore we could say no more. There is no likeness between your old playmate and her poor mother, and it is easy to see there can be no tie of blood between them ; and here I think to tell you of a certain incident which Mr. Pomfret has often related to me, and which I cannot but think may in some way concern Primrose. It happened some months before our marriage, while Mr. Pomfret was living alone at Swinford, that an elderly gentleman travelling through the place was taken ill at the little inn, and being very lonely, sent to request my husband to visit him. They had much talk, but finding my husband cared neither for card-playing nor drinking, and would gladly talk with him of more serious matters, he soon gave him to understand that he did not desire any further intercourse. But my husband, who took little note of it at the time, has since remembered that when the gentleman, who was from Wales, and a person of some distinction, spoke of being all alone in the world, and Mr. Pomfret asked him if he had neither wife nor son nor daughter, he replied that his wife had died long since, and that the only child he had ever had, had come to an untimely end when about four years old. At least, so he had been told, but he murmured something about not feeling entirely sure of the truth of the story. The child, a little girl, had, he said, been travelling under the care of her nurse and his cousin from Carlisle to Edinburgh, where dwelt some of her mother's relations, who had undertaken the care of her while he was at the wars on the Continent. But she never reached her destination,

and his cousin had wrote him a doleful story, relating how the child had fallen out of the post-chaise on the journey while asleep, and been killed on the spot ; the nurse, terrified lest she should be blamed for negligence, had fled, and never been heard of since, and this strange mishap occurred while the child was under the care of his cousin, who had always been jealous of the other's greater wealth. My husband took but little thought of the matter at the time, but when I was relating to him Primrose's story, shortly after our marriage, he recalled it to mind, having a notion, but not a very certain one, that the time named by the gentleman would agree with that when Primrose was found. Something of the tale Mr. Pomfret told to Primrose, when we were visiting them, but she seemed little interested, said she had a mother and brothers, and cared not to know any other relations. I have not mentioned the gentleman's name, which was Solmes, and my husband says that his brother Guy is acquainted with a man of that name, who may be the cousin alluded to. But I scarce know why I have told you this long tale, since if it interests not Primrose herself, no one else need concern themselves about it, and, indeed, I do believe it would be truer kindness never more to recall her to your mind. For the present, let me remind you, as a good sister, that the path of duty is the path to honour, and that a soldier has ever one mistress and lady-love, his country. And now, having told my tale and preached my sermon, let me say farewell, with the assurance of the fond love of your faithful sister.

‘ JOAN POMFRET.

‘P.S. You will think it strange that I say nothing concerning the earthquake which has occasioned so much wonderment and panic. Shall I own that I feared to fall into the same foolish talk concerning it of which I have heard so much? Some were convinced that another

shock would of necessity follow, since two had already been felt ; and the exact day was fixed, and it was said that London would without doubt be swallowed up. My mother-in-law was much alarmed, and for many days the talk ran on naught else ; each visitor who presented himself had something new to add to our fund of terrible forebodings, and though all agreed that London was doomed, none could say with certainty whither it were best to flee. Truly, it seems too laughable. Yet does it make one sad to see so many people tremble at the thought of sudden death ! There have been a marvellous number of sermons and discourses written and preached on the subject ; one would fain hope the world will be the better for them ; but even with such a stirring subject, many are heavy and tedious. Once more, farewell.'

'Madame your sister is right in her advice,' was Jack Pownal's comment on the parts of this letter which Amyot read to him. 'Abandon all thoughts of the beauty of Drury Lane : let your country be your mistress and none else ; and when you are old, and have lost a member or two—are blind, and deaf, and stupid—it will be fitting time to think of matrimony, elbow-chairs, and chimney-corners. For my part, when I am old and done for, I shall look out for a bullet rather than a mistress : to die in my bed makes no part of my plan.'

'Everyone to his taste,' said Amyot, mournfully ; 'but it is a hard fate to be shut up here, and never have a chance of trying to win her.'

'Ah ! well, my friend, you have a grievance : that is what an Englishman always wants. See you, if all went as you would choose, and still the young lady had not the good sense to fall in love with you, you would then be forced to confess that you were not so handsome, so pleasant, so desirable as you had fancied—that would not be at all pleasant. But in this circumstances, so little



agreeable, where you find yourself, you can console yourself that if only the Fates were more propitious, you would assuredly gain your object—your fair one would be in your arms. Thus, you see, you might have a grievance not at all so pleasant, because it would wound your *amour propre*.'

'What stuff you talk, Jack! All I desire is a chance. Are we to be kept in this wretched place for ever?'

'Ah, that is what I do not know. But concerning this story of Mrs. Arnold Pomfret's, what think you? Does it sound probable?'

'I don't much care whether it is probable or improbable. No one would be much the better for having that fellow Solmes for a relation. You remember him, don't you?'

'Was he not that inconvenient heavy burden that you and I transported from the major's bed at Maestricht? I have never seen him since, else would I have demanded pay for my trouble. And so you have a new cousin! Is she beautiful, this wife of your cousin Guy?'

'Beautiful as paint can make her. Guy must have been more drunk than usual when he married her. What scenes there will be!'

'Now behold, Amyot, what fools men become on this subject of marriage, and look at me. Am I not better off? Here you are for ever longing for leave, that you may run about London after a lady who has never thought of you. Here is our major, the most lucky fellow in all other regards, fretting—only he has the sense to conceal his torments—about this Miss Lawson, who has not the wits to comprehend what the man is worth. I tell you, you are fools for your pains; and some day you will say so yourselves.'

## CHAPTER XXII.

### FAR FROM THE BUSY HUM.

The village to which Joan had betaken herself, when she assumed the honourable estate of wifehood, lay in a low plain in the South-west of England. High hills might be seen in the distance, but the place itself was a straggling village on low and somewhat marshy ground. The country around was well wooded and verdant ; a lovely river skirted the plain.

Reader, the village desires to remain *incognito*—humour it in its whim. The name of Swinford will serve its turn. For some years past it had been esteemed a quiet place, and specially modest and well-behaved ; and so it appeared to a traveller who entered it on horse-back one Sunday morning some five years after the events recorded in our last chapter. The village street seemed uninhabited, save by a few lads who loitered about with an air of great indolence and much stupidity, and a few elderly people who peered from their doors and windows at the stranger as he rode down the street, or held babies up to admire his steed, as an excuse, doubtless, for well examining the rider themselves. At the Green Dragon he stopped ; and as the host came to the door, he proceeded to inquire the road to the rectory ; which, being a communicative man, the landlord pointed out to him with many more remarks than his question required.

‘They’ll all be in church now, and near about the sermon time,’ he added. ‘You’ll find none in the house,

sir, but a maid or so, and maybe the little boy, who I hear has been but sadly of late. You might slip into the house until the service is over. I can take the horse.'

But Amyot for the traveller was he—preferred to dismount and walk on to the church, to see, as he said, what was going on there. 'I'll leave my horse with you, and call for him presently. Shall I find the church full?'

'Well, as for full, sir, the parson is ever desiring to see it fuller, but he might be content, if he would, since he's brought folks to church that had never been save to be christened, and made most of us feel ashamed of ourselves if we're not there once a day at least. I am forced to stay at home, because my wife chooses to go in the mornings; but if I didn't show myself there in the afternoons, I should feel wrong all over through the week, for why, he takes such things so terrible hard. Can't believe but it's his fault, or something of the kind. So we go to keep him at peace with himself, if for naught else; but we think a good deal of him, we do. A glass of ale, sir, before you walk down to the church?'

'Yes, and give my horse a good feed. I will call again presently.' And so saying, Amyot resigned his bridle to the worthy innkeeper, and walked off with quick strides in the direction of the church. One door stood open, and he flattered himself that he could enter unperceived. But not so: a group of children seated near the porch were much disturbed by the unusual event of a total stranger entering during the progress of the service. There was some whispering and a little giggling among them, and before he had found a vacant seat, Amyot felt that the parson in the pulpit, and the parson's wife seated near the chancel, had both discovered his arrival. Almost involuntarily, Arnold Pomfret had paused, and Joan, from beneath her closely tied-in hat, had flushed with pleasure, ere, recovering herself, she cast her eyes on the open Bible upon her knee, and resumed the appearance of most

absorbed attention. Amyot wondered whether she were really listening, or whether, like himself, she had grown used to the dull monotony of sermons, and ceased to expect any entertainment from them. But, while asking himself the question, Amyot found himself drawn from the pleasing contemplation of the sweet devotional face under the large sheltering hat to a more engrossing consideration of the rather stern face in the pulpit. The years that had passed since they had met had added much to the gravity and thoughtfulness of Arnold's face, but his voice had its old sweetness and earnestness, and Amyot felt its charm as he had done when quite a child. Was he repeating his text? So it seemed. Amyot thought he had heard the words before, but knew not whence they came.

'What doth the Lord require of thee? But few things, truly. What doth the Almighty request at thy hand? Is it thy sheep, thy cow, thy pig, thy farm, thy wife, thy child? Nay, not so. These are His gifts to thee—these and all else that thou holdest dear. These thou mayest keep. He needeth none. Yet He *hath* need of somewhat at thy hand, and from His throne in Heaven He speaks to thee and me—to each one in this village—and saith, "I ask a few things of thee. I say not they are trifles, I say not they will cost thee nought; but cost they little or cost they much, I thy God require them at thy hand, and naught can I accept in their stead."

'And sayest thou, Who is the Lord, that we should obey His voice? Who is this God who demands a gift from us? I will answer thee. Nay, I marvel not that thou shouldst ask, Who is the Lord? for truly he is a God who hideth Himself; and there are those who go forward, He is not there; and backward, but they cannot perceive Him; to the left hand, but behold Him not; to the right hand, but they cannot see Him; therefore must I strive to show Him to the eyes which have never seen Him;

that seeing, they may know ; that knowing, they may worship ; and worshipping may yield Him the service He requires.

'But first, I would ask you, open wide those eyes that ye may see, else, with all my striving, I shall fail to show Him to ye. Open those eyes as ye walk by the roads, 'neath the blue heavens, and through the fair fields, beside the rushing streams, or 'neath the starry sky, and behold what He hath made.

'Then turn them to thyself, or to the form of thy brother man, and see again his handicraft. Fail not to mark the lambs that skip in the fields, the birds that sing among the boughs, the tiny insects fluttering over the flowers. Each hath He devised and created ; therefore let thine eyes consider each and all, and then wilt thou know somewhat of thy God, of His power, His wisdom, and His goodness. All this thou may'st see, and teach thyself—this, and much more. But to me it is given to tell thee more of Him ; to strive to open other eyes than those which now are fixed on me, and so to guide them that they may rest, not on me, which were but trouble lost, but on Him, and that so resting on Him, they may find the sight so all-entrancing, that they may never loosen their gaze, but go through life with their eyes set on their Father and their God.

'Their Father, said I ; yea truly. "Our Father, which art in heaven," say we daily, and yet if He be a Father, where is His honour, where is your regard for His wishes, your thought for His service ! Think but for a few short minutes of the sights and sounds that meet our eyes and ears in this our village ; think further of what we might see by night, did not darkness hide them from our view, and then ask yourselves how seem such acts in His sight, who cannot bear to look upon sin, and to whose eyes the darkness is no darkness at all ? Marvel not, then, that ye know Him so little, that He hideth His

face so that ye cannot see Him. Can He, think you, whose love is vast, boundless, incomprehensible, dwell with you, ye selfish ones, who love nought but your worthless selves, who grind down the poor, and oppress the fatherless and widow? Can He, who is the Truth, enter in and abide where false weights and false measures are permitted, where honesty and truth have no settled dwelling-place! Can He, I ask again, whose tenderness surpasses a mother's love, look with careless eye on you, who find your sport in tormenting his dumb creatures, who cry to Him, and not in vain for vengeance? Yes, brethren, He loveth all His creatures—hope not, dream not that their piteous groans, their agonising cries, do not reach His ears, and will not rouse His wrath. But again, I say, Can the All-Holy dwell with the profane, the profligate, the covetous, the murderer! Can He rest beneath the roof where sin is housed, and cherished, and made much of, and treated as an honoured guest? Nay, ye know He cannot. Visit you He may, as of old He visited the cities of the plain, or Korah, Dathan and Abiram in the wilderness, rushing upon you in His wrath, chastising in His sore displeasure. Even so He may visit you, and what will ye say when He appeareth?

'Yet is He still your Father. It is naught in Him that separates you from Him. The fault is yours, and yours alone. Tell me not ye cannot find Him—that ye long for His presence, but have sought it in vain. Ye are no true men if thus ye speak. Cry to Him: Thou art my Father—give Him the tribute that He claimeth, and see if He will not manifest Himself to thy sight. I tell you He will; yea, more—I promise you that He will make such vast discoveries of His wondrous love to you, that your heart will yearn towards Him, and you will find yourselves drawn to surrender to Him your whole spirit, soul, and being.

'But to return: What is it He doth require of thee?

Just this—to do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God. Alas! ye say, just the very things I cannot do! What, do justly when all my neighbours do unjustly? how then shall I live? Must I be cheated and defrauded, and not cheat and defraud again?

“Even so,” saith thy God.

“Love mercy,” thou sayest; “what meaneth that?” Just this does it mean. Be ye kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. “What! bear with injuries; let my neighbour set my stack on fire, and not fire his? Clothe him when naked, take of my children’s food to nourish his?—can this be true wisdom?” True, indeed, since Thy God hath so commanded.

‘And once more “Walk humbly with thy God.” “Hard again,” I hear you murmur, “such difficult tasks doth He set me.” What! hard to walk with thy God? Then is it plain to me that thou has failed to note one little word, the which, if rightly understood, will make thy walk right pleasant; I said not easy. And this word, it is but small—four letters only—*with*—but I pray you mark all that it implies. The road ye must walk is, as perchance ye have heard, and as I perceive ye are well persuaded, a toilsome up-hill path; yea, I will not hide from you that ye may have to tread it with weary, bleeding feet; but listen: ye must needs tread it in company with the Holy One Himself; ye must walk humbly with your God; close to His side, watching His steps, measuring yours by His, leaning when faint on His strength, cheered by His kindly converse, aye, and spurred on by His wise reproof.

‘Start on that road alone, then indeed will it be wearisome; strive to walk in it after your own fashion, and at your own pace, I promise ye many a painful stumble, many a bitter fall; choose some other guide, then most surely will ye lose your way; but walk with Him, and ye

shall fare well—walk humbly, and your journey shall be right prosperous, and have good success.

‘And here I pause amazed. Does He need to bid us walk *humbly* with our God? Yea, it would seem He doth. Then let us question with ourselves what cause have we to be humble; and even as I ask the question there rises before my eyes an awful sight. I see a cross reared up on high, and on that cross I see One dying in bitter grief and pain, and I know, and ye know full well, that it is the Son of God who hangs there, and that but for my sins and your sins, and the sins of the world He made, He had never so suffered and so died; and as I gaze, I wonder and adore. I know now why it behoveth me to be humble and adore, since He by whose side I strive to walk is the One who died for me. My brother, do I hear you speak of hardships?—nay, check the word. He hears thee—see His thorn-crowned head—wilt thou say He asks too much? Oh! behold His pierced side, His garments red with blood—wilt thou count the road too steep, the way too long? Nay, hush, for very shame! He marks thy every sign; wilt pierce His heart with thy ingratitude? wilt crucify thy Lord afresh?—rather, I pray thee, brother, turn thine eyes from thine own burden and consider His. Yes, consider His—but think not to measure it or comprehend it. Man knows nothing of its weight, but little of its nature. It is the guilt of the whole world—of those now living, of those long passed away—of every land, of every clime; it is the guilt of sinners in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—of rich and poor, of wise and foolish—it is your guilt, it is mine.

‘See there, where is thy burden? It is laid on Him. Truly thou hast great reason to walk humbly with thy God, since He hath lifted thy burden from off thy shoulders, and now invitest thee to walk with lightsome steps by His holy side.



‘What ! complaining still? What wouldst thou more? He will have thee walk the road He chooses, and it is not to thy liking. Then, brethren, I give ye up ; ye are well content that your Saviour should bear the stripes, the mockery, the cross, in your stead, but ye love Him not : ye will bear nought—nought for Him. ’Tis base ingratitude, ’tis meanness ! See, your Lord turns sorrowfully away, and ye will let Him go?’

‘Will you? Nay, not so, surely? Haste after Him, ere He be gone quite away ; take up thy cross and follow Him ; cling to the skirt of His robe, and humbly crave His pardon ; search for the prints of His steps, and in them plant thine own ; then shall the road that seemed erewhile so painful become pleasant to thy feet, and the Face that was turned away in grief shall smile upon thee in tender love, as thou settest thyself to learn thy difficult lesson—to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.’

Arnold Pomfret’s voice had ceased, there was a hush in the church, then some prayers, and the sound of departing feet, and ere Amyot had awoke from the spell of rapt attention which the preacher’s intense earnestness had cast upon him, he found the church fast emptying, and Joan with swift motion making her way towards him. It was a moment he had long looked forward to, and as his sister clung to his arm, and clasped his hand in both hers, while the words, ‘Oh, Amyot, brother!’ broke from her, he felt himself almost more like a hero returned from battles won, than merely an officer on short leave from garrison duty.

‘And, oh ! brother, you have come at just the right moment,’ she added, when, her husband having joined them and added his brotherly greeting to hers, together they turned down the churchyard path to the little gate which led into the rector’s garden ; ‘for my grandmother is staying with us, paying her first visit to our home. But why did you give us no warning of your coming?’

'Was there need? Am I not welcomed well enough?' said Amyot, gazing fondly at the sweet placid face upturned to his.

Joan was small, and between her tall husband and still taller brother looked even shorter and slighter than she really was. Her figure had still its girlish outline, but Amyot read in the soft blue eyes a wistful expression which recalled to his memory the words of the landlord at the inn, and he checked his inclination to mirth, to ask after the sick child at home.

'He is but sadly,' the young mother replied; and her hand sought her husband's arm. 'Dear grandmother remained at the house with him this morning, else should I not have been in church; but he is ever quiet, dear boy, and asks for nothing. How strange it seems that you have never seen him, and that this is your first visit to Swinford! I am glad you have come just now,' she added the last words after a short pause, and Amyot caught a tone of deep melancholy in them.

'The cooler weather will bring fresh strength to him,' Arnold interposed. 'The summer heat has always tried him;' but he too looked sad, and Amyot, who was much set on enjoying his brief holiday, took up the *rôle* of comforter, and talked much of the unusual heat, trying even to strong people, and sure to exhaust the weak.

As they reached the house, Joan hastened forward, saying:

'We bring you a visitor, dear madam,' and forthwith she led her brother into a long low room, with a wide window looking out over the garden, the church tower and part of the churchyard, where Amyot was welcomed by Mrs. Darley, cheery and alert as ever.

From her bright face his eye travelled at once to a little figure lying on a small couch beside the window, to which Joan had passed immediately she entered the room. Close beside the child's couch, within reach of his

small hand, lay Tory, now a very aged dog. He looked up with a low growl as Amyot approached the couch, but changed his tone to a plaintive whine, as Amyot said :

‘So this is little Stephen. Has he ever heard of me, I wonder?’

A pair of lustrous blue eyes were earnestly scanning him from among the pillows, and when Joan, smoothing back the bright hair from the white forehead, kissed it, saying :

‘My boy has heard much of Uncle Amyot—has he not?’

The child asked timidly :

‘Are you the boy who travelled with Tory on the coach when Tory got so muddy, and was nearly drowned?’

‘That I am, and no mistake,’ said Amyot cheerily. ‘Has Tory told you that tale, my little lad?’

‘My mother told me. Tory cannot talk. I wish he could, and he wishes it too ; but he is growing very old and sleepy, my mother says, like me. I think I am old and sleepy too, but not so old as Tory. He was old when I was born, my mother says.’

‘Hush, Stephen, you must not talk so much—here comes Nanny with our dinner. Brother, let me show you to your chamber ; you will be glad to wash away the dust of travel.’

When he returned to the parlour, the cloth was spread, and the meal only waiting the appearance of the master of the house. Joan was moving about the room with her quiet step, helping the maid servant, a rough country lass, whom Mrs. Darley described as more plague than profit. As Amyot entered, the little bright head was raised from the pillow with an eager look, then sank back disappointed, as the child said :

‘I wish father would come.’

'He will come soon, little son,' said Joan. 'Why so impatient, Stephen?'

'I have something to ask him,' the child said wearily. 'I wish he would come.'

'Here he is,' Joan said; 'but little ones must not speak unless they are spoken to, and your father is tired, Stephen.'

'Joan,' said Mrs. Darley, 'check not the child, I pray you. We have spoken of nought else the whole morning. I beg you let his mind be set at ease.'

'What is it?' said Mr. Pomfret, as he took his place at the table. 'Whose mind is ill at ease?'

''Tis the child,' Joan replied. 'He has something to ask his father, and being sick, we all humour him.'

Arnold went towards the window and stooped over his child, whose arms were raised to clasp his neck. A deep blush mounted to the pale little face, as, in answer to his father's inquiry, 'Well, little man, what is it?' he asked imploringly:

'Please, father, did you 'member to tell them? Tory and I want to know.'

'To tell them what?'

'What you promised. Did you tell the people in church that God loves the doggies, and won't have them hurt?'

'Yes, yes, my child; I told them, and I will tell them again. Don't fret yourself about those poor dogs any more.'

The child was laid tenderly back on his pillows, but still, half crying, as he laid his little hot hand on Tory's head, repeating, 'Father did tell them, Tory. I said he would;' and Tory responded by licking the little hand he loved so well.

'What does it mean?' Amyot inquired in a low voice, as his brother-in-law returned to the table, and Arnold said:

'It was a horrid piece of cruelty which Stephen chanced to witness in the village the last time he went out—two dogs terribly ill-used. He came home in great distress, and Tory sat and whined in sympathy. Then he extracted from me the promise that I would speak to the people about it. I hoped the child had forgotten about it. Let us try, at least, to do so now.'

He led the conversation on to other topics, and Joan forgot her constant anxiety in the interest of listening to her brother's anecdotes of his friends and way of life. When the meal was over, Mr. Pomfret disappeared, and Mrs. Darley, who had been joining less than was her wont in the conversation, pointed to a seat by her side, and bade Amyot leave his sister to tend her child, and come and talk with her.

'And so thou hast been in many places since last we met, grandson,' she said; 'Dover, Exeter, and now Winchester, I think thou saidst. But thou hast found a guiding star, if I mistake not. Dost know how oft one name is in thy mouth, Amyot?'

'Nay, is it? I did not think of that, though Jack Pownal for ever rails at me for talking of none else. I felt my tongue free to-day, as he was not here to listen.'

'Indeed, I ever thought well of young Wolfe, and am glad to find that he befriends thee. Do all young men speak of him as thou dost?'

Amyot considered a moment.

'There never was an officer more popular than James Wolfe, madam; yet since he is a sworn foe to licence of all kinds, he must needs make enemies at times. Yet does he give himself much trouble to win friends. At Exeter he was indefatigable in his attendance at balls and routs, the which he does not fancy, because he would win over the Jacobite ladies thereabouts, and truly he succeeded. We officers won golden opinions in that city.'

'I have heard his mother say he loves not cards not

dancing,' Mrs. Darley rejoined. 'Once the old lady was much incensed because she thought he meant to condemn her card-playing, and he had some difficulty in appeasing her. I met him with his parents at Bath two years ago, and liked him much ; he is a wondrous dutiful son. It is a pity his health is so bad, for his parents are so strong and hearty, it is difficult to credit it that he is truly their son. He has a notion he shall not live long, has he not, grandson Amyot ?'

'Once I heard him say that, being not likely to live as long as other men, he was solicitous to be of service to his country as soon as might be. But he has marvellous good spirits, which make one forget his bad health. Truly, I hope he will live long yet.'

'Mrs. Wolfe is anxious about him at times. She read portions of his letters to me, and in one he said that a few years more or less could make little difference, and therefore he had no need to lament that he was somewhat nearer his end than most men. He said, moreover, that he thought and spoke on these matters without being at all moved. Then, doubtless guessing that his mother would judge him subject to melancholy, he added, "It is not the vapours, but a desire that I have to be familiar with those ideas which frighten and terrify the half of mankind that makes me speak upon the subject of my dissolution." It is well for a soldier that he be thus able to think of death calmly beforehand, grandson Amyot.'

'It is, truly, madam.'

'It is comfortable to think that thou hast fallen into such hands,' the old lady continued. 'And now must I go and prepare myself for the service in the church, and in the evening I have a few words to say to thee on another matter. We will take a turn in the garden when it is cool.'

The rectory garden was a peculiarly shady spot. Large,

thickly-foliaged trees abounded, and the evergreens had been allowed to run wild.

'The rector,' Mrs. Darley grimly said, 'was so concerned about the weeds in other people's gardens, that he had not marked how much cutting and pruning were needed in his own.'

'Yet these shady walks are very pleasant,' Amyot replied as, leaning on his strong arm, the old lady paced the garden towards sunset.

'Pleasant—yes, once in a while ; but by-and-by will I make the parson hear reason. He shall cut down half his trees, and lop his evergreens, and drain that sloping meadow behind the house ; else will I carry Joan away, and leave him to die by himself.'

'To die?'

'Yes, to die, Amyot. Are you blind, too? Can you not see the reason of the child's ague fits? Ay, I was a fool to trust a parson. I should have come to see for myself years ago ; then might the child have been saved.'

'Poor little Stephen ! Is there no hope for him then? I thought he *had* been ill, but was recovering.'

'Recovering ! You thought so because Arnold talks of the benefit the cooler weather is to bring. Listen. I came here because Joan's letters made me anxious, and I fully meant to carry her and the child away to Westerham, where, as I thought, he would soon rally and grow strong ; but when I saw him I said nothing about Westerham, Amyot Brough.'

'You think him so ill, madam?'

'Ill? The child is dying, and the father shuts his eyes ; and the mother—well, I do not say how much she sees, but she does not know how near her trouble is.'

'Poor Joan !' said her brother tenderly ; 'Her one child. How will she bear it?'

'As she beareth all things. She has a wondrous store

of faith. But I am glad that thou art here, Amyot ; thou wilt help her.'

'I? No, grandmother ; I have little skill in comforting.'

'We will see, we will see. I am glad thou art grown so humble.'

'And is it really so? Must little Stephen die?'

'Ay, truly ; and the child knows it.'



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CONCERNING THE ENDING OF A SHORT LIFE.

SHOULD I tell him? Did my grandmother mean that?' Amyot asked himself, as day after day passed, and he walked or rode by Arnold's side about the country lanes, and ever noticed how, in all allusions to his child, Mr. Pomfret spoke of him as certain to grow stronger when the cooler weather came.

But it was hard to say the words which seemed so cruel, and he kept silence, and tried to fancy that the father might be right. Yet his eyes told him the old lady had spoken truly, and it was no surprise to him when, returning one evening with Arnold from a long ride to a distant farmhouse, they were greeted by Joan with the words :

'Little Stephen is so weary and restless that I have put him in his crib, and sent to ask the surgeon if he can do aught to soothe him ; and yet, though he could not rest on his couch, he did not like to go to bed—said it was so early, and the night would be so long, and he longed to say his prayer with father.'

'I will go and look at him,' said Arnold ; and Amyot followed with his arm around his sister.

Mrs. Darley was sitting beside the little crib.

'Something has happened,' said Joan fearfully, as she drew near the little bed. 'He did not look like that a few minutes ago. Grandmother, what is it? Shall I open the window wide? He looks faint. Or shall I lift him up?'

'Nay, nay ; let him lie still. Thou canst do no more

for him, Joan ; it will soon be past. The Shepherd is tender with the lambs. Place thy little one in His arms, and take thine own away'

'Yes, better so,' said Arnold.

But the surprise had overwhelmed him, and his strong frame was bowed and shook with agony ; he hid his face with his arms, that he might not see his child die. The young mother, with white lips but tearless eyes, watched to the end ; and when the last faint breath was drawn, the last kiss given, it was her hand that smoothed the pillow, and laid the little golden head gently down again.

Then, with a glance at her husband's bowed form, she turned, and burying her face on her brother's breast, moaned, 'I *have* given him to Thee, and I *will* not wish him back,' she quietly let Amyot lead her from the room.

Why tell of the hours that followed ? It is an oft-told tale. Why tell of the waking to life again the next morning ? Who does not know the flood of misery that surges in and fills the bereaved heart in the first moments of a new day, when the remembrance of the still form in the other room creeps in and shuts out all other thoughts, till the cry of the heart bursts forth, 'Why have I had such joy, if it were to be withdrawn ?' Why dwell on this ? Such griefs have always wrought the same questioning, the same longings. We feel them now as others felt them a hundred or a thousand years ago.

It was in the afternoon of the next day that Amyot, having relieved his brother-in-law of all the painful business connected with the funeral of little Stephen, was returning to the rectory by one of the shady paths which led through the long garden, when, somewhat to his dismay, he overtook Arnold pacing to and fro, and to all appearance sunk in melancholy. Never perfectly at his ease with his brother-in-law, Amyot would willingly have avoided him as much as possible in this time of

trouble ; but this was not in his power, as Arnold had heard his step, and turned round to meet him.

They spoke for a few moments in low, sad tones of the matters concerning which Amyot had been occupied. Arnold expressed his gratitude, and then a silence fell on both. They were nearing the house when Amyot spoke again.

‘There is another thing which I beg you will let me do for you. I would have seen to it to-day, but dared not without your permission. Let me go to one of your neighbours among the clergy to-morrow, and request him to read the service for you. You cannot do that yourself. Only tell me whom you would have, and I will settle it.’

‘There is no one,’ said Arnold. ‘I can do that much myself.’

‘No, but wherefore? It must needs be hard. Surely there is some one who would oblige you?’

Arnold shook his head.

‘It is no part of my work to speak ill of my brother clergy,’ he said. ‘Yet, since you urge it, Amyot, I must needs say that there is no one within many miles who might not vex us more by coming than by staying away. Surely you take my meaning?’

‘Is it so, truly? I know you parsons are a fine set, but it will fall hard on you to read the service. Let me do it for you!’

‘No, no,’ said Arnold, half smiling at the suggestion. ‘Everything will be hard—for a time at least ; but the thought of this does not oppress me.’

‘It falls harder on you than on my sister—at least, so it seems to me,’ Amyot replied.

‘I doubt that it does that,’ Arnold answered gloomily. ‘Yet she has nought to reproach herself with, while I——’

‘You! Well, what? You did not see that it was coming. That was no fault, surely, Arnold!’

‘No, no ; you mistake me. But can you not see? My

wife utters no complaint—she is quiet, as is her wont—but her eyes are full of reproach whenever she turns them on me. I can scarce bear to look at her.'

'Arnold Pomfret!' exclaimed Amyot indignantly, 'what do you mean? My sister reproach you for her trouble! Wherefore? Was he not yours as well as hers?'

'Ay, am I likely to forget that? But I see you do not know that two years back my wife prayed me earnestly, for the sake of the child, to give up this parish, and take another then offered in an eastern county. The doctor had told her it was doubtful if he could be reared in this place.'

'And you would not go?'

'It seemed to me that a man should not be for ever changing from place to place.'

'I understand,' said Amyot, gravely. 'And you think my sister reproaches you now the child is dead. But let me tell you, Arnold, in that you wrong her. I know her better than you, it seems, and I vow she has no thought of the kind.'

'It would scarce be possible for her to feel otherwise,' Arnold asserted. 'She can hardly tolerate her husband when she sees he has robbed her of her child.'

'Are you always thus morbid, and given to self-condemnation—sure that all misfortunes are your own fault, Pomfret? I thought such was a woman's fashion—not a man's.'

'Be it a virtue or a vice, man's or woman's way, I would not shut my eyes to my own selfishness,' answered Arnold wearily. 'But do not speak of this to Joan, Amyot; it might vex her to see that I had read her thoughts—nought can change the past.'

'Nought indeed! I seldom think about the past. But the present might be made more comfortable. Where are you going—to write your sermon for next Sunday? Nay, don't set your mind to that just now. Preach the

same over again that you gave last Sunday. That's the way we drill, and after a few years' saying the same thing over and over again, the thick-heads take it in. We never trouble to change a word.'

'Good for the learners no doubt, but scarce wholesome for the teachers,' Arnold replied, as he parted from his brother, and went into the house; while Amyot continued his walk up and down for a while, saying :

'A strange fellow ; thinks too much about what is wholesome and good and right. But as to Joan, I wonder where she is.' And, not apt to delay carrying out an idea, he walked into the parlour where Mrs. Darley sat alone, saying : 'Do you know, madam, where I shall find my sister?'

'Canst thou not guess? In the little room yonder ; they have laid the child in his coffin, and she is there beside him. Are you going to her? Well, she has been there too long by far.'

And the next minute Joan, kneeling beside the little coffin with her eyes set on the sweet pale face, felt an arm about her, and, turning, saw Amyot's face, wet with most unusual emotion, bending over her. The tears of strong men are painful to behold, and Joan's fell fast at the sight, but she rose and clung to him, saying :

'Have I been too long here? Did you want me? It was hard to come away.'

'Yes, I want you much ; but there is one who wants you more.'

'Arnold?' said Joan tremulously. 'Is it wrong? I am afraid to be with him ; his grief is terrible. Men love so differently from women.'

'Joan, we have no secrets, you and I ; so I must tell you something. He, too, fears to meet you, because he thinks you reproach him for this,' and he laid his hand upon the little coffin.

Joan started back amazed.

'Yes, sweet sister, so he thinks; ever fearful that he is not what he should be, he thinks he has been cruel to you and yours.'

'Where is he, Amyot?'

'In his room, among his books.'

And while Amyot reverently covered the little face, and tenderly arranged the white roses that Joan had dropped into the coffin, she left his side, and passed with trembling footsteps to her husband's room, where sat Arnold with his head bowed upon his hands, and neither book nor paper before him.

He started up as her soft step fell on his ear, and came towards her, murmuring something about Amyot; and she, looking up at him beseechingly, while the tears still stood in her eyes, answered:

'Yes; Amyot told me. I am glad he did. My best and dearest, our love-token is in safer keeping than ours. But the love remains, does it not? Ay! it seems to me it must needs grow stronger than ever, since our Lord hath taken the dear pledge thereof, and laid it up among his jewels. My husband, is it not so?'

'Indeed, I would fain hope it might yet be so if——'

'Sure there can be no doubt,' Joan pursued, with feverish earnestness. 'My husband, believe me, I do not say it to comfort you, but never once, since the day you refused my wish, has the black thought you dream of crossed my mind; no, nor shall it ever. You best know your duty; your wife is yours, and she can trust you.'

'Amyot should not have told you,' Arnold answered, with a troubled voice, but the cloud on his brow was somewhat less; still Joan was not satisfied.

'Say that you believe me, Arnold,' she urged; 'truly, there is no bitterness in my sorrow—it is only a heart-ache, a longing, a yearning for my little lamb, my sweet darling!' she sobbed; 'but to dream for one moment that anyone was to blame, and you, of all others——'

'Hush, Joan! I did but judge you according to what seemed likely, my wife; and now I cannot but believe that which is so pleasant to me; but had I ever thought of what the end would be, I know not what I should have judged to be my duty; but I was blind, and now, as I look back, it seems to me I would not see.'

Joan made no reply; her earnestness had well-nigh exhausted her. She scarcely seemed to notice Arnold's last remark, or to have any power to speak again. After a while she asked:

'Are you busy, Arnold; shall I hinder you if I stay here? I cannot meet my grandmother just now, and my brother has seen enough of our sorrow for the present.'

'But there is no couch for you here, and you should rest, else should I be most glad to have you; stay, I will devise something. My own, I am but a rough husband to you, still I am grieved that my blundering words should have added to your pain.'

She raised her eyes, heavy with weeping, to his face, and tried to smile as she whispered:

'There are pains which are not all painful; I am glad I came to you—we are best together now; nay, do not trouble to speak to me, or if you will, repeat those ever blessed words, "The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing"—but not if it troubles you.'

The days went but slowly in that sad household, and again and again Amyot reflected how different a holiday this was to the one his fancy had pictured; yet with an unselfishness very unlike his former self, he rejoiced that matters had so fallen out that he could be with his sister in her sorrow. He saw that after the first few days were past, it was good for her to have someone to consider besides her usual household.

'I verily believe they would have no meals at all, if courtesy towards you madam, and myself did not compel

them,' he remarked one day to Mrs. Darley, and the old lady agreed with a sigh.

Real sorrow, and sorrow which in her view might have been averted, was very depressing to the kind old lady, and Amyot, who knew how bitterly Arnold was suffering from self-reproach, and was anxious to spare him further pain, had much difficulty in defending him from some of her more severe speeches.

She longed to make him see his duty she said. She must speak before she left Swinford, or her next visit would be to see Joan laid in her grave: 'They should either leave the place, or make it entirely different; but that priest sees nothing but his books, and people's unclean hearts; nay, Amyot, I will not be checked—he shall be made to see their filthy houses, and driven to teach them to drain off the stagnant water that breeds this horrid ague and fever; and if he won't trouble to chop and hew down the trees that shut in this house, I'll get a hatchet myself and set to work.'

'Dear madam, let me speak to him.'

'You!—do you think he will attend to you?'

'Let me at least try.'

'Well, try, if you will, and when you have finished your say, he will begin to talk about the beauties of nature, and the refreshment of green to the eyes, and so forth; I know him, obstinate as can well be, and Joan humours him.'

'My sister is a very happy wife, madam,' Amyot replied, 'and till this sad bereavement few women have been happier.'

'Did I ever say she was not happy? Grandson Amyot, thy imagination is over-busy. It is her nature to worship her husband; often have I wondered why your marriage service doth oblige the husband to profess he worships his wife, when it is most clearly the wife that for the most part performs that duty; but Joan, I say, being devout



by nature, worships her husband, and if he wills that she be choked by trees crowding up the windows, or be slowly killed by rheumatism or ague springing from the marshes and dews, she will say it is well, and that never woman was so blessed as she. But, if you are a man, Amyot, you will stand by your sister, and teach your brother-in-law that things temporal are not wholly to be despised.'

'I will try, assuredly, madam, but I pray you vex him no more than you can help; he has reproached himself much for blindness in the matter of the child, and I care not to speak too plainly just at present.'

'Reproach himself! Does he truly?' The old lady's voice softened at once. 'Ay, it was a dear lamb. Poor Tory misses him, but not as I had feared. He is getting very old, and doubtless thinks the child is away. Joan was mindful to keep him from discovering the real truth, else I doubt not the poor beast's heart would have broken. Now he sniffs about, and then comes and lies down at my feet? His sight is almost gone, it seems. Well, Amyot, since Arnold's eyes are opened, I will leave you to deal with him, but do it before you leave. Your time, you say, will expire next week.'

'Yes; I must go for a time to London, and my leave will come to an end in a month. I must see my uncle and aunt and friends in town.'

Mrs. Darley gazed at him over her spectacles.

'And the young lady of whom Joan speaks! Is she still the object of thy devotion?'

Amyot reddened. 'She has no thought of me,' he said, 'yet I can think of none other.'

'A luckless state of things! How long is it since you met?'

'Two years now. I spent a few days in town two years ago, and saw her several times; but her mother told me, in her presence, that when her betrothed Lance returned, they would surely be married, and she did not say other-

wise ; but she laughed, and said that *when* was a long time coming, not, I thought, as if it grieved her much.'

'And the mother? Joan spoke much of her ill-health.'

'She seemed quieter, and more like her old self when I saw them last. Primrose said she was better.'

'And this fancy of thy sister, by which she would provide a father for thy love, what thinkest thou of that?'

'Primrose took no account of it ; said the portrait of her father, as drawn by my sister, was not enticing, and so I said little about it.'

'Well ! and when thou goest to London next week, thou wilt still hover round this girl as a moth round the flame. Thy passion, it seems, is not very devouring ; it is a wonder thou art so constant. If I might counsel thee—but in these days young men brook no advice—I would say : speak thy whole mind to the girl ; find out whether or no she cares for the rebel Lance Kirkbride, and decide thy case one way or other.'

'If it were not that I feared to have it decided against me, I should have done this long ago, madam.'

'I see ! thou art waiting .n hopes some bullet may find thy rival, and then thou wilt take the forlorn damsel to thy heart and comfort her. The notion does not please me, Amyot Brough ; it is scarce soldier-like in my thinking.'

## CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH A SECRET COMES TO LIGHT.

A FEW days later, and Amyot was in London, pondering much and constantly on his grandmother's advice, also wondering whether by any means he could induce Mrs. Kirkbride to listen to a proposal conveyed in a message wherewith Joan had charged him.

The evening before his departure from Swinford she had spoken to him of Primrose, putting aside for the time her grief, and had expressed an earnest wish that Mrs. Kirkbride and Primrose might be persuaded to pay her a visit in her home. 'Tell Primrose,' she said, 'how lonely I am, and how I feel I have nothing to do, and that when my grandmother is gone it will be worse. Tell Mrs. Kirkbride, also, what a kindness I should feel it if they would but come, and see if you cannot persuade them, Amyot. Then, if I have her to myself, I shall be able to find out how the matter stands between her and Lance, and whether or no she wishes to be bound.'

With this message, and his grandmother's advice full in his mind, Amyot lost no time, after arriving in London, in seeking his old haunt in Drury Lane. Mrs. Kirkbride was not within.

'She finds the air does her much good, and walking also, so she goes abroad twice or thrice a day,' Primrose said, after the first greetings were over. 'You are a very faithful friend, Lieutenant Brough. Did you say you only arrived in London last night?'

'Late last night,' Amyot replied; 'but seeing that I

am such an old friend, and, as you are pleased to say, so faithful, surely you might call me by my Christian name, as when we were children.'

'Nay, I always called you Master Brough then, except sometimes, when I forgot my manners. I pray you let me keep what small remnant I may retain in this lonely place; it is but seldom I need to speak at all except to mother, and I must needs be careful lest I forget all proprieties.'

'Small fear of that,' said Amyot; 'but how does this dull life suit you? You find no fairies here, I warrant.'

'Ay, but I could if I looked for them,' said Primrose, merrily. 'Still, at my age one is apt to forget the fairies, or, maybe, call them by other names.'

'What names?'

'There is one good fairy whom I have christened Joan; she sends me marvellously delightful baskets, with all manner of country dainties; and another whom I respect too greatly to name, who has a trick of bestowing books on me, which are much valued in this dull room. There is another that writes monstrous pretty letters, full of silly nothings, yet they do us good, for they force us to laugh when over-grave.'

'And have you no name for this foolish fairy?'

'In my own mind, maybe; but you, Lieutenant Brough, care not for fairies, and so I will not introduce you.'

'Yet I brought a message from one of these fairies,' Amyot replied; and then he delivered his sister's message, telling in a few sentences of her bereavement, and her longing for Primrose's society, adding, 'The people there are all rough farmer folk, kind and good; but Joan has none to talk to her in a fashion to cheer her sadness. Oh! Primrose, I wish that you could go!'

Primrose's bright eyes had filled with tears as he spoke of little Stephen.

'It would indeed be pleasant,' she said; 'but I doubt if mother will consent. I liked your sister more than I can tell when she came here, and she wrote me many pleasant notes since that day, which make me long to know her better. It must be pleasant to have a sister!'

'Your brothers,' said Amyot, 'have you heard of them? And, Miss Primrose, if it be not too presumptuous, may I seek to know whether the old scheme concerning you and Lance, to which your mother makes such frequent reference, is like to come to pass?'

He tried to speak carelessly, and Primrose, shaking off the sadness that had seized her while listening to his story of little Stephen's death, flashed a merry glance at him as she replied:

'Who but you would venture to doubt such a story? have you not heard it all your life?'

'So long, that I am beginning to think it but a nursery tale.'

'What! when you have it on such authority as my mother's?'

'Your mother, or rather Lance's mother, wishes it I make no doubt. *My* doubt was whether you also wished it.'

Primrose dropped her eyes demurely; then, raising them again, and looking gravely in his face, she inquired:

'Have you any reason, sir, for thinking I should be inclined to recall my pledge, or in any way fail of my duty?'

'No, truly; but——'

'But what? A well-behaved maiden will make it her pleasure to fulfil her destiny, and mine has long been revealed to me, as you know well.'

'True; but Lance is slow in claiming his bride.'

She threw her head back.

'And what of that, sir? His bride is not pining for him; she is in no haste to give up her freedom.'

'Oh, Primrose! tell me, are you really betrothed to him, or was it merely child's play, which neither of you holds binding?'

'Have I not answered you, sir? I have long been betrothed to Lance Kirkbride. Now is your curiosity satisfied?'

'Not entirely,' Amyot confessed. 'Yet I fear you will not let your old playfellow press you further, else would I gladly hear whether you truly care for him.'

'Care for him! Oh, to be sure! We have loved each other all our lives, and never made any secret of it. Truly, as you say, I have not seen him for so long that I have almost forgotten what he is like; but that will make the meeting, when it does come to pass, all the pleasanter. I love change and variety—the more, I suppose, because I have so little of it.'

'Primrose, I cannot tell whether or not you are in earnest!'

'Never mind, it is of small importance. Tell me now with whom you are staying in London—with your brave soldier-cousin and his handsome wife, or at your uncle's house?'

'Last night I lodged at an inn, to-night I shall take up my abode, by invitation, at my uncle's; but why do you speak of my cousin—have you any acquaintance with him?'

'In truth, more than I desire. How he came to know of my existence I cannot tell; but one day he called here, professing to have a message from his sister-in-law, Mrs. Arnold Pomfret, and insisted on seeing me; and with him came a very fine gentleman called Captain Solmes. But, as neither of them was entirely sober, my mother was much disturbed at their visit, and blamed me much for some want of discretion which had brought upon her

such an annoyance. If you could prevail upon your cousin not to come again, you would do us great service, Lieutenant Brough.'

'What could have brought them?' exclaimed Amyot. 'Can Arnold have questioned his brother concerning this Captain Solmes, and by so doing have excited his curiosity?'

'It is possible, for your cousin questioned me with much unnecessary freedom about my history; whereupon I told him that I remembered nothing about it, and could not precisely see how it could concern him—a stranger. Captain Solmes said nothing, but sat and ogled me like a baboon. I trust they will never come again.'

'Guy will not be hindered by aught that I might say,' Amyot replied; 'yet I will speak to him, if you wish it.'

'If you meet him do, I pray you; but I would not have you seek such undesirable society on my account. How unlike he is to his brother!'

As fate would have it, Amyot was destined very soon to meet his cousin Guy: having dined with his uncle and aunt in Queen's Square that evening, and having had the honour of attending his aunt to the theatre in Drury Lane to witness the performance of Mr. Garrick, she poured forth to him all her trouble with regard to her unworthy son, who, on account of his low marriage and profligate habits, was utterly forbidden to show himself in his father's presence, and was, she feared, at that moment in actual want of money.

'Such a prodigious uncomfortable state to be in,' she lamented; 'and poor Guy likes everything of the best—good wines, good cooking, and everything in good taste. It *is* hard for him, poor fellow! but his father has no heart, and as for his brother, I am out of all patience with him. Guy says it is long since he had a sixpence from him, and he a clergyman!'

Amyot was sorry; but what could he do?

'Well, I don't ask *you* to lend him anything, because Mr. Pomfret would be angry if I suggested anything of the kind ; but I have a small sum that I can spare, and I must send it to him by some safe hand—by some one who will deliver it to Guy himself, not to that baggage his wife, who certainly shall never have a farthing from me. Now, my dear nephew, will you take it for me? the chariot could leave you at his door as we drive home.'

Amyot would gladly have been spared the task ; but not liking to offend his aunt, whom he could not help pitying, when the play was ended, he agreed to perform her errand.

It was indeed a prodigious uncomfortable state in which he found his cousin. He and his constant companion, Captain Solmes, had been passing a merry evening together, while Mrs. Guy had been absent accompanying some friends to Bagnigge Wells ; she had just returned home when Amyot was introduced into their midst, and having met with some cause of irritation while abroad, was relieving her feelings in loud tones when the guest came upon the scene. Guy and his friend were lounging over their wine and dice, and with them also something had gone awry.

'I swear it is !' 'I swear it's not !'—with many loud thumps upon the table and many big oaths—greeted Amyot's ear as he mounted the stairs, assuring himself that he would stay but one minute, and then flee the din and uproar, however uncousinly such conduct might seem. But he had no such chance. As he entered the room, Mrs. Guy, frantic that her husband would pay no attention to a long story which she was bent upon pouring forth, had made a savage attack upon him, and threatened serious damage to his handsome face with her nails, if he would not there and then give heed to what she had to say ; while, on the other hand, Captain Solmes, equally



bent on settling his dispute, was undecided whether to side with the enraged wife, or wait to see the conjugal fray over, before beginning on his own account.

'He is a fiend—a brute of a husband! Oh! that I had never married him!' said Mrs. Guy, grinding her teeth as she picked herself up from the hearthrug, where her husband, with one turn of the wrist had laid her; 'but I will have the law of him—I will indeed! You, sir,' turning to Amyot, 'will bear witness how he maltreats me?'

'No, indeed,' said Amyot curtly. 'Guy, your mother sent you this. Can I speak a word with you in private? I have a message——'

'Hear, hear!—secrets from his wife! No, sir, you cannot see him in private. Speak your message here.'

'Very well,' said Amyot, interrupting Guy, who was about to speak; it does not matter; I can speak it here if necessary. It was to you, Guy—and you, captain. I was visiting my old friends, Mrs. and Miss Kirkbride, this morning, and was desired to mention to you that they wish to live quietly, and receive no visitors. You understand, no doubt, and will not call again.'

And he was turning to go, when Guy shouted:

'Stop; you don't understand. Captain Solmes considers Miss Kirkbride his cousin, and therefore cannot stand on such ceremonies. You *are* her cousin, are you not, Solmes? I understood you to say so. Her guardian, I suppose, you might call yourself if you chose?'

'But I don't; because the thing not being certain, it is more convenient to say nothing about it. You're a fool, Guy, to let the cat out of the bag.'

'Well, that's all. Now, good-night, gentlemen!' And Amyot rushed away, saying to himself: 'They're both tipsy. To-morrow Captain Solmes will vow he knows nothing about Miss Kirkbride. I wonder what's become of her father?'

But the morrow brought fuller information than Amyot could have ever anticipated. How this came about, being an unpleasant episode, shall be told as briefly as may be.

The quarrel which Amyot had interrupted, being resumed as soon as opportunity was given, continued for another hour or more, occasioning much screaming on the part of the lady, and many deep oaths between the men. They parted for the night, but in the early morning Guy and Captain Solmes met by agreement at a quiet place somewhere near the Green Park. Captain Solmes fell, and Guy disappeared, and was not heard of again for some years. The wounded man was carried home and died a few hours after, having—in the presence of a lawyer and surgeon—confessed that he believed Miss Kirkbride, then living in Drury Lane, to be the child of his late cousin; which child had been lost by him and by a French nurse Félicité, now Mrs. Guy Pomfret—somewhere in the neighbourhood of Penrith seventeen years before. Further particulars he gave; and added that he had seen the young lady, and was well satisfied that she was Rose Solmes, the daughter of his cousin, being the very image of that cousin, and, as far as he could remember, like the child who had been lost. Therefore, to save all trouble and further inquiry, he made a will, leaving to her what remained of the property he had inherited on the death of her father two years before. ‘And about half-an-hour afterwards he died,’ said the lawyer who brought the news to the house in Queen’s Square; ‘and your son, Mr. Pomfret, has taken himself out of the country, I hear.’

‘I trust he will never come back,’ that gentleman replied.

‘This property of Captain Solmes’s,’ continued the lawyer, ‘is of small account. It was worth a considerable amount in the lifetime of his cousin, but this young captain has run through an immensity of money, and I

doubt whether the young lady's inheritance will be of any real value. You, sir, I believe, can furnish me with her address.'

'My nephew knows it,' said Mr. Pomfret ; and Amyot, who was present, immediately wrote it down.

The lawyer then bowed and retired.

Mr. Pomfret began to pace the room.

'Who is to tell your poor aunt this story?' he said. 'She dotes on Guy still.'

'Tell her he has gone abroad. Why say any more?'

'She will hear it from someone else, but I cannot help that—I shall not tell her. Fortunately we seldom mention him, so she will not suspect that I know much about his proceedings. This story about Félicité will keep that woman quiet, I should hope, else should I have her for ever at the door, clamouring to be supported during her husband's absence.'

'I wonder if Primrose has any remembrance of her nurse?'

'Primrose—is that what you call her? Is it true, Amyot, that you have a fancy for this girl? Your aunt has some such notion.'

'I have loved her for years, sir, but she cares nothing for me.'

'Ha! is it so? Then, my boy, think of something else; these hopeless love-affairs are like a stone round a man's neck.'

'We are like to have something else to think about—we soldiers, I mean,' said Amyot, trying to speak lightly. 'Have you heard the news this morning, sir, from America? I was about to tell you when that lawyer was announced. Braddock is defeated and killed by an onset of Indians in a wood. The story is that his men fled like sheep, the officers alone standing their ground—twenty-six of them were slain; so that is the end of our hopes of him.'

'The French will be well content with that scrap of news ; it will console them for our various pieces of luck by sea. Someone said the other day that we have as many as three thousand French prisoners in England, taken from various ships. Pirates they call us.'

'The papers are full of rumours of invasion ; vast quantities of flat-bottomed boats at Dunkirk ; sixteen thousand men assembled there ; but America, and our bounderies there, is the point to be settled. It is time something was done to prove our rights.'

'You are tired of being out of work, I see. Well, the storm is brewing—it will break before long ; and Marshal Saxe is dead, as Mrs. Darley oft remarks. She thinks it has been altogether most prudent of us to keep the peace until he was safely bestowed with his fathers. But if your love be not agreeable to you, I do not wonder that you long to be doing ; there is nothing like a war to put such cobwebs out of the brain.'

## CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH WE MAKE BUT SMALL PROGRESS.

'AND do I really see you once again, oh, friend beloved! and do you come to heal the sores of my broken heart?' was Jack Pownal's greeting to Amyot, when the latter returned to his duty, and met his friend coming off parade. 'You find us all sitting in the dust, and tearing our hair. Have you no balm for our wounds, you who arrive from the centre of life and activity? Tell us, oh, tell us some good news!'

'Why, what ails you, Jack? you look well enough, and the colonel reported well of all, when I saw him just now. He is much disgusted with this business of General Braddock's, as of course everybody must be.'

'But without doubt that is what I mean. Must we not wail and lament, and hang our heads to think that our men can run like cats from a handful of wild savages? Figure to yourself how the Frenchmen are mocking at us, and the King, they say, must send for some beggarly Hessians and Hanoverians to protect us from these same frog-eating dandies. It is a shame, a villain shame!—I shall die of it!'

'No, Jack, that is scarce worth while. If these fellows come over in their flat-bottomed tubs, whereof it is said they are building a vast number, we shall have a chance of paying the debt; for it is they that taught the savages that trick, and the thought of it must needs make our men fight, if they have a chance.'

'I doubt it. We should all save ourselves, and entreat

Messieurs the Hessians to defend us. What has come over our people, Amyot? What fiend possesses them, that they should be such dastards?’

‘Ask Colonel Wolfe that question—he will give you a plain answer, I’ll warrant you.’

‘But, yes, that will he, without doubt. We have had much discourse on that head, and some sharp dealing with some youngsters who pretended illness, for to be excused from duty—a conduct very reprehensible, I do not doubt, especially when others are the criminals; but when it is only myself, I do not see it so bad.’

‘What do you mean, Jack? You shammed sickness, and wherefore?’

‘Now see how, my friend, he fires at me! Yes, truly, I did sham—made pretence to be very ill, when it was a nothing; and the colonel! but do not speak of it. Truly, I have had a singing in my ears ever since I departed from his presence on that unhappy day.’

‘Serve you right. But what say the men here about the invasion—will it really come to pass?’

‘Who can say? You, who come from London, should surely know. Are the people in great terror and desolation there, or do they laugh and bet, and drink and swear, and run away with other people’s wives, as they had the habitude to do?’

‘Much the same as formerly. I told you in my letter about my Cousin Guy.’

‘Yes, it is just the same as I have always expected, but he has not completed yet; he will do more mischief before he dies. He is a villain by nature, he can never come to good.’

‘And I told you about Solmes?’

‘Yes, and the fair Primrose; but you never told me how the beauty received the tidings that she was an heiress.’

‘Just as one might expect: laughed to think that she

could have a right to any money, looked miserable when she heard of her cousin's melancholy end, but soon forgot everything else in the joy of thinking that she could now make her mother more comfortable.'

'And you! Has she no thought of bestowing herself and Solmes's money on her constant adorer! No; you shake the head. Then it is impossible for you to deny that there is no hope for you. You must give up your folly.'

'Never! Jack.'

'Well, then, one can no more call you a man of sense; but it is enough—converse of something more agreeable. Tell me of madam your sister and her solemn husband. It is a pity the boy died. We might have made a soldier of him, unless the parson thinks it wicked to hate the French.'

Amyot's face grew grave, he could not jest about little Stephen. And Jack, kind-hearted and true, hastened to say, 'Pardon, I am a fool. You were there when the child died, and I can well divine how sad would be your sister. But that will pass. And I have heard the parsons say, that those who have sent their children on before them, are more ready to go when their own time comes. Your brother-in-law—cousin, you used to name him—is he the same as ever, or has he taken up the ways more common with his cloth? Does he run the roads after the hounds, drink in the alchouses, bet upon cocks, gamble and swear, as the most of them do?'

'Not he, indeed! yet he gave me to understand that for miles around there were none but parsons of that sort. Some call him a Methodist. I scarce know what that means, but he has great esteem for some divine whom he met in Yorkshire, the same that you and I once heard preaching on a hill, Jack. Mad Grimshaw they called him. Arnold says he learned many a thing from him.'

'We liked the fellow, if I remember right. He took

good aim, and went straight at the mark, and his words rang in the ears just as the colonel's do.'

It was some months later, in the spring of 1756, that a move of the regiment gave Amyot the unexpected pleasure of spending a few hours with his friends at Westerham. Marching with his men along a dirty he found himself suddenly accosted by the colonel.

'We are near some old haunts of yours, Lieutenant Brough. I am about to pay a passing visit to my old



GARDEN OF SQUERRIES COURT.

friends at Squerries Court, and you, if you will, have the same opportunity to pay your respects to Mrs. Darley, if she be at Westerham.'

Gladly availing himself of the chance thus afforded, Amyot soon found himself in the old familiar village street. They passed the house where Wolfe's childhood had been spent, at which the young officer gazed, saying sadly, 'It is always of Ned that I think as I pass that place;' then through the village, and following the road



beside the river, Amyot parted from his superior as they drew near to Squerries, and repaired to Mrs. Darley's abode. As he rang and knocked, there was a sound of pleased excitement within, and the door was thrown open by Joan, who exclaimed, 'I saw you from my chamber window, at which I was sitting, thinking of you. Oh! brother, this is a glad surprise!'

'And to me, indeed,' said Amyot. 'I did not know that you were here. How and why did you come?'

'Come into the house, and I will tell you. My grandmother is in the garden, but she will be here immediately. I came last week, and why, because my husband would have it. The house needs some alterations for the sake of health, and he would have me away, though, as you will guess, I saw no reason why.'

'A lucky chance for me.'

'And brother, while we are alone, let me tell you that you will find Primrose also here. I have prevailed on her to visit me at this house, with my grandmother's permission, since she will not come to mine. She is now in the garden with my grandmother, who has found out many points in which her education has been neglected. You know what that means.'

'It means that Primrose pleases the old lady. Joan, tell me, before I meet her, what think you—have I any chance of winning her, even yet?'

Joan shook her head. 'I cannot tell; she is so merry that I can seldom guess whether she is in jest or earnest; one thing I know: she never hears from Lance Kirkbride, which seems to prove him no ardent lover.'

'And what says my grandmother?'

'She says but few words on the matter, but they are always the same: "Amyot is a fool;" but she makes no note or comment on her text, and I am slow of comprehension. But, hush! I hear my grandmother's step.'

'And so the village is invaded; have the French

arrived, and do they come straight to me, not knowing whether I am French or English? Truly, it is an awkward case, for I know not myself. Oh! it is only that young giant; then are the troops right English, and not like to do much damage. Primrose, child, you need not run away; it is an old friend of yours, a soldier, but not given to desperate deeds of valour.'

And Primrose came in; she had started back at the sight of a stranger, fearing to intrude. She looked lovelier than ever, her eyes dancing with pleasure at the return to life and freedom which this visit to the country seemed to her; her graceful figure set off by more trim attire than when last Amyot saw her, her bearing full of natural dignity, yet something rustic in its friendliness.

She gave her hand with perfect unconcern to Amyot, and taking up Mrs. Darley's tone of raillery, jested with him as in her childish days of mirth and fun, while Joan, listening, said to herself, 'She cannot care for him: no maiden would thus receive a man whom she loved. He is right; she looks upon him but as an old playfellow.'

'Joan, thy brother is doubtless starving. I pray thee run to the kitchen, and bid them serve the dinner as soon as may be. Nay, Primrose, sit down. Joan knows the ways of the house better than you, and, though a married woman, disdains not to do my bidding. It is most comfortable to have her here. I wish I had stopped that foolish scheme of marriage. But, Amyot Brough, have you left any of your brother officers starving in the roads?—it would be but common humanity to fetch them in; starving men cannot fight, and it would be unseemly to fail to feed our gallant defenders.'

Amyot replied that all were cared for in the village or the neighbourhood, and the old lady continued:

'That is well; we are scarce provisioned to feed an army, and a British one too; they are wont to consume much roast beef, and I have no ox to slay. My country-

men, if they come, will be more readily entertained, which is a comfortable reflection, seeing that we live not so very distant from the coast.'

'Nay, madam, I pray you, feed no Frenchmen if they come.'

'Not feed my own people? what brutality! Hear the young islander! I, sir, am neutral, most entirely neutral. I will feed both—the beef for the English, and the salads for the French, provided they do not come at the same time, which is a thought which has not a little disturbed my dreams of late.'

'And what do you propose to do in such a case? for if the French should visit Westerham, I make no doubt the British would be at their heels.'

'Think you so? Do you yet believe in the prowess of your nation? You are still over-confident, Amyot Brough, and have some lessons left to learn.'

'Many, I doubt not, madam; it was in search of some lessons of politeness that I came, having been much debarred from ladies' society of late.'

'Art beginning to be sensible of thy deficiencies? Thy aunt will be greatly encouraged concerning thee; Joan, we shall yet be able to speak well of that brother of thine. What! dinner is served? I am right glad to hear it.'

Before he brought his brief visit to a close, Amyot drew his sister into the garden, sweet with the scent of may, narcissus, and all spring flowers, and cheerful with the songs of many birds, saying, 'I want a few quiet words, sweet sister, before I go. Who knows when we may meet again?'

'You look to be ordered abroad,' she said in a faltering voice.

'Yes, now war is declared; but it may be some time yet. Joan, you will take good care of yourself. I do not like to see you so pale and thin.'

‘So Arnold said ; but I am better, marvellously better, since I came here, though I care not to confess it to him, lest he should keep me long in banishment. It is pleasant to be ordered about and scolded again—bidden to sit upright, and chided for melancholy looks ; it is pleasant and very wholesome ;’ and Joan laughed a low sad laugh as she glanced towards the window where sat the silver-haired old lady as straight as a dart, in spite of her seventy years.

‘Poor little sister ! who could chide you for sad looks ? not my grandmother, truly.’

‘Yes ; but in her own merry way, which leaves no soreness. It does me good ; my husband had spoiled me, as would you too, Amyot. Even now you are leading me to speak of myself—the most foolish thing a woman can do. Tell me, rather, what do you think of Primrose ? Does she not look well ?’

‘Lovelier than ever,’ Amyot replied, but with his head averted ; and Joan saw plainly that his hopes had received no encouragement from what had passed that day. ‘Write to me of her, Joan,’ he said at length, ‘and if by word or look she makes any discovery of her mind, I pray you, do not fail to let me know.’

Joan promised, and with many fond words the brother and sister parted.

‘Mrs. Pomfret,’ remarked Primrose suddenly one day, ‘I am strongly inclined to try to persuade my mother to allow me to rent that little cottage by the river which we noticed in our walk yesterday ; the air here is so sweet and balmy, she would be another woman if she would but leave the town and come hither. What say you to my scheme ?’

‘That it is greatly to my liking, and my grandmother too will be charmed to have Mrs. Kirkbride for a neighbour ; but, Primrose, call me by my name, I pray—for my brother’s sake, who has known you so long, call me Joan.’

'I have long called you so in my thoughts ; but what do you think : shall I ever induce my mother to listen to my request ?'

'Surely you might persuade her ; but it will, I suppose, be but for a short time. When Mr. Lance Kirkbride comes home, you will, I imagine, be wedded ?'

'Oh ! that "when he comes home" has been so often said that I have ceased to think about it !' Primrose replied carelessly.

'And ceased to think about being wedded ?' Joan asked.

'Mother always says that a young girl should not be ever thinking about marriage,' Primrose replied, dropping the long lashes over her beautiful eyes ; 'and, indeed, I know not that I care to be wedded.'

'Then you do not care for your betrothed husband,' Joan said, with the authority of a young wife ; and the girl replied :

'Do I not ? Oh ! yes, we are very fond of each other, or we were in the happy days so long ago.'

'You were a child then ; is there no one else you like as well, or even better ?'

'Who could there be ?' said Primrose, looking suddenly at Joan's quiet face.

'Nay, dear, it seemed to me you might like many people as well, without loving them at all in the sense that a wife should love a husband.'

Primrose was silent ; at last she said :

'When Lance comes home it will be time enough to consider the matter ; he wrote word to mother a month ago that he hoped to go to Canada before long. He is now an officer in the French army ; but that is a secret—we do not speak of it, you know.'

'An officer in the French army and going to Canada ! Then will he no doubt be fighting against his own countrymen, Primrose. I pray you, do not think of marrying this man.'

Primrose laughed.

'He has already fought against our armies in Flanders; you forget, dear Joan, how embittered he was by the matter of Prince Charlie. England will never again be home to him, much as my mother hopes and prays that he may return.'

'For your sake I trust he never will,' Joan replied; and Primrose added:

'I have small hopes that he will, but should he ever have a settled home, my mother says that we will go to him.'

'And will you?'

'Truly I do not know.'

'No, dear brother,' wrote Joan a few days later; 'I have nothing to tell you. That she loves him greatly it were folly to imagine, yet, having a certain liking for him, and holding herself to be betrothed, she may, and I fear she will, entirely decline your suit. To see how she was inclined towards you, I talked at some length about you; she listened with kind attention, as indeed she would do if I discoursed about my pigs or bees, or household matters, but showed no special interest. Then I tried another device—spoke of your faults, regretted this in you, and blamed that; but still she was not to be surprised into expressing any like or dislike. Once only was I rendered something uncomfortable by observing her stealing a perplexed inquiring look at me from under those lovely eyelashes of hers, as if she would say, "Why all this talk about your brother?" and then I stopped confused. In truth, I am much ashamed of my ill success, but my husband ever tells me that I am a bad schemer; had you set my grandmother the task, it would have suited her far better. She thinks you an arrant coward, and says if Admiral Byng has no more daring than you, the Duc de Richelieu will assuredly have Minorca. I spake of prudence to

her, and of the reward oft granted to long constancy ; but she rapped my hand with her fan, and bade me not try to teach my grandmother ; said she was tired of the whole business, and was determined either to make or mar it. But do not be alarmed at this her threat ; she changed her mind soon after, and said soldiers had no need of wives, and that you might play the laggard as long as you pleased. She is a dear old lady, and wondrous good to me. I tell my husband that thanks to her schooling, his wife hopes to return to him stronger in health and braver in spirit, for truly low spirits find no tolerance in her house ; yet am I somewhat glad that I was suffered to have Arnold's tender care in the first months of my sore trouble.'

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### CONCERNING A SUDDEN VISIT TO DRURY LANE.

'PRIMROSE, child, where is that letter going? You have grown monstrous fond of your pen since your visit to Westerham; surely Mrs. Arnold Pomfret is not so eager for your letters as you would fain imagine.'

'I am not writing now to Mrs. Arnold Pomfret, mother; but to the kind old lady, Mrs. Darley, who told me that she would settle the matter of the little cottage for us, if I could persuade you to make trial of the place. I was writing to say that, out of kindness to me, you had consented.'

'Did I say so? Well, if it must be, it must. I am better here, and, for some causes, I doubt not, you, too, are in greater safety here; but since you pine so for country air, I will go, if you are set upon it. I trust your new friends are as truly desirous to have you near them as you have persuaded yourself.'

'It is my way to believe what people say to me. Mother, you could not fail to believe Mrs. Arnold Pomfret, did you know her.'

'Has she no end to serve? Well, it matters nothing. I have said I will go, for a while at least. Though how to let your brothers know whither we have fled I do not see. It is long since I knew where to write to Lance and Jasper, and as for Percy, though young Brough did say he had gone to America, I much doubt whether he was not mistaken. Shall I ever see my sons again?'

'Dear mother, yes. It cannot be that Lance will not



return some day. He was a good son to you in years gone by—Jasper and Percy were less thoughtful, I used to think.'

'These wars!' sighed the poor stricken woman. 'Can Lance ever show his face in England again, having served against the English troops? Yet I do not blame him—what could he do?'

'I wish he had chosen any other course of life. Listen to those songs and shouts below, mother. Only hear what they are selling now; that is a new cry, "Britain in Tears: a Rueful Story;" and there's another, "The Devil's Dance, set to French Music." What can that mean, I wonder? The old man downstairs says that the admiral is burnt in effigy in every city in the kingdom, and that all the places of any consequence are entreating the King to show him no mercy. What will be the end of it all? At Portsmouth, he says, it was hard to prevent the mob from tearing him in pieces. Those savage cries make me cold all over! Do they not prove how bitter is the feeling, at this time, of Englishmen against the French? It is a grievous crime, truly, to have failed to save one small island from falling into their hands. It would fare ill with the poor admiral could these savage people but get him into their clutches. Would he not be torn to pieces, surely, mother?'

'It is spite, and rage, and disappointment, ay! and jealousy, as it seems to me. I pray you shut the window, Primrose, though it is stifling hot. I am wearied to death of those songs and shouts.'

Primrose obeyed. Then, returning to her letter, finished it and closed it, and soon resumed her conversation.

'Mother, that wretched woman came again to-day while you were out. It will be a happiness to be freed from her importunities by leaving this place, for I am half afraid of her, her tongue and her temper are so terrifying.'

'Begging again? And what did you say, Priunrose? That she had no claim on you, but much the reverse? That did she get her deserts it would be hanging, and nothing less? Woman are hanged every day for a less crime.'

'She has no fear of any such fate, but holds herself much ill-used because she is deprived of the money which she often obtained from Captain Solmes by threatening to tell the tale. It is her right, she says; and by some strange arguments she has persuaded herself that as I have come into possession of the remnant of his money, I am bound to do by her as he was wont to do; though, as she knows well, I have no secret to keep.'

'She will drive you to reveal her secret for her. Have you told her so?'

'No, indeed; she never leaves me time to speak, but worms and rages about her wrongs, her widowhood, as she calls it, ingratitude, and so forth; says she is starving—though while she has so many fine clothes to sell there can be small need for her to die of hunger. She is sure that if I would, I could tell her where her husband is, for do I not know his brother and sister-in-law? "that proud, cold miss," as she always calls sweet Joan. I told her to-day that Mrs. Arnold Pomfret never named her brother-in-law, and that I much doubted whether either her husband or his father knew where he was; but she did not listen. She is a terrible woman, and her tongue is fearful.'

'If she is starving she should seek help from her father-in-law.'

'That she did once, but was straightway turned out of the house—that is another matter for her fury. Truly, Captain Guy Pomfret was much to be pitied. He must be greatly rejoiced to be freed from her tongue. Much of her time and breath was spent to-day in telling me how much better I should have been trained had I

continued under her care, and how much she regretted the part she played seventeen years ago ; but Captain Solmes, she says, was urgent, and half promised to marry her if she would do his bidding. But that promise he quite forgot, as indeed was natural, though she deemed it most extraordinary.'

'She must needs be many years older than her husband,' said Mrs. Kirkbride. What a misfortune for his parents, as well as himself ?'

'Dear mother,' said Primrose, suddenly changing the subject, 'you will not venture out this evening with that heavy cold upon you. I will go and fetch the things we need, and be back with all speed. The evenings are so long and light now, you will not fear to let me go.'

Mrs. Kirkbride made some demur. The streets were much beset with noisy passengers, the popular disturbance and discontent concerning the ill-success of Admiral Byng's Minorca expedition had brought some additional tumult and mobbing, and Primrose's was not a face to pass unnoticed. Yet, as the girl laughed at her fears, and said it would be broad daylight for long yet, she let her go, only bidding her return with all speed.

It was a still summer evening—no air was stirring, the sky was misty, and the sunset red and angry ; but, tired of long confinement to the house, Primrose's spirits rose the instant she was in the open air, and her feet scarcely touched the ground as she sped along. Was it wrong to make the walk a little longer than needful—to run down and take a peep at the sunset lights over the river, and gaze longingly at the tall masts, and wish that Fortune had made her a boy, that she might know something of travel and adventure and foreign lands? Was it wrong to hate the thought of turning homeward to that dull room, where nothing ever came to break the dreary monotony of life, into which the light of heaven so seldom came, and where it had of late been so difficult to

be cheerful and good-tempered? Was it wrong? And this question suggested another: Why was it now so hard to be merry as of old? What did she want that she had not got? Surely some good fortune had befallen her which she had not expected; why, then, was her contentment less? Primrose could not answer her own question, except by confessing something to herself to which, for months past, she had been striving to blind herself, inasmuch as such confession seemed to her to imply a great failure of duty, a change of purpose most humiliating and perplexing.

'If Joan had been anyone else, I would have told her all about it,' she was saying to herself, when a sudden decrease of brightness in the sky made her awake to the consciousness that the daylight was waning, and she must hasten home. At the same instant, another and more unpleasing consciousness forced itself upon her: more than once that evening had she instinctively drawn her hood close to screen herself from too familiar glances; but they had been directed by casual passers-by, who turned and stared for a moment after the slight tripping figure, and then went their way, and thought no more about her. But now she had a strong impression that the stare which was calling the blushes to her cheek, and quickening to agony the beating of her heart, was not the mere passing gaze of curiosity: something told her that those bold eyes had been watching her long, and that the tall figure wrapped in a long cloak, which was drawing nearer to her, was the same which had passed her several times before in that evening's walk.

Clearly the individual must have gone past, and returned on his steps merely for the purpose of meeting and annoying her. She tried to think, in her alarm, where she had first noticed the strange man, and it seemed to her that when she left her own door, he was standing opposite the house; he must have followed her, and yet

she remembered that shortly afterwards she had met him face to face. He must have passed her, gone on, and returned on his steps to stare anew. Again, on leaving a shop, she was conscious that he had passed once more, so as almost to touch her as she emerged from the doorway, and now, as she roused herself from her reverie, and set out on her return home, here he was again close on her footsteps. 'Does he mean to rob me? he looks bad enough for anything,' she said to herself, as she tried to outstrip him, but felt his stride keeping steady pace with hers. 'I will let him pass; how fast it grows dark, and how he strides along! I shall drop in a minute, unless he passes me.'

But her tormentor had no such intention. Reaching the corner of Drury Lane, there was some interval in the passing of foot passengers, and a long step or two brought him close on her heels. She started on one side, but found her hand roughly grasped, and a harsh voice close to her ear, saying, 'How now, pretty one!—whither away so fast? A word with you, if you please. What! you will have nought to say to me. Nay, but you shall!' for Primrose had wrenched her hand from his hold, and, always fleet of foot, had darted off at full speed, determined to rid herself of her pursuer.

She had but a few yards to run ere she was at home. The door stood open. Surely he would not enter. What strange audacity! He was following her into the very house, mounting the stairs behind her—up, up, to the very top. Alarmed, yet exulting in the thought that she was safe, feeling confident that he would not venture to follow her much farther, she struggled up the last few steps, and sank half fainting into the nearest seat, as Mrs. Kirkbride, who had been dozing in the fading light, started up in amazement at her strangely sudden entrance.

The light was too nearly gone for her to be able to see clearly the girl's terrified and pallid countenance, but she

could discern a tall, dark figure standing in the doorway ; and, ever ready to take alarm, she doubted not that Primrose had been savagely attacked, and had but just struggled home to die in her arms. But before she had time for question or thought, before her lips could utter one word, the intruder was in the room, advancing with the utmost coolness towards her, and Primrose, scarcely in possession of her senses, panting and panic struck, caught the sound of the harsh voice which had so terrified her in the street below, saying, in somewhat subdued accents, 'Hulloa, mother, we have met at last !'

Then there was a passionate cry, succeeded by the sound of sobs, as Mrs. Kirkbride flung herself into her son's arms, and laughed and cried alternately.

'Is it Jasper or Lance?' thought Primrose. 'Oh, surely not Lance !' But the mother and son were engrossed with each other, and for some minutes neither thought of her.

'I had been watching the house for some time, being unwilling to knock or ring, or call anyone to the door, when the little one came out,' said the new comer at last, 'and then I watched her till her errands were done, and followed her home. I knew her at once, but she, it seems, did not recognise me. Hey, Primrose ! hast forgotten thine old lover, and found thyself a beau in merry London ?'

'Fie ! Primrose, for shame ! not to know Lance,' said the glad mother. 'I truly thought some great mischance had befallen, when you came rushing in as if a wolf had been at your heels. Have you still no welcome for your old friend ?'

'He frightened me,' said Primrose, as she let her hand be grasped by Lance, but drew back from the closer embrace which he attempted, curtsying with quiet dignity, and then retreating to some distance ; while Mrs. Kirkbride, surveying her with some displeasure, said :

‘A poor welcome, indeed!’

Lance laughed a loud, harsh laugh, as, fixing his dark eyes with a bold stare on her blushing face, he said :

‘You were right, mother ; she has grown divinely beautiful. But a little more light would give us all a better chance of admiring one another. Do you live in the dark?’

Primrose silently lit the small oil lamp, conscious that all the while those dark eyes were watching her, and feeling little pleasure in the thought. This done, she took her seam, and sat down in a dark corner to sew, while Mrs. Kirkbride watched, and Lance stared.

‘I’ve been long in coming, did you say, mother?’ Lance remarked, when, after some silence, Mrs. Kirkbride had made this very natural observation. ‘Ay, to be sure ; but there was little to bring me. England is nothing to me now. I’ve no country, no home—why, therefore, should I come?’

‘Why? Well, you have a mother, and——’

‘A betrothed wife, you would say. True, and for their sakes I have made this venture, and in busy London, perchance, I run no great risk, though I have grown to look like a Frenchman, and the people are mad enough to hang a man for bearing such a resemblance. But my stay will be short ; and before anyone shall have had time to ask me questions, I shall be gone. Two matters I have to settle, and then off I go ; and I care not if I never see England again.’

‘And whither are you going?’

‘To America. You must know, mother, that I am now an officer in the French army. Nay, don’t look so alarmed—surely I may speak it here? Primrose will not betray me—and I go to Canada to serve under the Marquis de Montcalm, recently dispatched thither. You have no such leader in England ; he will settle the matter of these British traders, and drive them all out of Canada,

as Jasper tells me is like to happen in India; and England will lose her footing in both lands, and go down, down—as she richly deserves to do! Traitor to her rightful King, she will never prosper!

‘Lance, I like not such talk,’ said Mrs. Kirkbride, glancing timidly around; ‘walls have ears.’

Lance laughed, and muttered under his breath:

‘Revenge is what I want—revenge on this Hanoverian brood for Culloden, and we shall have it! Minorca is lost to them: let them gnash their teeth, and shoot or hang their admiral! We will laugh at them, and say: “While you send out such incapables, our affairs are sure to go well! Find a Montcalm for England, if you want to keep your foreign possessions; but that, I warrant, you cannot do.”’

‘Lance, you terrify me!’ said his mother again.

But he paid no heed to her remonstrance, further than to drop his voice as he poured forth a flood of deep curses and savage imprecations on his native land, its King and his Ministers. Suddenly he looked up. Primrose’s bright eyes were flashing in her dark corner, and her lips had parted as if to speak; but as his eyes met hers, she dropped her head and said nothing.

He paused; and she began folding up her work with feverish haste, saying it was time to set the supper, and hastily left the room.

Then Lance rose, and, drawing near to his mother, said in a low voice:

‘I came because you bid me, mother—in no small haste and with no small difficulty; but she gives me but a cold welcome. Think you there is no fear that she will refuse to marry me?’

‘Refuse? She cannot. She has all along known you were to be her husband; never once have I permitted another thought to enter her head. I sent for you in haste, because I feared that other thoughts might intrude if you delayed



much longer ; but as yet no harm has happened. Marry her at once : and when you will, she and I will follow you to Canada.'

'When that will be, I cannot tell. But I thought you named or hinted at someone who had become too pleasant to my bonny bride. If she will not marry me, I may have an account to settle with him too. Who is it ?'

'Nay, I named no one. Marry her at once, and all will be well.'

'When you will, so she will have me.'

'She will have you. I have no fear for that. Come again early to-morrow, and I will tell you when and how. But, hush ! here she comes ! What was the other matter which brought you to England just now ? You said you had two things that claimed your attention ?'

'The second was of no great importance, being but to deliver up certain pieces of property belonging to an acquaintance of mine, who has recently died, to a brother of his, and to make his death known to his relatives. It is no very pleasing task ; and had I not promised, I should gladly have forgotten the circumstance. To-morrow I must seek out the man and tell the tale, which is somewhat ugly.'

'Do you know where to find his friends ?'

'Yes. I have an address ; poor silly fool ! he blew his brains out because the fates were against him ; nought went well with him, he said. I bid him wait, told him the tide would change ; but he had no patience ; must go and see what the other world would do for him ; was tired of this.'

Lance rattled on, mingling with his talk many coarse oaths and foreign expressions, which made his mother shrink into herself and grow silent. And ever and anon he returned to his favourite topic—abuse of England, and everything English ; longing to see her trampled upon, scorned and despised, as she deserved to be.

Apparently he was well content to have the talk to himself, and scarcely noticed the silence of his companions, except to laugh at his mother's fears, or to inquire of Primrose now and then why she would not smile upon him after his long absence.

At length he departed, saying he had a quiet haunt of his own where he should lodge, but they would see him again in the morning.

Primrose breathed more freely when his step no longer sounded on the stair.

'Mother,' she exclaimed, 'with such a tongue in his head, Lance can never be safe in England.'

'He will not stay long,' Mrs. Kirkbride replied. 'I am doomed to be separated from my children, and indeed I cannot wish him to stay : it is plain enough England is nothing to him. It will soon be nothing to me either ! Once I thought I could never leave my home in the North : I have been uprooted, and now I shall think it a good wind that blows me across the Atlantic ; for if Lance settles there, and has a home and family, life may begin again for me too.'

'Lance will never settle ; he goes to America to follow his trade ; when the war is over, he will be away somewhere else.

'So he does not intend ; he would fain marry, and as soon as he sees a chance, his wife and mother should follow him to Canada : so he told me in his last letter, and it is in furtherance of this plan that he has come to England.'

Primrose coloured slightly, then turned pale, as she replied :

'Such a man as Lance has become should not marry, at least, so it seems to me, unless it be one of those women of whom he spoke so lightly.'

'Primrose you are not used to soldiers' talk. Lance meant no harm ; he has grown rough and boisterous, I grant it, but his heart is steadfast ; and since you must

needs know it without loss of time, this journey to England is for the very purpose of wedding you.'

Primrose started back ; then, recovering herself with an effort, she said :

'Mother, you must tell him it cannot be ; but, surely, he must see for himself that I am not the wife for him. Oh ! mother, you must be mistaken ; he does not, surely, mean it !'

'What else should he mean ? Has he not called you his wife ever since you were children ? Have you not laughed and jested together about it ? Have you not told others that you were betrothed to him ? And now, when he comes at the risk of his life (for may he not be seized as a French spy ?) to wed you, you say "It cannot be ; and he does not mean it."'

The young girl drooped under this reproach, and, making no reply, Mrs. Kirkbride went on :

'He was pained at your treatment of him, but I assured him you had no thought but to marry him ; for I judged you would most certainly abide by your word, and do I not know for sure that you have spoken of him as your future husband ? Child, child, I could have trusted your word as I could none else !'

'Mother !' said Primrose piteously, 'I was but a child when he went away, and I have seen him but once since.'

'What then ; have you not lived in the same house for many years ? Surely, you know him better than most brides know their husbands ?'

'But he is not—not what I thought him.'

'How do you know what he is ? I tell you plainly, Primrose, that not every man would have remained steadfast to his child-love, and come to wed her at the risk of his life on the first chance that he had.'

'To wed her and to leave her—that is his purpose,' Primrose replied. 'Mother, I would rather the latter, without the former.'

Mrs. Kirkbride groaned with vexation and impatience ; then, suddenly seizing the girl's hands in a passionate grasp, she exclaimed :

'Child, tell me this, and tell me no falsehoods, do you love that lad Amyot Brough? Nay, struggle not to escape from me—the truth I must and will know. I cannot sleep in doubt. What! speak out, whatever it may be!'

'I did not know it until to-night,' said Primrose, sobbing ; 'not until I heard Lance talk, and then——'

'Then, silly child, you thought that even a steadfast heart could not atone for roughness of manner and speech. You were offended because he frightened you in the street ; it was thoughtless of him, I grant, but men who have lived in camps, forget that girls are easily frightened ; and then you were again offended at his rough language. These are outside matters ; Primrose, are such trifles to be set in the balance against an honest man's true love? Fie, for shame! you are but a silly child in mind, though a woman in years. But how about thy word ; is it nothing for a woman to retract her promise, and say it cannot be?'

'Mother, would you have Lance married to a woman who does not love him?'

'I would have him married to you?'

'But I cannot love him.'

'Primrose, your talk is unmaidenly! You will love him when he is your husband—that is enough for me.'

'Dear mother, I cannot say all that is in my mind, because Lance is your son ; but I pray you, tell him that it cannot be. I do not want to be married ; let me stay with you, your daughter always, but not his wife.'

'My daughter, because his wife. Primrose, can you think that I can love you as I did before, if you thus disappoint all my hopes, and mar Lance's life, all for a whim? Nay, do not weep, silly child! How can we talk this

matter over, if you betake yourself to tears? Tears ever anger me, as you know full well.'

'But what can I do? I cannot marry Lance—no, I cannot, mother.'

'Cannot was an oft-repeated word when you were a child; I never heeded it then, nor do I feel much inclined to do so now, were it not for your small fortune, which I would not have you think I care about. One thing I allow, and no more: to-morrow, when Lance comes, I will bid him wait a day for his answer, and you must school yourself to do your duty. Put that silly boy out of your thoughts, and you will find Lance once more to your mind.'

'But, mother, though I must not say it cannot be, since it vexes you so much, let me beg you to tell Lance I would gladly wait, and I pray you say nothing of Amyot to him.' She blushed deeply as she spoke.

'Primrose, I promise you nothing; I shall speak to my son as I judge right and fitting.'

And with this reply Primrose was forced to be content, or at least to seem so.

The next day was a miserable one. When Lance's step was heard coming up the stairs, Primrose made her escape from the room, nor did Mrs. Kirkbride attempt to stop her; probably she wished to speak to her son alone. The interview could scarcely have been satisfactory, and when at length her would-be bridegroom departed, Primrose trembled as she marked how he banged the door, and swore and raged on his way down the stairs. It was long before she ventured to steal back into the room where Mrs. Kirkbride sat lost in thought, wearing an expression of deeper gloom than Primrose had seen for many a long day. It was terribly hard to the warm heart of the young girl to see that look of hopeless despondency, and feel that she was the cause; it seemed as if all the misery of former years, which Mrs. Kirkbride

had in some degree shaken off, had now returned in double force, and Primrose dared not make any attempt to cheer her.

'If I had but known he was coming,' she said to herself, 'I would have begged her to stop him; for though I did not know what he was like, I did know that he was nothing to me, and surely it had seemed that I was nothing to him. But would she have done it? And what can I do now? She, who owed me no mother's love, has been a mother to me; how can I vex her so?'

In self-reproach and great perplexity the day wore away—surely never day had seemed so long—and the evening came. Scarcely a word had been exchanged between them since Lance had departed: each waited for the other to speak; the silence, so insupportable, was at length broken by Primrose asking in a tremulous voice:

'Dear mother, may I know what Lance said this morning?'

'What he said will make small difference to you, as it appears.' Mrs. Kirkbride answered coldly.

Primrose choked back the rising tears, and replied earnestly:

'Indeed, dear mother, but it will; I long to think that he will not refuse to be still my brother, for it is even so that I have ever thought of him, as I now perceive.'

'A grievous pity you did not perceive it sooner,' the old lady replied bitterly.

'But will he, dear mother; will he let it be so, and rest contented?'

'Primrose, I have no heart to talk with you; you are a selfish, heartless girl, with no sense of duty towards those who at least have done their best for you. Truly, I have nothing left to live for now. My dream is gone, my best-loved son has now nothing to allure him home; he will persevere in his wandering life; we shall never more meet or have a home together.'

'Did he say so, mother? did he say he would never return to England?'

Primrose's face grew white, and her lips quivered.

'What else should he say! He came to seek you, and if possible to wed you; but Lance is proud, and he says: "No unwilling bride for me! she shall not be forced to marry a man she scorns;" but he vows vengeance on the man who has stolen your heart from him, and——'

'Oh, mother! I prayed you not to name what I said so foolishly; in truth, I believe I love no one; my heart is turned to stone. I love none but you and sweet Joan Pomfret!'

'And her brother, Primrose!—you said as much.'

'Mother, forget it; he does not know it, and never will. He thinks I care nothing for him, and indeed, I do not know whether I do or not. But, oh! I prayed you not to breathe his name to Lance.'

'And I did your bidding, foolish child. Lance learnt nothing from me, though I cannot say he guessed nothing. We have had few friends, as he knows full well.'

Primrose's large violet eyes were dilated with terror. She squeezed her hands together in an agony, as she moaned:

'What shall I do? What shall I do? Lance's anger must be terrible.'

Mrs. Kirkbride said nothing, but gazed at the girl in gloomy silence.

'You have yourself to thank,' she said, and added no more.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH TWO FRIENDS MEET AGAIN.

'ANOTHER cause for hating my native land,' Lance had muttered gloomily, when he had learned from his mother that the bride he had come to seek was to be no bride for him; and then he had turned savagely on his mother, and reproached her for having urged him to come across the Channel merely to be scorned and insulted. 'I want no wife,' he had said; 'and assuredly I will have none but Primrose; if she cares not for me, I will hamper myself with no other. A free life and a merry one for me. A soldier of fortune wants neither wife nor child.' Yet there was disappointment in his tone, and savage wrath in his eye, as he said: 'If that young Brough came in my way just now he should learn a thing or two. Mother, where is he?'

'I know nothing of him; it is long since we saw him. Do not concern yourself with him.'

Lance eyed her keenly; she quailed beneath his frown, and said:

'You can see Primrose, if you will, and take your answer from herself.'

'And where would be the use? I read it in her face the night I came here, scorn, and dislike, and loathing. Mother, I cannot tamely bear it that I was brought here merely to hear this tale. Why have you always told me that she was mine whenever I chose to claim her?'

'Why but because I thought so?'

Lance muttered a curse on woman's blindness and



woman's fickleness, and then relapsed into silence, rousing himself at last to question his mother closely as to the number and frequency of Amyot's visits; but she answered briefly that it was long since they had seen him, and that she knew not where he then was.

It was a miserable interview, and even Mrs. Kirkbride was relieved when it was over, though when he was gone she sat long in the seat where he had left her, repeating again and again :

'I shall never more see my son !'

And this melancholy conviction grew each day in strength as Lance never reappeared, and his mother concluded that he had left the country. But with this conviction came another fear, another apprehension of calamity, 'If that young Brough came in my way,' Lance had said, and his lowering glance, his clenched teeth, the passion in his voice had not been lost upon his mother. She reproached herself that she had permitted her own suspicion to be discovered, that she had not instantaneously and positively declared that no ground existed for such an idea, for it was impossible to deny that, as Primrose had said, Lance's anger and revenge might be desperate.

'But the world,' she assured herself, 'is wide; if I am no more to meet my son, even less likely is it that he and Amyot should cross each others paths. Lance would scarcely go far to seek him, and fate would surely not be so cruel as to throw them together.' But, oh! the misery of all that uncertainty! to what fearful dreams did it give rise, to what weary wondering, what hopeless questioning!

'Mother,' said Primrose timidly one evening; 'Where think you is Lance now?'

'I know not; perchance across the sea. Perchance in some English prison; or, maybe, shot as a spy, or torn in pieces by the mob. He is more French than English

now, and, thanks to Admiral Byng, no Frenchman could be safe in England now.'

'Mother,' said Primrose, with white lips; 'why did you not entreat him to send you word what befell him?'

'He left me in too great anger for any such words to pass between us,' said the old woman, sternly. 'Primrose, where think you is Amyot Brough?'

'I have no notion; but why?' she hesitated and a new fear seemed to seize her. 'Why speak of him just now, mother?'

The old woman made no reply, but their eyes met, and they knew each other's thoughts. Primrose grew suddenly restless, paced the room, and gazed often with wide open, awe-struck eyes from the window at the constantly moving crowds below, then returned to her place, sat down and buried her face in her hands.

'I could not not help it,' she murmured half aloud. 'Yet, if any harm came of it, could I ever forgive myself? Oh! to know where they are now?'

And day by day, hour by hour, this was their one thought and desire, just to hear that Lance had crossed the Channel safely, and that he, towards whom he cherished thoughts of ill, might not have crossed his path. But days passed, weeks passed, and no word came from Lance.

And while these weary anxious days were passing slowly by with the two sad hearts in Drury Lane, the thoughts and tongues of all outside were busy with the momentous subject of England's disgrace, and France's triumph. The soberest of London citizens was beside himself with rage, and from all the country round sounded the cry for revenge.

Such was the humour of the people when Lance ventured to make his secret visit to London. Then there came a hush, a kind of sullen satisfaction. The people had cried for blood, and blood they were to have.

The admiral, who had left Minorca to its fate, was to pay for his failure with his life, the people would have it so, and the King bowed to their will.

It was at this very moment that Amyot Brough found himself under orders to march with a detachment of his regiment to Portsmouth ; when starting he had concerned himself little with the reflection that his destination was the spot where the unfortunate admiral lay confined ; nor was it until he found himself surrounded by men who could speak and think of nothing else but the admiral, his sentence, and its approaching fulfilment, that he realised how near he was to the man whose name was in every mouth.

He had seen his men lodged, and was wandering about the town as evening approached, seeking amusement in watching the busy scene in the harbour, when the conversation around him, the constant recurrence of the admiral's name, made him suddenly ask himself what day it was, for the last few days had passed so rapidly that he could scarcely believe that the 11th of March, the fateful day, was close at hand. Yet there was no denying it was the 10th, and a strange awe crept over him as he looked again at the *Monarch* lying at anchor in the harbour, and wondered how the prisoner on board was heeding the closing of this his last day on earth. Amyot had small sympathy with him, deeming, like many an ardent spirit before, and since, that caution and cowardice were identical, and that the sentence passed was entirely wise and fitting. Yet there was a melancholy interest, a kind of fascination, about that ship, and as he gazed towards it over the quiet waters of the harbour, and listened to the savage exultation of the lowest of the loungers by the waterside, he told himself that such a closing to a life of honour and renown must be terribly bitter, and for a moment he could have wished that more merciful counsels had prevailed. Could Byng have ever

dreamed, when young and ardent like himself, that the day would come when he should be branded with the foul name of his country's betrayer, and from all sides the cry would resound that his life was forfeit, and his blood alone could wipe out the stain of his country's shame.

A rough laugh broke in upon his musings, loud and discordant, from an ale-house close by ; and as he turned his head three or four sailors came reeling forth. 'They had been drinking to the admiral's health,' they said, 'and a swift and pleasant journey to the regions below, and better luck than in this.'

'Luck !' shouted another, 'what better luck could he have than to find himself face to face with the French? it was pluck, not luck, that the villain lacked.'

'He should swing like a cat from the yard-arm ; shooting was too good for such as he !'

'He should be given to the people—they would teach him what Englishmen thought of such knavery. Tear him limb from limb, roast him, nail him to the ramparts, a warning to all cowards and traitors !'

Amyot listened in silence, and as the talk grew more bloodthirsty, more heavily laden with oaths and curses, more incoherent as the strong drink got hold of their senses, he was turning away with loathing and disgust, when the words, 'Down with him ! pitch him into the water ! Spy ! French traitor !' fell upon his ear, and at the same minute there was a rush of the besotted, grimy group towards a man who had left the ale-house with them, and had seemed to all casual observers to be one of them. From time to time he had muttered a word or two, but Amyot had failed to overhear these remarks. The man had looked more stupidly drunk than the rest, and for the most part had sat silent and a little apart. What it was, therefore, that had so excited his comrades' wrath, Amyot had no idea ; but with the natural dislike

of seeing one attacked by many, he turned again, and lingered to watch the fray.

'Didst hear him, Dick?' cried one.

'Nay, not I; what said he? a foreigneering-looking rogue.'

'What said he? Why, that the admiral was no different from all Englishmen—that they always show the white feather if a man looks 'em in the face! What be he, think ye? English! no, not he, with that outlandish hat and cloak. Ha:k'ee, we'll have no French or Spanish spies here. Heave him high and pitch him into the sea!'

'Nay, nay; who knows but he can swim. A rope! a rope! String him up to yon lamp-post!' and again a rush of staggering but savage men made at the stranger. Apparently he was less drunk than he looked, for, rising as they approached, he adroitly shunned their attack, and three of them rolled over on the beach. Then, seating himself again on a stump of wood, he laughed a mocking laugh, adding, 'you're all alike, ye blundering knaves! Hadn't ye better run away, as the admiral did?'

A volley of oaths was the reply. The crowd was thickening, gathering closer round the stranger, struggling, clamouring with each other, all eager to make an end of him, but by no means unanimous as to the method. Amyot still heard his gibes and mocking laugh, and muttered, 'He will dearly rue it!' as he drew nearer, convinced that, drunken as they were, the stranger must in a few minutes be overpowered. And he was right—there was a desperate struggle; they had fastened on him like bull-dogs. Half strangled, his clothes hanging in shreds about him, the blood streaming from his face, for one moment he shook himself free, but only to be dragged backwards by his hair, and to fall with a heavy thud to the ground. A fiendish laugh broke from his assailants as they stood gazing at his prostrate figure; one dealt him a savage kick, another, drawing a huge clasp

knife from his pocket, evidently contemplated finishing the work. But at that moment a hand grasped the ruffian's arm ; the clutch was violent and sudden and paralysing. The knife dropped from his hold, and the next minute was kicked into the sea. The owner struggled, tried to turn ; but another hand grasped the collar of his coat, and as he stormed and swore, his captor only tightened his grasp, saying, 'Stop that, or I'll find a way to make you ! What?—you wont !' and Amyot Brough, for he it was, without more parley, lifted the surly brute from his feet, and whirling him round, flung him heavily to the ground.

The crowd drew back a pace or two as he turned round and faced them ; there was some angry muttering, some inclination to renew the attack on the senseless victim of their wrath, but his sudden interference had awed them, and seizing the opportunity afforded by their sullen hesitation, Amyot calmly remarked :

'The next I lay hands on I'll pitch into the sea. Now, my friends, I counsel you to go home, before I call out the guard, and have half of you in the lock-up. What ! would you make the fellow's words true? Are Englishmen such cowards that a dozen must set upon one man?'

'Tis a beggarly French spy !' shouted the crowd.

'Then he's my prisoner ; lend a hand, two of you to carry him to my quarters. My word for it, he shall be hung if he's French or a spy ; but take heed, or some of you will dance at the rope's end before you're a month older.'

'He's an officer,' murmured the crowd ; 'and what a fist,' whispered others. 'It were safest to go home—looks as if he might keep his word.'

Late that evening Amyot sat at supper in his own room. It was a comfortable little meal, and a bottle of good wine stood between him and his guest. The unfortunate stranger had at last rallied from his long fit of insensibility, and though much the worse for his after-

noon's experience, made pretence of being all right, and accepted, but somewhat sullenly, his preserver's hospitality.

'I swore that you should be hanged, if, as they vowed, you were French and a spy,' Amyot remarked, as he filled his guest's glass. 'I am quit of my oath in one respect, Lance, but for the other, what must I say?'

'What you will,' said the other gruffly.

'Nay, but, Lance, I was but jesting. None will know of this visit, and as for those drunken brutes, they will never question me, or if they did, would get no answer; but, for old friendship's sake, tell me something of your doings.'

'Ask, and I will answer. I came to see my mother. What more would you hear?'

'What you have been doing all these years. Nay, Lance, forget old animosities and party feuds, and remember that as boys we played together.'

Lance drew his hand across his brow, then pushed his glass from him, got up and paced the room. His tread was unsteady still, and before long he sat down again, and, leaning his elbows on the table, gazed gloomily at Amyot.

'Do you know,' he said in a hoarse voice, 'that this is the second time you have saved my life, Amyot Brough, and yet if it were worth while to hate anybody, I should hate you?'

'And why?' said Amyot, meeting his fierce look of gloomy despair with a gaze of some surprise. 'It is scarcely my fault that the luck has gone against you, and ——'

'Who cares to ask the reasons of his hatreds? Nay, who cares to talk of love and hate at all? I did but name it because you spoke of friendship. What have I been doing? Living by my wits; as a soldier for the most part. You fought at Laffelt, well, so did I. You may,

perchance, have a campaign or two in America, and so, maybe, shall I. You start; is the idea a pleasant one? To me it is altogether most enchanting. We may cross swords then, if gratitude, or some other senseless notion hinders our doing so now.'

'Lance Kirkbride!' exclaimed Amyot vehemently, 'I cannot thus forget old friendships; but if——'

Lance broke in with a bitter laugh. 'My past is so pleasant to look back upon,' he said, 'my future so brilliant in prospect, you are amazed to hear that I am not enchanted to discuss old times, or anticipate time to come.'

'Nay, nay, let it alone if it is distasteful to you. Talk then, of your brothers. What are they doing? where are they?'

'I know nothing of them,' said Lance gloomily. 'Amyot, I have no family, no home, no past, no future; but what matters it? The less to live for, the easier one risks one's life; and 'tis a sorry farce this life of ours. I warrant you that admiral of yours has found that out by this time.'

'Perhaps,' said Amyot thoughtfully, 'doubtless he little thought of such an ending.'

'Little indeed! yet what matters it? A shameful death do you call it? Well, unpleasant for five minutes, I grant you; but what then? Oh, don't begin preaching about leaving a spotless fame behind you. Are you such a fool as to think the grave doesn't end all such troubles, and make all alike?'

'Then you'd have no objection to find yourself in the admiral's place to-morrow?'

'I scarce look for such pomp and parade at my exit; a rope and a lamp-post are more like to be my way out of the world, as you saw this afternoon.'

'And it will content you?'

Lance swore that one way was as good as another, and then returned to the bottle. After a while he roused



himself to ask the time, and when told that it wanted but a few minutes of midnight, he started up, saying that the master of the lugger, who had given him a passage to Holland, had spoken of sailing soon after twelve, and he must not run the chance of being late. Amyot accompanied him along the now silent streets, parted from him at a dark and little frequented spot on the harbour, where a boat was in waiting for the skipper and his passenger. It was a relief to bid him farewell, a relief to be quit of his sullen company, and to know him safely shipped for the Continent, for surely such a tongue would bring him to mischief had he lingered long in England. Yet it was no small relief to be rid of him without having yielded to the impulse to make him repent his savage words, and Amyot breathed more freely when he had watched the little boat push off into the darkness, and knew that Lance no longer stood on English soil. They had not pressed each other's hands ; they had uttered no word of farewell. Lance had breathed no syllable of acknowledgment for the service rendered : but he was gone, and Amyot was glad.

Early the next morning he was astir, watching the motions of the ships in the harbour, wondering if this or that of the outgoing craft was the one which was carrying his friend back to that strange life of hazard and adventure which alone seemed now to have any charms for him. Before long he concluded that the Dutch lugger had probably sailed at break of day, since none of the ships then visible carried a Dutch flag, but so long as Lance was safely embarked, Amyot cared little in what vessel he had sailed.

Yet there was a wondrous enchantment to him in the sight of that mighty harbour, and though he had matters to arrange during his brief stay, he found himself ever and anon returning to the shore, watching the doings on the docks, gazing at the mighty vessels, the sight

of which recalled to him the days of his childhood, and the old farmhouse, and the evenings spent in listening to his father's sea-faring tales. At first his whole being had revolted from the notion of taking any share, or even seeming to participate in the savage triumph of the townspeople at the doom of the unfortunate admiral. 'Tis most entirely and absolutely necessary,' Colonel Wolfe had said to him, 'an example must be made, or there will be an end to all deeds of daring, all honour, all discipline, His Majesty has the right on't, the man must die,' and Amyot had concurred, as indeed he was wont to concur in most of Colonel Wolfe's sentiments. But he could not for that reason join in the wild triumph of the mob, even while a strange fascination kept him lingering within sight of the ship where the prisoner lay awaiting his doom. And yet as he listened, now to the talk of the rough boatmen, now to the soldiers loitering about the ramparts, now to the townspeople, crowding into little boats and wherries which should carry them near enough to feast their eyes on the prison ship, and within easy hearing of the fatal volley, he was conscious of a gloomy kind of satisfaction stealing over him; the honour of England, which, under Wolfe's influence, had grown to be as dear to him as his own, had been but scantily upheld by her sons for many a long day; the King was said to have small confidence in either her soldiers or her sailors; the lesson was most plainly needful, and could scarce fail to be salutary. He had refused many an entreaty from the watermen to be allowed the honour of conveying him also near the *Monarch* and when at length he yielded, it was more to be rid of their importunity than from any anxious desire to mingle in the throng of boats that covered the waters of the harbour. In fact, he was ashamed of his acquiescence the moment afterwards, and blushed to think that he was following the vulgar crowd, and, like

them, striving to be as near the fateful spot as possible. He glanced at the old boatman as he dipped his oars into the water, and for a moment had resolved to recall his consent and return to shore, but something in the old fellow's mien attracted him; he had uttered no brutal jests, like many of his fellows, rather it seemed that their language, coarse and cruel in its mirth and glee, galled and chafed him, and as he pulled away from the shore, he drew one hand across his brow, and breathed something between a sigh and a groan, then, looking at his passenger, he said, with some hesitation, 'Among that crew yonder, a man durstn't speak his mind, a set of low-lived, cowardly ruffians as ever breathed, and they to be calling a gentleman traitor and coward; you may be thinking differently, sir.'

'Tis the same cry all over England,' said Amyot gloomily.

'Maybe, maybe,' said the old man hastily. 'Ay, sir, don't I know how it was when the admiral was landed, and orders came as he was to be brought safe to London. Safe, sir, it wasn't so easy. They started with him about half-past three in the morning, but though he was guarded by sixty fine fellows of the Blues, would you believe it, they had to turn round and come back with him, couldn't get him to London no ways.'

'Why not?' inquired Amyot, who had heard this tale.

'Why, but because of the crowds of blackguards between there and London town; in one place, as I heard tell, there was more nor a thousand of them, carrying pitchforks, clubs, and what not, eager, as they said, to pay their respects to his honour. So they brought him back, and cheated the rabble finely.'

'But he was carried to Greenwich, after all.'

'Ay, ay, after a bit, travelling mostly by night; but what with burning figures of the admiral, screeching against him in the streets, the town went just mad. And

a mate of mine told me that at Southampton it was worse. They made a figure of him there, dressed up with a wooden sword, and wrote across the right breast a scrawl, "My heart grew on the wrong side," and they carried it round the town, hanged it up to a sign-post, and fired seven rounds at it, and then cut it down and burnt it in a huge fire made with tar barrels, and a rare good sport they thought it, ay, and the gentlefolks too; but seeing as I have served under the admiral, and knew him when I was a bit younger than I am now, I can't see things in that fashion; no, I can't, sir, and I'm not ashamed to say it.'

'You hold him not wanting in courage,' was Amyot's reply.

'I do, sir,' was the unflinching answer.

'And true to his country? Men have doubted even that.'

'True as steel. That court-martial as sat on him may not have been quite as brave nor quite as true. I take it they were a trifle scared at the pitchforks and clubs, and the ugly pictures and bits of verses. Mr. Pitt, as I heard tell, was afraid of nothing of the kind.'

Amyot was silent, gazing at the busy scene around him, and the men swarming the rigging in a neighbouring ship. Then, turning again to the old sailor before him, and pitying his emotion, he said kindly, 'Well, it was a blunder, and it has cost him dear.'

'Ay, ay, but it shouldn't be!' cried the old man, while the tears chased each other down his brown cheeks; 'he has done his country good service, couldn't they have forgiven one fault, if fault it was?'

'We have made many blunders,' Amyot was replying, when from some small sailing vessel near at hand there came some sounds of ominous import, hooting, jeering, bitter laughter. The old sailor's colour faded from his face, he ground his teeth as he bent his head upon his

breast, muttering, 'Tis, then, the time; what matters, he'll not hear them; a coward, no, not he.' The boat rocked gently to and fro as the old man leaned on his oars, listening with awe-struck face and softly drawn breath.

Amyot leaned over the side, gazing into the water and listening too, and wondering at himself that he was there. At length it came, that sharp rattling sound, echoing over the waters, and leaving an awful silence behind it. The old sailor's head drooped lower for a moment, then raising it, he lifted his cap from his brow, and with solemn, tear-choked voice murmured, 'Tis done, well for him, and well for all of us. Pray God have mercy, and give him rest, a home, and a welcome, though man will have none of him.'

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH MANY QUESTIONS ARE DEBATED.

A MELANCHOLY period in Primrose's history had followed that visit of Lance Kirkbride. The little cottage in the country which had been taken, and in part prepared, still stood empty, for Mrs. Kirkbride stoutly resisted all proposals to remove thither, feeling that to place Primrose in circumstances where she might hear and see more of Amyot Brough, would be treason to her son.

But at length she gave way. The post one day brought a letter for Primrose from her one friend, Joan Pomfret a letter received with such rapture that even Mrs. Kirkbride could scarce forbear to smile.

'Dear Joan is again at Westerham,' Primrose said; 'and oh, I am glad! she has a sweet little daughter. And, oh! dear mother, do but listen. She begs and prays that we will come down to our little cottage, if it be only for a while, and see her and the babe. Mr. Pomfret, she says, is very strict in his commands that she remains quiet at Westerham, so she will not be able to see us unless we go to see her. Dear mother, may we not go for one week, at least?'

'The winds are cold, and it is early in the year for travelling,' objected Mrs. Kirkbride; 'and you have been but poorly all the winter, Primrose.'

'Dear mother, you know well the reason why. 'Tis but the mopes and bad temper. A breath of country air will help me to a better frame of mind; and sweet Joan, you always say, is good company for me. Nay, mother, do not look so uneasy. I guess your thoughts. You will not

forget those silly words of mine, but Joan says there is no chance of her seeing her brother while on this visit, seeing he is with his regiment in Gloucestershire, busied in quelling riots there.'

'Well, we will go for a week,' Mrs. Kirkbride replied.

And Primrose's rapturous thanks and fervent embrace gave her a sense of pleasure to which she had long been a stranger. She had felt bound in loyalty to her son to keep the young girl in disgrace, to permit few caresses, and to treat her as much as possible as a culprit. It had not been always easy; for, as of old, Primrose's spirits would bound up, her laugh would ring out at the veriest trifle; she would find sources of amusement where others could see nothing to provoke a smile. But as much as in her lay, Mrs. Kirkbride had made her feel herself a delinquent: hence the depression which Primrose had described as the mopes and bad temper. What joy to be permitted to throw it all to the winds, to revel in the country sights and sounds, to talk with Joan, and nurse the baby!

So the simple preparations were made, and in a few days they found themselves settled in the little cottage which Mrs. Kirkbride was always careful to call Primrose's, and which Primrose was equally positive was her mother's. One little maid, sought out by Mrs. Darley, was their sole attendant; the furniture was scanty and of the plainest but what mattered that? The snowdrops in the garden, the primroses just beginning to peep above the ground, the chirping of the birds, and, above all, the near neighbourhood of Joan and Mrs. Darley, made it paradise to Primrose. Nor was it long before Mrs. Kirkbride thawed to these kind friends, and was persuaded by Joan to admit that there was no imperative reason why the visit should be so short as had been at first proposed.

'The journey, though not long, is fatiguing,' Joan urged. 'To stay only a week seems a pity.'

And the old lady, in whose arms Joan's fair baby lay sleeping, agreed that perhaps it would be foolish to return so soon. And as Primrose was needed as godmother to little Peace, she would not hurry her away.

And so, in a manner most satisfactory to Primrose, the days slipped by. The babe's christening could not take place until her father could leave his parish and travel to Westerham to be present.

'And that will not be until the end of the month,' said the young mother. 'Then he will come to conduct us home; but the child will be baptised here—my grandmother wishes it. Ah, Primrose, I dread, and yet I long, to see my husband with a child in his arms once again.'

'Does Mr. Pomfret care for children?' Primrose asked; 'he seems to me too grave to notice little ones. But it were strange, indeed, if he did not notice this sweet babe. Dear Joan, is she not lovely?'

Joan laughed.

'A strange question to put to me,' she said. 'But you asked another, and to that I say that my husband is marvellously fond of children, and children of him. Could you but see him among the little ones on Sunday afternoons, when he catechises them, you would cease to think him grave or severe. It is the work he loves best, and the children clamour and struggle to be near him, which proves they stand in no dread of him. You, Primrose, must cease to fear him.'

'I scarcely *fear* him; but I do not know him as I know you. I doubt he will not like to hear me call you Joan.'

'He will never heed it. Men don't notice such things—else would he be very glad. He knows how often I have longed that God had given me a sister. Primrose, tell me, have you heard of late from Mrs. Kirkbride's sons, whom you used to call your brothers. Now that your



name is no longer Kirkbride, I conclude you have ceased to call them thus.'

'Indeed, no ; they are my brothers still, and ever will be I trust. Of the youngest, Percy, we never hear of Jasper and Lance but seldom. Jasper's last letter was full of a certain Colonel Clive, who is about to do great things for our people in India, at least, so Jasper says. But Jasper is always full of high hopes. I know not that they mean much.'

'Nay, I have heard much of Colonel Clive. Mr. Pomfret knows about him ; he is a horn soldier, they say--daring and dashing ; hard to guide when a boy, but able to lead others, as it would seem. But of your brother Lance what news have you ?'

Primrose turned away her head, and hesitated ere she replied :

'My mother had a letter from him a fortnight ago. He is in Quebec, in the French army, serving under a general whom he calls the Marquis de Montcalm. Lance adores him, his whole letter was taken up with his praises of his skill as an officer, his kindness as a commander, of his generous treatment of the poor Indians, who worship him, and will be led by him in all things ; and of his virtue and religion, which I wonder Lance should notice—he was not wont to set much store by either.'

'Indeed, was he not ? And this is your betrothed husband, Primrose ?'

Primrose blushed rosy red.

'That is an old joke—our being betrothed, I mean,' she said. 'Lance is best without a wife, living the life he does. Please do not speak of that again, Joan.'

'Very well,' Joan assented. 'If you are no longer betrothed, it were certainly best to say no more about it. In that case too much has been already said.'

'Too much, a great deal,' Primrose replied ; 'but I did

not say we were not betrothed, Joan dear. Only, please let us say no more about it.'

'As you will. But, having always heard the story from my brother, and from yourself too, I should like to know whether or no it is true?'

'It was true once. But now Lance cannot return to England, and is in no state to marry, it is best to say nothing about it.'

'And it will never be?' inquired Joan, suddenly lifting her quiet eyes from the sewing in her hand to Primrose's agitated face, and dropping them as rapidly when she perceived the trouble expressed in every line of the young girl's countenance.

'Please do not ask me,' Primrose replied. And Joan, perplexed, said no more.

The week which Mrs. Kirkbride had agreed to stay at Westerham had long passed away, and many weeks had succeeded it, ere she again thought of moving. It was an effort to her, she said in self-excuse for her change of plan; and when at length the news came that her old rooms in Drury Lane had been let in her absence, the landlady thinking she must have given up all notion of returning, she showed no great vexation or disappointment.

'All places were alike to her now,' she said, 'and Primrose was happy and contented.' This was said with a glance of reproach which checked the girl's mirth, and made her cast down her eyes as if detected in some grave fault.

Mrs. Darley, whose quick eyes had intercepted this look, wondered what it meant, and asked innocently 'if it was strange that Primrose should be happy and contented. Was it not generally allowed that persons of her age, and personal advantages, might be both happy and contented, although it was much the fashion for those who had passed their first bloom to suffer from the vapours?'

Whereupon Mrs. Kirkbride sighed, and agreed that Primrose might well be happy. 'She had merely meant that the case with herself was different ; but she was glad that life should still shine on the young—it was right and fitting ;' and then she sighed again.

'Nay ; there I differ from you, madam,' the elder lady replied. 'It is we who should be blithe and merry, seeing our task is nearly done ; the young have much to make them serious, *their* work being but just begun.'

'But they have no fears for the future, born of their knowledge of the past ; they have no regrets over past joys never to return.'

'No more have we fears for the future. Why, madam, our future may be very short ; and fears born of the knowledge of the past, did you say ? Truly, my past has taught me not to fear the future, since I have lived through all my troubles, and am none the worse, but in some sort the better for them. They have no regrets, did you say ? no more have I.'

'Then are you a most happy woman, madam,' Mrs. Kirkbride replied, with solemn emphasis, but a tone that implied some degree of doubt.

'Happy ! Yes ; but I lost my husband, and I loved him very well, and could have been well content to have lived with him twenty or thirty years longer. I lost six children, and have only one left—Mrs. Pomfret, Arnold's step-mother, as you know—and I have had other small troubles of diverse kinds, yet have I no regrets to speak of.'

Mrs. Kirkbride looked amazed ; then, doubtless remembering that the French are lighthearted by nature, she contented herself with remarking that it must be very pleasant to be able to say such a thing.

'Vastly more pleasant than to go through life groaning about what cannot be mended,' the old lady remarked. 'I was but thirty-five when my husband died. Only imagine how long I should have tormented my friends,

had I continued to weep all these years; they would assuredly have been driven to make an end of me long ago; whereas, since I dried my tears, and made no show of my grief, they have shown themselves very passably contented with my society. I might also have broken my heart when each of my children died, and once I was much inclined to do so; but I reasoned with myself in something this way: They are called to vast promotion, to a world far better than this, to safety and freedom from sin; all this they cannot have so long as they are with me, therefore it is I alone that am the loser, and am I to fret about my own loss, which so greatly benefits them? Truly, Pauline Darley, such selfishness were sin and shame. Thus I brought myself to see reason, and so I say, I regret none of the things that have happened to me, painful as some have been. One thing is certain, the pain is behind, the joy is before me.'

'But you have many still who love you, madam; you are not alone, as I may be any day, if Primrose should marry.'

'I have been alone many times in my life, but it is not pleasant; and I usually seek new friends for myself when death or change removes the old ones. When Joan left me on her marriage-day, I sought out a neglected Irish girl who had no home; she gave me much amusement and a vast deal of trouble; but she, too, married and left me. Still I have my good Johnstone, who will certainly not so desert me; and Joan returns from time to time to see the old grandmother, for whom she professes vast affection, though doubtless such professions mean not much—eh, Joan?—this to her granddaughter, who entered in the middle of the last speech.

'Whose professions mean not much, dear madam? not mine, I trust.'

'Yes, thine, surely, seeing thou art overjoyed to think of leaving me to-morrow, and didst greet thy husband as

if he had been the gaoler who bore the keys to open thy prison door.'

'It was so long since I had seen him, and there was the child to show him,' said Joan apologetically; 'yet believe it or not as you will, dear grandmother, the pain at the thought of parting from you is most real and bitter. I am always torn in two in my love for my two homes.'

'There, there! it is the fashion to flatter; but thy father's daughter and thy husband's wife should know better. Where hast thou left thy babe?'

'With Primrose, who has been weeping bitterly over my tale of poor Tory's death. She did not know he had been dead so long. I had forgotten that she had known him.'

'Poor old beast! Yet it is well that he died so quietly and easily. When little Stephen went, I knew he would not live long, and feared he would fret himself to death; but Arnold says that he busied himself with you, and seemed always to think that the child would return some day, crawling to the door to look out, and then returning to sit at your feet. Sure, there never was a more loving beast!'

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### CONCERNING A LAUGHABLE EXPLOIT.

'DEEP in thought, plunged in meditation,' said Jack Pownal, as he approached Amyot Brough, who was leaning over the side of the vessel which was conveying the two friends, several officers, and a large portion of their regiment along the coast of France. This ship was one of the sixteen ships of the line which, with frigates and transports, sailed from Spithead early in September, 1757, on what was then known as 'the secret expedition.' Much wonderment had been excited at home by the preparation of this armament : and until they were fairly on the open sea, its destination had been kept a secret from both officers and men. Now it had been revealed; and as Amyot roused himself to reply to his friend's exclamation, it was plain that some disappointment had been the result of this revelation.

'I was wishing, as I told you this morning, that Nova Scotia were to be our destination as we thought at first.'

'Always crying for the moon,' Jack replied. 'Amyot, I do at last comprehend the mystery of your long and hopeless love. It is because you cannot gain her that your heart is so set on Miss Primrose Solmes. Did I bring you the good news that she would favour your suit, I believe that in verity you would altogether cease to desire her hand—such is your nature, my respected friend.'

'Bring me such news, and you shall see.'

'If have seen for many years that it is always the very

thing that you may not possess, which you desire with all your soul. See, now—tell me—why do you complain that we may not go to fight the French in America, when we are sent to fight them nearer home? Is it merely the long voyage which charms you? Few of us would agree with your taste. This plaguy *mal-de-mer* makes the ship a most dismal place.'

'Do you know why we are to take Rochefort—I mean, what is the special attraction to the place? Has anyone told you?'

'One has said that somebody told Mr. Pitt or some of his friends that its fortifications are weak and greatly neglected, and that it might be easily conquered, if we have enough of that scarce commodity, the courage to attempt it; and Mr. Pitt, thinking that it might please the Duke of Cumberland and the King of Prussia to hear that we were seizing the enemy's towns while they were away, despatched this company to perform the trick, which in my humble opinion seems unpleasantly easy.'

'Why easy?'

'Because the greater part of the French army occupies itself with other matters. One says there are but few to defend this part of the coast, and the French pilot, whom the admiral has engaged, tells much the same story about the weak fortifications of the place. One can see no great glory to be gained by such an enterprise.'

'Who is grumbling now, Jack?'

'Is it I?! Well, I know well it is a most contagious complaint. But I am not truly discontented; a very small portion of glory will content me; but to tell the honest truth, friend Amyot, I am much afraid we shall have none.'

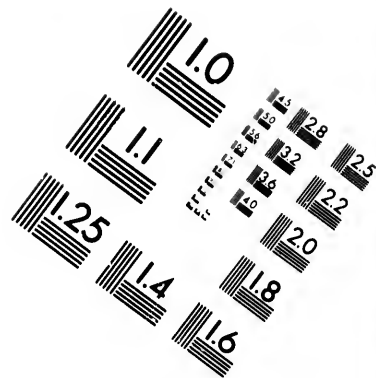
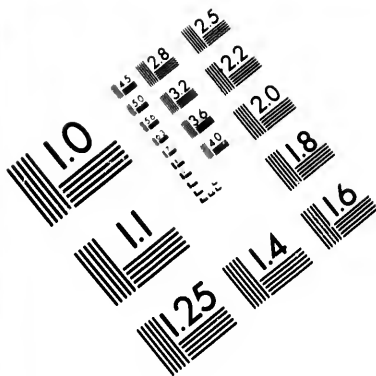
'And why do you think we can't take this place?'

'Can't is not a word I learnt when I studied English. I have not seen it in my dictionary.'

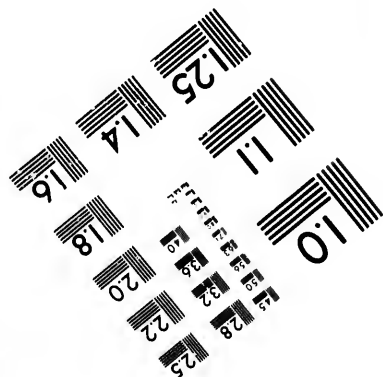
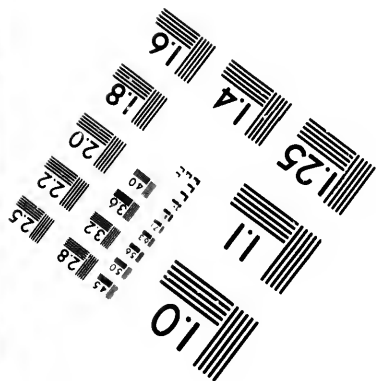
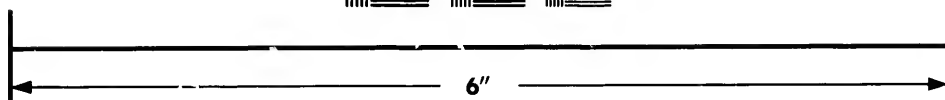
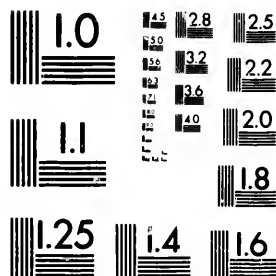
'It is in most people's, as you often observe. How think you? Is it in our general's?'







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Jack made a grimace.

'I do not speak evil of my superiors,' he said. 'We will see, we will see.'

'What do they call that island yonder, in the mouth of the river?'

'Somebody called it Aix; but right or wrong, is more than I can say.'

'Where are they going to attempt a landing?'

'How many more questions? Ask some one who knows more than I, and everybody will tell you some different tale, which will be marvellous diverting, but not particularly instructive. However, we shall hear some-



ROCHEFORT.

thing in time, I suppose; though it would be prodigious strange if the general does not command one thing, and the admiral determine quite the contrary.'

The little island of Aix at the mouth of the Charente being the first point to be attacked, it was shortly determined to land sufficient troops there to obtain possession of the place. The defence being but slight, this was easily achieved; but the main object of the expedition, the seizure of Rochefort, still remained to be accomplished. Elated with this first slight success, in spite of the strictest orders against any irregularity, the troops in possession of

Aix broke through all restraints of discipline, got furiously drunk, and grossly ill-treated the poor islanders. It was not a happy beginning, and many foreboded that the French on the mainland would make a more stubborn resistance rather than surrender Rochefort to such ruthless invaders.

But before recounting the story of the expedition, I am bound to relate somewhat of the small exploit which preceded it, inasmuch as among the regiments landed for the attack on Aix was the one to which Amyot Brough, now a captain, was attached, and consequently the assault on this little place has more to do with my narrative than may have seemed probable. It was in the first onset that, while cheering on his men, he was observed to fall; but the troops rushed on, and it was not till some hours after that he was found lying just within the fortifications, a ball in his side, and his head beneath a heap of stones and rubbish.

'Dead, without doubt,' said the soldier who, being one of his company, had identified him, and called others to make certain of the fact, just as Jack Pownal, in a state of fiery indignation, passed by, striving to bring to their senses and to some order and discipline, a rabble of half-drunken soldiers whom he had expelled from some low taverns in the town.

'Who is it who is dead without doubt?' he asked, stopping for a moment.

The name was repeated to him, and the colour left his face at the words:

'Our captain—Captain Brough—dead as a stone. Come and see, sir.' And Jack strode off in the direction pointed out, forgetting his fury, his shame, and all else, but the news which he had just heard. Some one from behind called him, but he paid no heed, leaping over rubbish and fallen walls, carefully striding over the corpses that lay strewn around, intent only on finding the one, and

turning over in his bewildered brain the possibilities and likelihoods of any mistake having been made.

'Here, sir, this way,' said the soldier who had told him, and was now following him. And in another minute Jack was forced to confess that no mistake had been made: the body was that of Amyot, without doubt. Only one other question remained to be settled—alive or dead?

'Lift those stones,' he said, in a choking voice; 'but gently—be careful.' And as he spoke a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice said:

'What is it Jack? Nay, surely not my old school-fellow, Amyot Brough?'

'Jack's head sank down lower and lower, as, the stones being carefully cleared away, a face, white as ashes, fixed and set, and a perfectly rigid form, were disclosed to view.

'Been dead for hours,' said the soldier. And Jack hid his face and groaned.

'Come, do not be so sure,' said the colonel. 'And if it is, what better fate would you have than a soldier's death? And stooping down he opened the vest, and laid his hand upon the heart. Jack ventured another glance—this time a miserable inquiring glance—into Colonel Wolfe's face, to which the latter replied, with much hesitation: 'I can scarcely tell—yet I think I feel a flutter about the heart; but I am no judge of such matters. Run, my good fellow, and seek some one more skilled than I am. There must be surgeons near at hand.' Then, as the man started off, he said: 'Speak to him, Jack; that may rouse him to consciousness, if there is any life left in him.'

Jack tried. But, choking again, he said:

'Colonel, if any voice will bring him back from the dead, it is yours. He loves no man on earth as he does you.'

The young colonel hesitated. Then, raising Amyot's head from the dust and rubbish where it lay, and supporting him with his arm, he said gently, but slowly and distinctly :

'Amyot Brough, we've won the place. Wake up, man, and hear the news.'

Jack held his breath and watched the still face with agonised earnestness ; but the lips moved not, the eyelids were still sealed in the profoundest unconsciousness, no sign of life was there. Some moments passed thus, the colonel kneeling on the ground, still supporting the heavy head, Jack Pownal motionless and miserable. Once more Colonel Wolfe uttered his name, slowly and with emphasis ; then, after a pause, he added :

'Do you not hear me, Amyot Brough ? It is I, James Wolfe.'

As the words passed his lips, Jack Pownal uttered an exclamation of startled gladness.

'Did you see, colonel ? His lips moved ; I am sure they did.'

'I felt a kind of shudder pass through him,' said Wolfe gravely. 'I doubt whether it is well to try to rouse him. Place your hand here, Jack. No, he is not dead, but how near to it, I cannot say. See, there is blood running from his side ; it would be well to try to check it—your handkerchief, Jack ; we will not move him till a surgeon gives leave.'

Silently they kept their watch, the minutes seeming wondrous long and tedious ; but at length help came. The messenger had returned with other soldiers of his company and a surgeon, who, in answer to the eager questions poured forth by Jack, said :

'Yes, Captain Brough was living, but desperately wounded ; it was scarce worth while to remove him to the ships ; he would die as easily where he was. It might be some hours yet.'

Jack groaned—his hopes had risen high, only to be dashed to the ground; but the colonel spoke quickly:

'Tell me, sir, must he certainly die?'

'Certainly! Well, perhaps not quite certainly, but it is likely, exceedingly likely.'

'Can he be moved without injury to himself? These good fellows will be careful of their captain.' He glanced round, and the men responded:

'Ay, sir, ay!'

'He might—yes, he might; but is it worth while, think you, Colonel Wolfe?'

'Without doubt; you will go with him, and see him safely on board, and do your utmost for him; and you, Captain Pownal, will also accompany him. I must stay here no longer. Now, my men, steady.'

He watched while they lifted their still unconscious burden, spoke a cheery word to Jack Pownal, and hastened away.

Two days after, Amyot awoke to something like consciousness, but of a very dreamy kind, in his berth. He glanced around, wondered what had happened, tried to rise, but finding this impossible, lay still and tried to think; but to think was as impossible as to rise, and he again fell into a doze which lasted some time, till, hearing voices, he opened his eyes, to find Jack's familiar form bending over him, while his eyes gleamed with delight.

'Come to your senses again, Amyot, my boy. In what lands of dreams and shadows have you been wandering? In vain have I tried to follow you. I could make nothing of your discourse, mighty fine though it has been at times. But one has told me not to talk, or let you talk, much as I long to hear you.'

'Tell me all,' said Amyot faintly.

'All what? Nay, I will tell you nothing, but that you are to lie still and sleep your fill.'

'But tell me what has happened. I have had a strang,

dream. How long is it since we stormed Aix? Some one said we had taken it. The words seemed spoken by the colonel's voice, but I do not see how that can be.

'We did take Aix—no great matter—let that content you. I see you are a sham; it was the colonel told you, and you held the eyes shut, and made believe to be stone deaf.'

'You are jesting, Jack,' Amyot said, with a weary smile. 'Tell me all, and then I will sleep for days, if you will. I am strangely sleepy.'

'Well, to content you, I break all orders, and tell the thing as it arrived. We stormed and took Aix three days ago. You got a bullet in your side just after the first attack, and lay in a right loathsome place, when one told me of your mischance. Dead men around you, and a wounded Frenchman or two, who were making a deafening noise concerning their wounds. There seemed small hopes of you, you had been bleeding so long; for it was hours after you fell that you were found. The surgeon had all the inclination to leave you to die, but the colonel ordered you to be carried here, and so here we brought you; and now you shall go to sleep, or I will never speak a single word to you as long as you live.'

Not another syllable could be extracted from him, though Amyot's curiosity was far from satisfied; and the latter at length desisted from questioning, and fell again into the dreamy state of semi-unconsciousness from which he had revived. Hours passed by, and days also, without his being able or desirous to notice their flight. Sometimes he took the food put to his lips by his nurses, sometimes he steadily refused it; sometimes he opened his eyes and gazed with a puzzled air at anyone who was present; oftener he lay with his eyes half-shut, noticing no one.

Jack Pownal had frequent fits of despair, and was inclined to think many times that the surgeon's words



would be fulfilled, and that it might have been kinder to have left his friend to the speedy death on the battlefield. But, by degrees, the periods of wakefulness grew more frequent and longer—in Jack's words, 'Amvot ceased to spend his whole time in the land of dreams,' and then the warm-hearted fellow took courage again.

'Have you had your fill of sleep to-day?' he asked one evening, as he drew near the patient's bed, and saw with satisfaction that the dark eyes were turned to him with a look of perfect recognition, which they had but seldom shown since the mischief was done.

'Yes, indeed,' Amvot replied, 'I do nothing but sleep. It would be better to heave me overboard, Jack, than have me snoring away down here—Ask the colonel if he does not think so.'

'Not I—you are doing as much as any of us. We might as well all put ourselves to sleep as pass our days in the fashion that we do, staring at the coast, and walking up and down and staring again. I have never been more idle in my life. Often I envy you, who can lie and sleep.'

Amvot turned his head with an effort towards his friend, and inquired eagerly:

'But why, Jack?'

'Ah! you may say, "But why?" That is what I say all the day, and every day; but why cannot we storm this place as we did Aix? Thierry, the pilot, says he can show us a place where we may land about five miles from Rochefort, and Admiral Hawke says one of his sixty-gun ships shall batter down the fort of Touras, by way of helping us; but still we do nothing. Sir John Mordaunt wants the admiral to promise, that if we have to save ourselves, as he seems to think likely, he will have his ships all ready to take us up, and the admiral says there are such things as winds and tides which may prevent, and the general has the air of never having heard of such things; and so we wait, we wait, till what? Truly, I do

not know, but I suppose till these inconvenient winds and waves are reprieved, and taught to respect us properly.'

'But, Jack!' ejaculated Amyot.

'Ah, you may say "But, Jack!" Still, I tell you the truth—Rochefort is mocking at us, and will mock till the end of the chapter.'

'Then I may as well lie here,' said Amyot dejectedly, 'if there's nothing to be done. What does Colonel Wolle say to this sort of thing?—It seems to me like the Minorca business—eh, Jack?'

'Marvellous like—I ask myself how many of us they'll shoot when we get home?—a goodly number, I hope.'

'Treason, Jack; you talk treason. But tell me again, what says the colonel?'

'How do I know? He says nothing to me, but walks to and fro and looks miserably. The story goes that he went to the general, and offered to take Rochefort, if he might have the command of five hundred men and three ships for the affair; but no, it is not to be taken—and there's an end of it.'

'Do you mean they refused him?'

'But yes, I tell you; he would not talk about it, so I don't know precisely what was said or done; but if I know anything about him, he's mad at all this waste of time.'

'Of course; is there nothing doing?'

'Oh, councils without end; much talking, many resolutions; this one in a rage, that one in the sulks, and the French making laudous preparations for the defence.'

'What fools they will think us.'

'Ay, won't they laugh—we shall hear them across the Channel!'

'But it cannot be: the general will never go home without attempting something. Jack, you are fooling me, to make me contented to lie here.'

'What! do you imagine that I tell lies to make you contented?—a state of things that never was known since you were born! Nay, when I perjure myself, it will be for a better purpose. I tell you the truth most plain and simple, and behold you furnished with enough of matter for discontent; so now I doubt not that you will thrive and grow fat, it being your natural food.'

Amyot smiled a weary smile, and tried to turn on his side, which Jack perceiving, started up to render assistance, and shook up the pillow vehemently, saying:

'You cannot yet lift the head; where has all your boasted strength departed? The French have got the better of you, if I do not deceive myself.'

'Thanks; my head seems tied to my pillow! I have been a plaguy fellow to nurse, I fear.'

'The old creature who looks after you makes no complaint; do you find yourself comfortable now, my boy?'

'Hot!' said Amyot, pushing back the covering. Your news has made me hot, Jack.'

'Fool that I am!' exclaimed his friend; 'could I not have held my tongue! Look here, Amyot, lie still and speak not one other word—for my sake, I pray! Try and sleep again! What a fool I am!'

And he seemed so truly miserable at the consequences of his rash communication, that Amyot could not but submit, and lie quiet till the sleep of weakness and exhaustion again crept over him; and when he next opened his eyes, it was late on in the night, and all was silent around him—no sound to be heard but the water plashing against the side of the ship.

His dreams had not been pleasant, and he was unwilling to fall asleep again, lest some of the dark spectres, which had been so constant in their attendance of late, should reappear. He had fallen asleep entirely engrossed with the thoughts of the disgraceful failure of the ex-

pedition ; but so hazy and indistinct were any impressions that might be made on his mind during those first few days of his convalescence, that when he woke again, all remembrance of the news which had so disturbed him had passed away, and his own personal trials had assumed giant proportions, threatening entirely to overwhelm him.

In the silence of the night—in the intense solitude that the darkness seemed to bring, as it wrapped him round and shut him off from all consciousness of the near neighbourhood of his fellow-creatures—Amyot felt a despairing sense of loneliness ; once he even asked himself if he were alive or dead. Might not this darkness which enwrapt him, be the darkness of the grave ? or was it that unknown home of spirits which men must enter after death ? Had he passed the boundary line ? Was he now no longer an inhabitant of the world where he had lived and loved, and longed and hoped—the world of so many loved ones, of Primrose and Joan, of his adored colonel, of his true-hearted friend Jack Pownal, and many more ? Was he separated from them ? The thought was misery, and some hot tears fell which helped to rouse him from the strange delusion. Then succeeded another thought of delirious wretchedness—the phantom of a fevered brain. The fleet had started on its homeward voyage : the ship on which he was, filled with sick and wounded, had been left behind—hence the silence, the sense of loneliness. This delusion, too, passed away—perhaps he dozed : another followed. It had been thought useless to bring him from the field of battle, the surgeon had deemed his case hopeless—why then, of course, it was ; and what did that mean, but that he was dying ? and dying meant—what ? Often had he and Jack Pownal discussed this question, but with what result his bewildered mind could scarcely now remember. ‘Nothing to fear, so long as it finds us

where we ought to be,' the colonel had once said in his hearing ; but to face it on the field of battle, in the rush and tumult, the clashing of arms, the noise and the shouting, was one thing—to lie alone and wait its slow approach, a very different thing indeed.

Again his thoughts seemed lost in wild confusion : he had wandered back to that day in Swinford rectory when little Stephen had passed into the unknown land, and then further still to the Sunday morning in Swinford Church, and some of Arnold's words sounded again in his ears : 'Turn thine eyes from thine own burden, and consider His !' and again, 'He will have thee walk the road He chooses, and it is not to thy liking.' He had repeated those words to himself many times since that Sunday two years ago ; they had proved a wholesome reminder many a day—they came to him again to help him through that dark night. 'What He chooses shall be to my liking,' he feebly said ; and before that determination, the gloomy spirits of the darkness fled, and when the grey morning dawned, Jack Pownal stealing on tiptoe to his bedside, found his fears and self-reproach allayed by the placid quiet of Amyot's sleeping face.

The day that was dawning brought much discontent to many on board the fleet. Admiral Hawke, wearied of the irresolution of the land commanders, resolved to set sail on his return to England. Orders were given accordingly, and the expedition which had excited so much hopes, and cost, some say, a million of money, returned to Portsmouth.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

OF A SECOND WOUND RECEIVED BY AMYOT BROUGH.

‘AND so you are in urgent need of tidings of your brother, Mrs. Joan Pomfret, and you must needs suggest to your old grandmother to take a journey to London to see how he comports himself in his new character of interesting invalid! Truly I was much astonished at your request; and pride suggested, “Let her go herself, if she needs to know;” but other sentiments interfered, and thus I have made the journey to Queen’s Square, stayed a week, and returned home, and now I take the pen to write to you. I had been in some need of change for some time past—not on account of any bodily ailment, but because I had had naught to divert me for months—no fresh society, no one to tell me the news; therefore this little jaunt was to my liking, and I was not sorry to have a reasonable excuse for it. Though, to be sure, I would not have you let my grandson think that I went to London purposely to see him. He is interesting enough already, being one of the very few who have suffered in this silly business, and he needs not to be made of greater importance still. My daughter Pomfret, always silly in the matter of youths, makes a grievous lamentation over his wound, speaks of his mother’s delicate constitution, and doubtless, in her own mind, has settled the fashion of his coffin, and the shop where she will order her mourning. And now, Joan, I see you turn white, and wring your small dainty hands as in the old days when you repeated your tasks to me, and had not

well committed them to memory. Nay, silly child, his aunt's foolish talk should do a brave man no harm, and Annet is brave, as, indeed, his father's son could scarce fail to be. He will not die this bout, though I do not deny his looks startled me not a little. Doubtless, they mismanage their sick, as they do other concerns, in the wars. He can tell but little of his wound, remembers naught about it, and cares little to speak of it. His friend, Captain Pownal, tells my daughter Poudret that he lost much blood from the bullet in his side, and sustained some injury to the head. He has a weary look, as of one who does not greatly desire to live; but of that I will cure him when he comes to stay with me, as I intend he shall shortly. The house in Queen's Square, being much frequented by men who talk politics, is not a fitting place for an invalid. Neither is it well for him to hear all the abuse and ridicule of those whom the ill-success of this expedition has provoked. He can, of course, think of nothing but the inquiry that is going forward, and is ever craving to hear all that is said by my merry nation across the Channel. That their mirth is very bitter to him I saw too plainly, inasmuch as he could scarce contain his vexation when I jested with him; he has, as you know full well, a fiery temper, though I do admit he has now attained a surprising mastery over it. I warrant I shall test it somewhat when I have him to myself; but that cannot be for some days, as he is promised to pass a while at Greenwich with his much-adored colonel, and I would not interfere with a scheme which will bring him so much pleasure.

And now have I done your bidding, Joan, with regard to your brother; but concerning that other question in your letter, I am at a loss how to answer it. What said Primrose when she heard her old friend was like to die? I think she said nothing. The stern old mother hoped he might yet recover, and spoke in civil terms of her

respect for his character; but Primrose held her peace—neither could I see her face, she being behind my chair. Twice since then she has asked for news of him, but if much interested, she has skill in concealing it, for I can discover no trepidousness nor vast disquietude. Indeed, I would that all the blood that he has lost, had carried with it some of Amyot's love for this girl, since I see small signs that she returns it; but I believe he is as set on his purpose as ever, to judge from the eagerness with which he asked for news of her. It is a silly lad, but obstinacy ever ran in the Brough blood, as I have heard your father say many a time.

'And now, granddaughter, having replied to your questions, I may bring my writing to a close, assuring you that when once I have him at Westerham, your brother shall be diverted from his present melancholy, and made sound and strong to fight his country's battles; the more so that I am well convinced that, unless Mr. Pitt can put some of his own spirit into the generals he sends forth to fight, my country will suffer little from their knavish tricks. The Duke of Cumberland has come back, as doubtless you have heard. What think you of his famous Convention at Closter Seven? It is said he has promised not to command more armies against the French, and also for his army that it shall not again presume to front the enemy. Most diverting truly, it is worth while to come to London to find so much cause for amusement; but my son-in-law looks wondrous grave, and Amyot's heavy brows frown portentously, so I am forced to laugh quietly when the talk runs on this matter.'

So wrote Mrs. Darley in reply to Joan's anxious inquiries after her brother, who, having been with some difficulty removed to London on the arrival of the fleet at Portsmouth, was now on sick leave at his uncle's house in Queen's Square. The old lady had been much shocked



at his appearance, and was eager to have the nursing of him; but it was long before he was pronounced well enough to dispense with the constant attendance of surgeons, and a languor, quite new to him, had crept over him, making him much disinclined to consent to any move.

And so the change to Westerham was deferred, much to the wrath of Mrs. Darley, who had set her heart on undertaking the task of bringing her grandson back to life, and was most unwilling that anyone else should have the credit of his cure. Secretly, Amyot had a further reason for delay—of which more anon. To his grandmother he only wrote that he felt too weary and weak to go anywhere, and she must excuse him; and then he resigned himself to some dismal forebodings, which his aunt's not very cheerful discourse suggested, and which each day grew stronger and took more definite form.

From this state of depression he was roused at length by a sudden visit from Colonel Wolfe, who had come to remind him of his engagement to pass a few days at Blackheath; but who, finding out in a few moments the point of melancholy to which Amyot had sunk, declared that there was no time like the present, and carried him off then and there to the house where he was staying with his parents, which, he assured Mrs. Pomfret, was on one of the finest spots near London—so placed as to enjoy the best of air, and the finest of views.

Was it the air, or was it the society of that cheery, but tender-hearted friend, Amyot cared not to inquire; but, whichever it was, that short sojourn at the house in Chesterfield Walk drove away the dark phantoms which weakness had brought; life became once more a thing to be desired, full of high purposes and ardent longings.

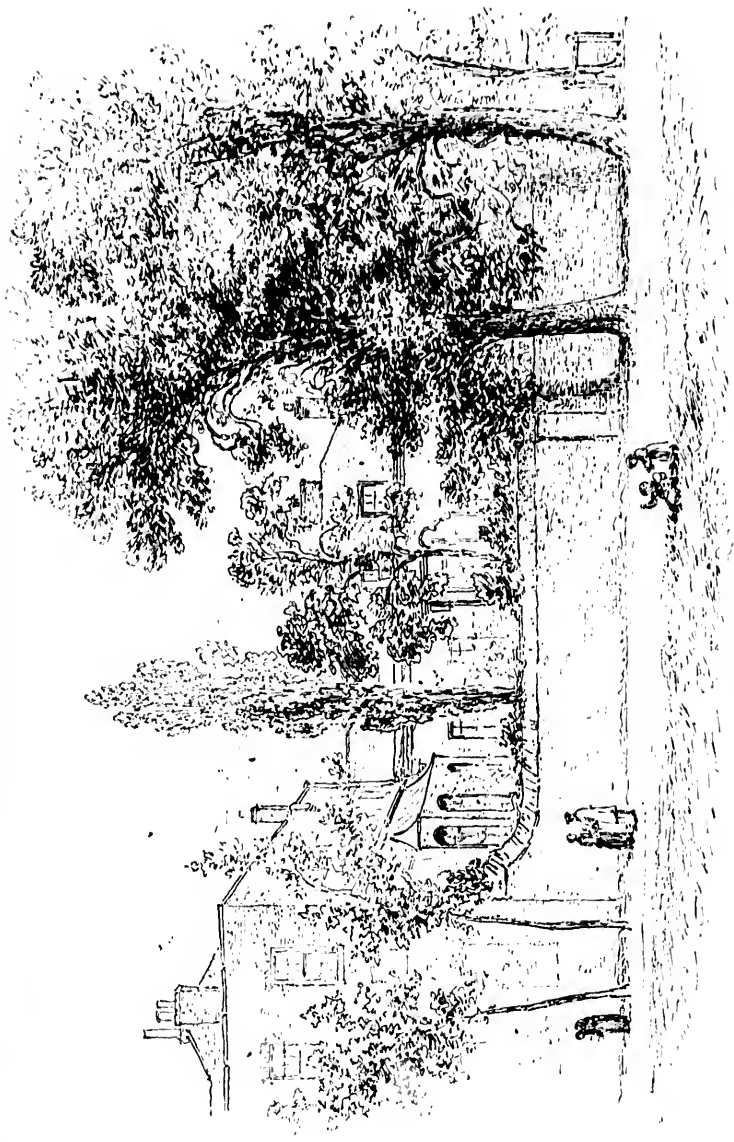
At first it was strange to Amyot to hear his friend's foibles, hitherto quite sacred in his eyes, noticed and remarked upon, and not unfrequently censured by the

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CHESTERFIELD WALK, LACKHEATH.

handsome old lady, his mother ; for, perfect in his eyes, Amyot had never imagined that anyone could discover aught to blame in James Wolfe. She must be hard to please indeed, if she was not satisfied with such a son—so dutiful and tender, so solicitous for her comfort, so ardent in his admiration of both her and his father. Something of this surprise, James Wolfe seemed to read in his young friend's countenance, and once, when alone, he remarked suddenly :

' You wonder what my mother means, Amyot. She has always been good enough to tell me plainly of my failings, and my vehemence and impetuosity have often called forth her censure ; yet, though she may not think it, I do believe I never meant to vex her.'

Then, as if to prevent any reply, he turned to speak of other subjects, which he naturally supposed more interesting to Amyot—when the latter would be fit for service again, of the prospect of taking a share in the next campaign in America, of the peace signed at Stade, of the last doings of the King of Prussia ; and then they touched on the inquiry lately held concerning the Rochefort expedition. James Wolfe had been summoned to give his opinion, and had owned that he thought more might have been done ; yet, to Amyot, he was careful to speak moderately, asking if he was not contented with the scars he had brought home, and what more he desired ?

' And you will go to Westerham now, if you really are determined to leave us so soon,' he added, when Amyot spoke of departure. ' Yes ; Westerham is better for you than Queen's Square—I mean no disrespect to Mrs. Pomfret when I say that were I ill, Mrs. Darley's care would soonest cure me—I do not wonder you had grown melancholy in London. And now I think of it, what is the latest news of Captain Guy Pomfret ?'

' None for a long while. Some time ago a strange

thing happened, which they have never understood. A singular-looking man, a foreigner, called one day at the house in Queen's Square, and asked for the Rev. Arnold Pomfret. My brother-in-law was, of course, not there, being at his parish, and the servant told him so; whereupon the fellow swore a good deal, and handed in a packet, which he requested might be sent to Arnold. It was despatched, and when opened, was found to contain a watch and some rings, which my aunt affirms were Guy's; but there was no line in the packet to say whence they came, or what it meant. My uncle thinks his son is dead, but my aunt entirely refuses to believe it—thinks that the ruffian who left the packet had stolen the things, and for some reason repented, and wished to restore them.'

'A strange piece of business. And no further tidings have ever been received from Captain Guy himself?'

'None whatever. My grandmother thinks he will reappear some day; but I doubt it, and think he must be dead.'

'Most likely. Well, if I chance to come down to Westerham, as I am always desiring to do, having very much-esteemed friends in the family at Squerries Court, I shall look to see you in much sounder health and spirits than at present. Mrs. Darley has no tolerance of low spirits, she once told me.'

'But my spirits are first-rate now.'

The young colonel shook his head.

'I know your case. You'll have many fits of vapours yet. And, remember this: a soldier *must* have good spirits; but a small amount of health will content me, so long as a man has good spirits—that we cannot dispense with—therefore, shake off the gloom that besets you, for England will want you yet. Don't fancy it is time to die until you have done her some good service.'

And his friend proved right in his surmise, the fits of

vapours, as he called them, recurred many times during the months which followed, and Mrs. Darley found the cure by no means so easy or so rapid as she had expected. It had not occurred to her that by bringing Amyot into the near neighbourhood of his lady love, other causes of depression might be produced. If she had considered the matter from that point of view at all, she had probably concluded that a lengthened sojourn in each other's near vicinity would result in the happiest consequences. A wounded officer must needs be interesting, she thought, as she recalled her own girlhood, her courtship, and gay officer bridegroom.

But sickness and weakness, and the strange propensity to visions and fancies which still clove to Amyot, did not help him in his wooing.

Was Primrose merry and unrestrained as of old? Then it was plain she never thought of him as a lover. Was she silent and embarrassed? No doubt she was thinking of Lance. Was she sympathetic in his sufferings? She looked upon him as one like to die, whom all the world must pity. In her society he grew more and more hopeless, yet ever more desperately in love. Every evening he told himself that he was a fool to have come to Westerham, that he must go away, and never see her again. Every morning, he found some new pretext for lingering there.

Such being the case, it was scarcely to be called marvellous that the cure which Mrs. Darley had foretold was not so rapid as she had expected, and before long the good lady grew impatient.

'Amyot Brough,' she said, with some asperity, 'it seems to me you make small effort to be well. Tell me, do you take your doses of physic as ordered by your London doctors? Yes, you say. Then they must be of little worth, as it appears to me. But tell me, further, when you go to bed, do you address yourself to sleep, or

do you lie awake? There is much mischief done by idly tossing on a bed instead of sleeping. And your eyes have a weary look about them.'

Amyot, thus catechised, confessed that he was somewhat addicted to tossing idly in his bed, though, as he averred, he knew not why.

'Then I will tell you. It is a foolish habit to which some are greatly given of permitting the thoughts to wander, which leads to this bad habit. Train thy thoughts, Amyot; keep them well in hand, as thou wouldst a masterful horse, and then, by the grace of God, thou wilt sleep. And, to another matter—thy food. I like not to harass people in my house about what they eat and drink; but thou art my grandson, and a sick man. So I must prescribe for thee. Doddridge tells me you ate far more heartily when a lad than now, when thou art a man of six feet and some inches. It seems to him strange, and to me unreasonable. Therefore, I pray thee, mend thy ways in this respect also.'

'Nay, madam; a growing lad needs more food than a man.'

'Tush! do my bidding, and thou wilt recover thyself. But another matter. Amyot Brough, I grieve much to see thou cherishest thy old folly for Primrose Solmes. Nay, do not interrupt me; let me have my say out. I know what thou wouldst say: that thou canst not help it; but I tell thee that thou must find a help for it, one way or another. How long is this dream of thine to go on marring thy life? I pray thee, tell me, grandson, hast thou ever plainly asked the maiden to be thy wife?'

'Madam, where would be the use?'

'Answer me. Hast thou ever told thy love, and sought hers in return?'

'Not precisely; but I do believe she knows it.'

'Amyot Brough! you try my patience sorely. Will you do my bidding in this matter?'

‘Most gladly, if I can, dear madam.’

‘If! The whole story rests on ifs!—I hate such uncertainties. Go to Primrose, tell her thy love-tale, and ask her to be thy wife. Then we shall know how we stand.’

‘But, grandmother, she is betrothed to Launcelot Kirkbride.’

Mrs. Darley rapped the table with her fan.

‘Small marvel is it that your fine expedition failed to take Rochefort,’ she said scornfully, ‘or that you came back wounded like to die, having gained nothing by it. Will you ever learn wisdom?’

Amyot made no reply, and she continued :

‘In this matter I am determined, Amyot Brough ; find out thy fate for thyself, or I will do it for thee, and Primrose shall laugh at thy cowardice all the rest of her life.’

‘It is no lack of courage, madam ; but it seems to me dishonourable to take profit by my old schoolfellow’s misfortunes.’

‘Dishonourable ! and wherein ? I say to thee, Amyot, find out if Primrose be attached to this man, or if indeed it is true that she be in any way pledged to him ; and if, as I judge, there be no such barrier in thy way, tell thine own tale, and see what she says to thee.’

‘But, madam, you forget that I heard of her pledge to him from her own lips.’

‘Tush ! that childish talk again ! Take it for granted that they have changed their minds, and urge thy own suit boldly. Then, if she says thee nay, take thy fate bravely and like a man ; but have done with this hesitation. Had thy father been of thy mould, my daughter had never been his wife.’

Amyot received this last thrust in silence ; which forbearance was not a little surprising to the old lady.

‘Weakness makes him marvellously meek,’ she thought

to herself ; and looking sharply at him as he sat half lying in the window-seat, her heart smote her as she marked the look of deep depression on his pallid face.

She gathered together some papers with which she had been busying herself when the conversation began, and prepared to leave the room.

Amyot, seeing this, roused himself from his abstraction, and sprang up to open the door for her.

She smiled as she passed him, and said :

'Bend thy tall head, boy, and kiss me, and say thou wilt follow my advice. I tell thee, I shall live to see Primrose thy wife.'

'Grandmother, that hope, small as it is, is my life. If I speak now, and she will not listen——'

'If, again ! I tell thee, Amyot, she will listen.'

'I think not.'

'Think no more about it, but go and try.'

And with these words she left him ; and Amyot, hesitating for one minute only, went to know his fate.

It was market-day in the little Kentish town, and as Amyot walked slowly down the street, in no very happy and contented mood, the cheerful bustle chafed his spirit—the jolly, red-faced farmers, who had to all appearance everything that heart could wish ; the lively housewives enjoying the opportunity of friendly gossip with their neighbours ; the young men and maidens exchanging rustic compliments over their baskets, all seemed fortunate compared with himself ; for by no manner of means could he bring himself to believe that any but ill-success would attend the venture he was about to make.

The walk was not long, yet he was tired when he laid his hand on the little gate, and, pushing it open, advanced into the porch. The house-door was ajar, and announcing his approach with a knock, Amyot entered,



to find himself in the midst of a scene of distress : his bright Primrose in tears, while Mrs. Kirkbride, with an open letter in her hand, was looking worried and anxious, and more fretful than usual. What did it mean ?

As he entered, it seemed to Amyot that some words of reproach had been addressed to Primrose, but of this he could not be certain. Of one thing, however, he did feel sure—his coming was not welcome either to Mrs. Kirkbride or Primrose : the latter seemed to shrink back at his approach, and the hand she suffered him to take was cold as a stone.

'Some bad news, surely?' he ventured to say, when the first greetings had been exchanged ; and the inquiry, received at first in silence, was, after a few moments answered in constrained tones by Mrs. Kirkbride.

'Yes, from my eldest son. He is very ill in Canada.'

'Lance very ill?' Amyot replied, as his eyes scanned Primrose's tear-stained face. 'What is it? Does he write himself? May I hear what my old schoolfellow says, Mrs. Kirkbride? I am truly sorry for your distress.'

With some mistrust—and, as he fancied, with some dislike, the stern old woman eyed her visitor : then, glad of a listener, she took up the sheet of paper, and read parts of its contents. Lance told of a long attack of illness, from which the doctor gave him small hopes of recovery ; he felt so bad at times, that he had no great desire to live ; he begged his mother to forget him, and to think no more of their old plans of a meeting.

Then Mrs. Kirkbride made a pause, and cast her eyes further down the page. She was missing something—Lance's message to his affianced bride, no doubt, surmised Amyot—hence her tears. Then Mrs. Kirkbride resumed. Lance was speaking of his new life in Canada ; of his enthusiastic admiration for his leader, the Marquis de

Montcalm ; of the great exploits and still greater projects of the gallant Frenchman ; how beloved he was by the natives, how well he knew how to win their allegiance, and to make use of them for his country's service. Should he live, Lance concluded, Canada should be his home ; but of that, he thought little until he saw how it would go with him.

Mrs. Kirkbride read all with a tearless eye and unfaltering voice, but her face was white, and her lips drawn. Amyot knew her well enough to guess how much she was suffering, and tried once more to express his sorrow and sympathy ; but his words sounded colder than he would fain have had them, for his thoughts were all astray, and no one seemed much to care what he said.

'It will not be long before he writes again, I trust,' were his concluding words ; and Mrs. Kirkbride assented, saying :

'Yes, or some one for him ;' and again her eyes fell with cold severity on the still weeping Primrose, and she said no more.

Amyot felt indignant.

'She might try to comfort Primrose,' he said to himself ; 'for of course her trial is the worst, after all,' and then he found himself wondering whether he could say anything to console the young girl, and asking himself whether she would take it amiss if he made the attempt.

It was hard, with those stern eyes watching their every movement ; but after a while Primrose slipped away, and before long Amyot found his way to her side in the garden. She had dried her tears, but it was manifest they were but just restrained, and that an unguarded word would make them flow again ; and Amyot, watching her quivering lip, felt afraid to speak.

'You must hope,' he said at last. 'Men who have been strong are apt to think they are going to die with small

reason. I know that well enough, Primrose, from my own case. Lance is, perhaps, by this time, well again.'

'I think it is very likely,' she said; 'but it is natural his mother should be anxious, only it is hard to bear, when anxiety makes her unjust. You look surprised, Captain Brough. I thought you heard her words when you came in. No! oh, then, it does not signify. You thought my vexation was all for Lance. Oh, well, let it be so!'

'I thought it but natural that you should be grieved for him,' Amyot replied, puzzled at her indifferent tone and manner; and Primrose replied:

'Well, so I am.'

'But not too deeply, as it seems to me. Primrose, will it offend you greatly if I venture to ask an old question once again? I pray you believe me it is not idle curiosity that drives me to do so, but another purpose which I will explain hereafter.'

'And this old question?' said Primrose gravely, retreating to some distance from him, as she cast a frightened glance towards the cottage window; and Amyot replied:

'You will not think me curious when I beg you to tell me how stands the matter between you and Lance. Nay, Primrose,' he added earnestly, catching her hand as she was turning away; 'forgive me if I vex you, but bear with me, and let me know.'

'How can it concern you, Captain Brough? and it does vex me. I do not care to speak of the matter. Let me go—my mother should not be left.'

'One minute only. Primrose, it does concern me; surely you know why! If Lance is to you but a dearly beloved brother—if, as some have thought, you are no longer pledged to him, then I would ask you, may the dream of *my* life be realised? Will you try to think of me as, for long years past, I have thought of you?—will you try to love me, Primrose?'

'Captain Brough?' said Primrose, turning very white, 'it cannot be! Oh! I thought I was to you but an old friend and playfellow. I thought—but never mind what I thought—only I pray you say no more of this—it cannot be!'

Amyot's face grew mournful almost to sternness.

'Is it so certain then?' he asked. 'If it be not uncourteous, I would pray to know the reason why it is so certain. Since you do not altogether dislike me, might you not some day learn to love me? It seems to me that my love is such, that it will be content with but small return. Primrose, is it altogether impossible?'

She bowed her head, and her lips, rather than her voice, replied:

'It cannot be!'

'And the reason? I may not know the reason?'

The young girl raised her head with an effort at composure, and replied, with some impatience:

'Is it truly so hard for a man to believe that a woman does not love him? Must one say so plainly? Truly, Captain Brough, you force me to be monstrous uncivil. I beg you to receive my assurance that this can never be; and say no more about the matter. My mother is calling, I must needs go.'

She curtsied to him, and fled into the house, while Amyot, feeling his worst presages to be more than realised, went slowly down the lane towards the village. But before he had gone far, the sound of running feet behind him caused him to turn his head. It was Primrose, with a letter in her hand. The paleness had passed from her cheek, and it was a blushing face that looked up at him as she said:

'This letter came enclosed in my mother's this morning, with a request that it should be forwarded. My mother thinks that you will know best where it should be sent, whether to Queen's Square, as directed, or to Swinford; may we beg you to see to it?'

Amyot took the letter, addressed to the Rev. Arnold Pomfret, with some surprise, replying :

'My brother-in-law is at Swinford ; it will be best to send it there. Yes, Miss Primrose, I will take charge of it ;' he was turning away, when she stayed him with an entreating look.

'I have something to confess,' she said. 'My mother had vexed me much by some unjust suspicions this morning. It is small excuse for ill-temper, I know, to plead that one has been provoked, yet, Captain Brough, as my conscience tells me that I spoke ungraciously to you just now, I would fain discover some excuse while I pray you to forgive me for my rudeness. You did me much honour, and while I cannot consent to your wish, it grieves me to remember that I parted from my old friend unkindly.'

'Primrose !' the young man burst forth vehemently ; but she was gone, and there was nothing left for him but to return home, and confess the failure of his wooing.

Mrs. Darley had a mind to know all, being firmly convinced that could she draw from her grandson a circumstantial account of the whole transaction, she should be able to tell him wherein he had failed ; but Amyot was not communicative.

'It was as I expected, madam,' he had replied to her inquiries. 'She does not care for me.' And then he would fain have dropped the subject, but his grandmother would not permit it.

'You had made up your mind beforehand, and took your answer before she had well spoken it, I warrant you, silly boy. What, do you not know that many a maiden's "Nay" means "Yea" ? She only waits to be asked a second time. Your Primrose has a sour old mother, who keeps her in mortal dread of doing the wrong thing. Was she not listening at the keyhole, think you ?'

'Nay, madam, I spoke in the garden.'

'Well, she was weeding behind some bush, and Primrose knew it.'

'Mrs. Kirkbride was in the parlour.'

'Thou shouldst have seen her further off; and Primrose ran after you with the letter—thou mightest, at least, have learned the truth then.'

'She stayed but one minute, and then ran away.'

'And why did you let her? Amyot, thou art the most thick-witted swain that ever went a-wooing. I shall have to do it for thee yet. But for the present, I counsel thee to believe it is as thou sayest, and so think no more of her. Take thy trouble with both hands, crush it, and make an end of it.'

'Not so easy, when you tell me that but for my blundering I might have succeeded; but I must try.' He paced the room restlessly, then, stopping suddenly in front of Mrs. Darley's chair, said: 'Will it seem uncourteous to you, madam, if I leave you somewhat suddenly? My sister is urgent upon me to visit her, and it might be wiser to quit Westerham for the present.'

'Doubtless you will be best away. You can be the bearer of Arnold's letter instead of sending it by the post; but I would not have you stay long at Swinford, which is an unwholesome place, and certain to feed the vapours. I intend shortly to visit Bath; you can join me there, and, if possible, induce Joan to come thither also with her little daughter. The worthy priest will stay among his flock—black sheep though they be, he loves them better than the gay world.'

And in this manner was it settled; and the next morning saw Amyot riding towards London *en route* for Swinford. He must needs pass the cottage on his road, and as he drew near, he saw the flutter of Primrose's dress as she stood at the door feeding her fowls.

She saw him, too, and hesitated for a moment whether or not to retreat into the house until he had passed by.

On second thoughts she contented herself with appearing much engrossed by her feathered family, and scarcely looked up as he drew near. He would surely pass, she thought; but no; he checked his horse, and lingered for a minute to wish her good morning, and to beg her kindly to visit his grandmother in his absence, as rheumatic pains detained her much within the house, and she was wont to complain of dulness.

Primrose promised, without raising her eyes to his face, and he continued :

‘Tell your mother that I am going to Swinford immediately, and will deliver Lance’s letter to Arnold Pomfret without delay; and if it contains aught of interest to Mrs. Kirkbride I will not fail to write her word.’

He raised his hat, remounted his horse, and rode slowly away; while Primrose, throwing hastily the rest of the corn to the fowls, ran indoors and up to her little chamber, where she drew the bolt of the door and sat down to think.

‘How gently he spoke; he cannot be angry with me,’ she said to herself. ‘I am glad of that; and, perhaps, it is not a great disappointment after all. How I wish I could remember exactly the words I used. I thought I had wounded him so deeply; he looked so grieved and vexed. Did I say I could not love him, or only that it could not be? Oh, mother, why are you so hard on me? Surely, it were no great sin to love Amyot Brough, since I cannot love Lance; but she thinks I could if I would. She cannot truly believe, as she is wont to say, that I despise Lance because he is poor, and because I have a little money of my own. Nor can she think, as she hinted yesterday, that I am weary of the life I lead with her. Oh, mother, trouble has changed you sadly, that you could think so meanly of me!’ And then, as even harsher words recurred to her memory, Primrose hid her burning face in her hands, and murmured, ‘Is it, can

it be, true that I have been forward and unmaidenly? We had known each other so long, it seemed so natural to laugh and jest with him. Shall I ever dare to jest with anyone again? But he is gone; that will be a rest. Mother will forget her suspicions while he is absent; and after what passed yesterday we shall never be too much at ease with each other again. Heigh-ho! I wish I could remember the words I used to him yesterday. Did I say I could not love him? But what is that?—my mother calling, and I have Amyot's message to deliver! She can scarce bear to hear his name!

‘Primrose, come down; here is a note from Mrs. Darley which concerns you more than me; read it, and send your answer by the lad who brought it.’

And Primrose read:

‘Will you, dear madam, lend me your daughter for a short time this afternoon? My grandson has left me to visit his sister, and I am lonesome, and would gladly have some lively discourse. I am much concerned to hear of your ill news from Canada: the uncertainty of letters and the long distance must render such anxiety doubly hard to bear. May God in His mercy restore your son.’

‘Yours, in true sympathy,

‘P. DARLEY.’

‘Shall I go, mother, or do you need me?’ Primrose asked, in some fear and trembling, for what, she thought, might not that keen-sighted old lady have discovered?

But Mrs. Kirkbride deciding that she was bound to go when asked in such a civil fashion, she had no objection to urge, and in due time found herself in Mrs. Darley's oak parlour drinking tea with her old friend and her aged companion, Miss Johnstone, now almost stone deaf and totally blind. It was not until the latter had fallen into a doze in her elbow-chair that any discourse of much



interest passed between Mrs. Darley and her young favourite, and Primrose had quite forgotten her fears in amusement at the old lady's tales of her youthful days, and playful sallies concerning the universal corruption of morals and manners as shown by the idle ways of the youthful generation, when a sudden silence fell upon both, and then the old lady, in quite a different manner, asked abruptly why Primrose had been so little to see her of late—was she tired of her old friend?

'Indeed, no!' the young girl replied; 'sometimes I fear lest I come too often, madam.'

'Primrose, child!' said the old lady gravely; 'I trust you always speak the truth.'

'I hope so, madam; but why do you doubt it?'

'Why, but because, since you have not been inside this house for more than a month, you can scarce think you come too often. Tell me, is there no other reason that has kept you away? That tall, blundering grandson of mine, has he by any chance offended or troubled you? If so, let me know; those who stay in my house must needs learn manners.'

'Captain Brough?' said Primrose, with some embarrassment. 'Nay, madam; he is always kind and friendly.'

'Kind he means to be, but blundering he is, and it is small marvel to me that while such a watch-dog guarded my premises you dared not cross the threshold. Come, Primrose, make no pretence—tell me all his awkward ways; then shall I have matter for many a lecture these long evenings, when conversation is apt to be tedious, seeing we are not all blessed with the knowledge of words possessed by Dr. Samuel Johnson.'

'But, dear madam, Captain Brough is my old friend! I have no complaints to make of him!'

'None whatever? I am much disappointed. I looked to hear of sundry breaches of all rules of politeness, since

he owned to me that he was out of favour with you, though he would not tell me wherefore. Come, tell the old woman what he has done to vex you? Old friends should not fall out without cause.'

'Indeed, he has done nothing to vex me. He is always kind and gentle.'

'Is he? but you do not like him?'

'Oh, yes! I like him very much. I have always liked him. Dear madam, why do you doubt it?'

'Primrose, I am a very inquisitive old woman, and for the most part I know my children's troubles—it is not to my credit, and perhaps not for their comfort, but it is my way, and I am too old to mend. I have pryed and peeped until I know most of my neighbours' troubles; they give me something to think about when I lie awake with my aches and pains; and when you came in this afternoon, it seemed to me that I read something amiss in your face too. Does it mean that my grandson's trouble—you see, I have heard of that little matter—is some sorrow to you also?'

'Did he—did Captain Brough tell you, madam?' Primrose asked in much confusion.

'Did I not say I know most of their troubles? Yes, he told me something, and I guessed the rest; and now, I ask you: did you speak your mind plainly to him, or has that blundering lad mistook your meaning!'

'I think not, madam. I spoke most plainly; too plainly, I thought, since I fear I wounded him.'

'And you spoke the truth? It was no whimsical "Nay" when your heart said "Yea"? Tell me truly, Primrose, can you not bring yourself to fancy him for your husband? He has his faults, but there is good stuff in him, and he is most obstinately in love with you.'

'I am sorry for it, dear madam, because, as I told him plainly, it could not be.'

'And you will not tell me why? I am but half convinced that you do not love him, Primrose.'

'Dear madam, as it cannot be, surely it were best not to speak of love. I like my old playfellow much, and would be always among his friends. I am disturbed that I have been forced to vex him, and hope he will forgive me, and that you also, will not cease to love me. Dear Joan, too; will her brother tell her, and will she be angry and cast me off? Truly, I think he might be more generous.'

'You speak nothing of the old story of your boy-lover, Lance Kirkbride, Primrose,' said the old lady, after a few minutes' silence; 'tell me, is he the cause why this wish of Amyot's may not be gratified? If so, it would be well to say so plainly.'

Primrose blushed deeply and hesitated.

'I am not likely to marry Lance,' she said at last; 'poor fellow! he is more likely to find a grave than a wife; but even if he live, in his wandering life he wants no wife, and I too, I think, am much inclined to lead a single life.'

'She has baffled me so far,' said Mrs. Darley to herself, as Primrose departed, 'but I am not so easily discomfited; I will know the whole truth before I have done. Shall I try the old mother next? Nay, Amyot does not deserve the treatment he would receive at her hands. A single life, indeed—that child to be an old miss!—I like the thought amazingly.'

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### IN WHICH A LETTER ARRIVES.

MRS. DARLEY had been right in her surmise that the Rev. Arnold Pomfret would prefer his life among his black sheep to the gay world of Bath; but so firmly impressed was he with the conviction that the climate of Swinford was unfit for his wife and child, that he gladly acquiesced in the old lady's request that Joan might join her during her stay there.

To Bath, therefore, Joan came with her babe, now a sprightly laughing child of twelve months old, attended by a little country maid who acted as nursemaid, and escorted by her brother, still much of an invalid, and therefore still on sick-leave from his regiment.

They found the old lady already established with her feeble companion and maid and man in comfortable rooms in Pulteney Street, and eagerly looking out for their arrival, fairly tired to death of her own company, since poor Miss Johnstone grew every day more silent and more deaf.

'She hears nothing I say, and she never speaks; but, poor thing! truly she never had anything worth hearing to say, so it is wisdom to be silent,' the old lady said. 'But what a hateful old chatterbox I grow, Joan. Child, I am right glad to have thee, but my pains make me cross-grained; you will have much to bear.'

Joan declared that she was prepared; her grandmothers scoldings were excellent medicine, and always did her

good! Whereupon Mrs. Darley lost no time in launching forth:

'Thy child is too noisy, Joan; thou must check such riotous spirits; and remember, it is a girl!'

Joan, well on her guard to receive reproof meekly, agreed that the child was too noisy.

'And thou must teach the girl to treat her with respect, else she will learn not to respect herself. Thou art too easy a mistress, Joan.'

And Joan submitted. Her husband told her so, she said.

'And where hast thou left all thy colour? Think you I will let my friends here see my granddaughter looking thus pinched and sickly? That husband of thine, has he no eyes in his head? And, Joan, art thou nothing of a nurse? I sent thy brother to thee with some misgivings, it is true, but I little thought that after a month's stay I should find him worse, rather than better. What hast thou been doing to him?'

'We have done our best for him, madam, and yet I grieve to say he is no better. It is the wound still pains him, and the doctors tell him that so it will be for some time to come. He went to London last week, seeking leave to return to his duties, and most of all to go with the troops starting for America; but all he got was a most positive refusal, and he came back most grievously disappointed.'

'He thought to cure one wound by another; it is like him,' Mrs. Darley replied. 'But, Joan, I pray you, did he see my daughter, Pomfret?'

'Yes, surely, and very sadly he found her; she takes no interest in anything, and is constantly talking of poor Guy.'

'She is a marvellous strange perso; one would have thought his name would never pass her lips again. I can but shudder when I think of him.'

'Ah! but my mother-in-law has a power of forgetting which is altogether wonderful. When my husband carried that doleful letter to London, wondering much how he should contrive to break the news to her without causing her instant death, she paid no attention to the manner of her son's departure—was in nowise shocked that he had passed by his own act into another world—but spoke only of his many virtues: bidding Arnold remember how fine a gentleman he always was, how complete in all graces, how nice in his taste in dress, how handsome, how merry! Surely it must have greatly comforted her to be able to think, as she told Arnold, that he had scarcely left his like behind him.'

'Poor silly woman! Well, she has no more sons to spoil, so let her deceive herself as she will. Mr. Pomfret has more sense. How did he bear the tidings?'

'He was much broken down by it; wished he had seen the writer of the letter when he called months ago in Queen's Square; longed for more particulars, clinging to the hope that Guy was not in his senses when he did the fearful deed—which, indeed, we all hope; but who can say?'

'Has anyone written to this Mr. Kirkbride, and asked for more particular information? Though he was compelled to write to Arnold by the thought that he had not fulfilled his promise to Guy, and that he might die without doing so, still he was not dead, as far as his mother knew, a week ago. Nor do I hear anything that inclines me to think he is like to die. They have had a sharp winter and much scarcity of food, and he has had fever; but that is all.'

'Arnold wrote at once, but has heard no more, and Amyot, who knows something of this man, thinks it scarcely likely he will reply. How strange that this Lance Kirkbride, of whom we have heard so much, should have met with poor Guy, and been bidden by him to tell us of his death!'

'What is the man doing in America? Can you tell me that, Joan?'

'No. The three brothers, having been concerned in the Rebellion, left the country when it was at an end. One went to India, and is growing rich, Amyot thinks: he avoids wars, but will doubtless profit by all the success that has attended our arms. But of Lance, Primrose's betrothed, Amyot cares not to speak; and when I asked what he was doing in America, he made no reply. You know his way, madam—when he knows something which he wishes not to tell, he answers nothing.'

'A very ugly way. I wonder that you should bear with it.'

'Nay; I can take much from Amyot, dear madam; he has had much to bear, and has been marvellous patient. I could have wept to see him when he returned from London so bitterly disappointed that he might not go with the forces to Canada, finding it so hard to rest quiet and be patient, and yet withal so wearied out with his journey that, from sheer exhaustion and heart-sickness too, he could scarce keep from tears as he answered my questions. Colonel Wolfe being about to start, and all his friends full of high hopes, feeling that with Mr. Pitt at the head of affairs England would at last rise to her proper place, it was so hard, he said, to be shut out of all share in the expedition. For Amyot loves his country, madam, and has keenly felt the disgrace that has of late attended our arms.'

'Ay, no doubt, we all like success. And so he thinks that we are going to make the gentlemen in New France shake in their shoes? If I know anything about the matter, M. de Montcalm is not much addicted to shaking; and he has already discovered, so a friend of mine told me, that the English are a very cautious people.'

'Amyot says Mr. Pitt is not over-cautious, and that in this expedition it is noticed that new commanders have

been appointed. Mr. Pitt, my brother says, has resolved to teach Englishmen what they can do. You must own, dear madam, that in India the French have not had it their own way.'

'Tush! the French are kept so busy with that mischievous King of Prussia, that M. Dupleix was ill-supported, else had he carried out his grand plan, and India had become another new France; but what do women know of these things, Joan? I warrant we are talking folly.'

But, though she spoke thus, no one could have been more keenly interested in all public questions than was Mrs. Darley.

'We fight their battles over again, I and my grandson,' she remarked, when some one observed of how martial spirit she was. 'It does him good, and is a great diversion to me. In truth, I should have been dead long ago if I had not been kept supplied with excitement by the pranks of this mad King of Prussia. England is such a dull place of residence. Mr. Pitt might do something to keep us supplied with conversation, if he were not so often laid up with the gout. I am glad he has the sense to pay the Prussian King to provide us with entertainment in his stead.'

'Why, grandmother, would you think it a matter for rejoicing when the King of Prussia gains a victory over your own people?' Joan inquired innocently.

Whereat Amyot laughed, saying:

'My grandmother cares little whether it is a victory or a defeat, so long as something befalls. It is these unlucky trips to the coast of France, where we do nothing but inspect the coast and come home and report, which excite her indignation.'

And the old lady replied:

'To be sure, to be sure! Inaction is and always has been a grievous affliction to me; as may plainly be seen



by my impatience of these pains which tie my feet together and hinder my turning my head. Amyot, too, likes not idleness—it is a pity when a man has but one trade. I counsel thee, Amyot, to seek out some of those famous bookmakers, and study their business. Didst thou not tell me thou hadst seen the writer of those tales which have rendered folks so wild with ecstacy? What are they called?—"Clarissa Harlowe?" "Sir Charles Grandison"—suppose thou take lessons of him, and set thyself to write a book?—though perchance a more straightforward task than a tale will suit thee better, such as Dr. Samuel Johnson's dictionary making.'

'Madam, my dictionary would be but a small one, and would bring me into more disrepute than my present trade is like to do. Jack Pownal can never cease wondering by what blunder I fell in with a wound at Aix, and is sure I must have gone out of my way to seek it; he would die of laughter did I take to the pen. Nevertheless, you are right, madam, and I would give much to have somewhat to do.'

This, though often checked, was the cry ever on Amyot's lips. The diversions of the gay world at Bath failed to amuse him: the promenades in the pump-rooms, the evening assemblies, tired him, and he wearied of them long before his more energetic grandmother, and none were so glad as he when the time fixed for their departure drew near, and he could again seek leave to rejoin the army.

The next few months were spent by him in London, but in August he again appeared at Swinford, quite recovered, as he reported, and ready for active service. Joan doubted, but as her brother could quote medical authority for his assertion, she could only sigh, and hope that as the campaign for the year was nearly closed, he would still have some months to recruit. He came laden with news, marvelling much how they could live in such

an outlandish place that they should have heard of neither of the two great events of the day, the capture of Cherbourg by Admiral Howe, or the news, more interesting to him, of the taking of Louisburg in Cape Breton.

'I have burst upon the village like a shell, startling the good people out of their senses; but they are English enough to like victories, though they have no notion whether they were gained in the next village or in the moon,' he said, ere he had been in the house five minutes. 'Does the vicar never read the *Gazettes*, Joan?' (Arnold was not present.) 'It is a sin and a shame!'

'Sometimes,' Joan replied. 'Dear brother, I am glad; but forget your wars for the moment, and kiss your niece. See, she is stretching out her arms to you.'

Amyot complied, took the little one, and raised her high above his head; which action elicited shrieks of delight from little Peace, whose boisterous spirits were a great perplexity to her even-tempered mother, Joan being at times inclined to think there was some naughtiness in so much merriment.

But Amyot liked the din, as he called it, and baby, perceiving sympathy in his gestures, clutched his hair, and cried 'More, more!' whenever he showed symptoms of relapsing into a quieter style of play.

'It is of no use saying "Hush, hush!" Joan; let her screech—what harm does it do? She's glad to see her uncle, and she's shouting, "Hurrah for old England!" That's it, baby, try again—hurrah!' And the little one, kicking and screaming, imitated the sound in her shrillest key.

'Now I am going down to the church to ring the bells,' said Amyot. 'Where's Arnold? Will he be much surprised, Joan, or is he too absorbed in other matters to hear the bells? Maybe he will fancy it's Sunday, and rush to church and begin to preach. I will give him a subject which it seems to me he has much neglected.'

And what is that ?'

'Patriotism ! why, the people here scarce know that they are English—have no interest in anything outside their farmyards. It is a shame to let them live in such ignorance, when, before long, Englishmen will have their homes on the other side of the Atlantic, and in far-off India too. Arnold should at least teach them to pray for the armies and navies fighting our battles. But I'll settle the account with him, never fear, Joan. What ! must you take the child ? Well, if you will.' And he watched with much amusement while, with quiet resolution, Joan disengaged the little hands which had tightly clutched his coat, and silenced the passionate screams that were beginning to break forth, with a grave 'Hush, Peace, you vex mother !' which brought an awed look on the eager little face, and an abashed drooping of the long eyelashes, as the child controlled herself, and became as calm and quiet as Joan herself could be.

'You have misnamed that child, Joan ; there will be war before there is peace there, I warrant you. But it matters not ; a well fought war brings a lasting peace, and you, at least, will fight well.'

'Hush ! we have no fighting here,' Joan said gravely, as she placed the little one on the floor. 'Now, brother, tell me all your news—or stay, I must order in some refreshment, and see if Arnold is in his room. He will be most glad to hear that you are come.'

Amyot's news was chiefly contained in a long letter from his friend Jack Pownall, now major ; and to save trouble, we insert it here. Right glad was Amyot to have had such prompt information of his old friend's safety, and such sure testimony to the truth of the intelligence of the capture of Louisburg.

'Friend beloved,' wrote Jack Pownal, 'yet though beloved, the most ungrateful and undeserving, how long is

it since I had news of you? What has arrived to you? Have you gone over to the enemy, and sworn eternal hatred to your old friends, or have the ships which carried your longed-for epistles been seized and rifled? Nay, I doubt it. Fie, then! you that are the most idle of men, a most poltroon and cowardly knight! have not even energy enough to put pen to paper to write and tell me how many times you have been to stare at the coast of France, and come back to report how charming it is. Is it that you are jealous of me? *Eh bien!* Amyot Brough, I can well believe it. Had you not put yourself in the way of that unlucky bullet at Aix, you would have learned a thing or two in your profession on this side the ocean.

'Will you have all the details? But I know your greediness—you will have all and something more, and at the end you will say, "What a poor story that fellow makes!" But what to do? I was born to fight, not to write romances, so may you be sure that all I say is most plain and simple truth—that is to say, it is what I saw. Another man may have seen quite contrary things. I cannot help that. But one thing everybody has seen, and that is, that we have taken Louisburg. Do you hear, my boy?—taken Louisburg, on Cape Breton, the key to the St. Lawrence! What may we not do now? General Amherst would like to go on and take Quebec, but the admiral says no. Still, that must be the next business. Will you come and lend a hand? or is the *rôle* of carpet knight so pleasing that you will still let the surgeons have their will with you?

'But, lo! I hear a deafening sound about my ears; it is your sonorous voice, and you are waxing impatient. "Jack tell me all—how did you take the place?" Patience, sweet friend, till I bethink me how the thing has arrived.

'And now, I must confess that since you are not here to carry on your wonted *rôle* of Wolfe-worship, the malady

has singularly attacked myself. I struggle against it, and would fain recall all the rebukes he has dealt out to me in times past, and harden my heart against him; but it is in vain. His voice is music in my ears: I rise each day to do his bidding; I am as enamoured of his example, as proud to run his errands, as if I were his humble slave; and, therefore, when I tell you what has arrived in this most happy adventure, you will not fail to perceive that it is Brigadier Wolfe's exploits that I relate, for of General Amherst's I can tell you nothing extraordinary, not having been in his company.

'But, to the fact, we—that is, the detachment led by Brigadier Wolfe—landed at a little creek called Fresh-water Cove. Our frigates, close behind, kept up a heavy fire, in order to make clear the beach before us. The sea was in a truly unruly condition, the surf most powerful; but the brigadier, can you not figure to yourself his ardour? would not suffer the men to be disheartened: he urged on the rowers, and when, in the end, his boat touched the shore, he sprang through the boiling, foaming waves and led the men—nothing but a cane in his hand—up a steep bit of hill. The men followed as Britons should—they will follow him anywhere. And here, I would call you to notice, Amyot, that Britons will dare anything if only they be well led; it is the leading we have lacked of late. And why, do you ask? Nay, that I cannot rightly explain without preaching a long sermon, which you may as well preach yourself. But, to return. The heavy surf played us some villain tricks; more than one boat was overset, and the crew lost. The French opened fire so soon as we approached; but we charged at a rush, and the skirmish had soon an end—they fled within the walls of the place. Then the general, who had also landed, ordered the guns, stores, and ammunition to be brought up, and the siege began in real earnest. General Amherst invested the place on the land side, and

detached our brigadier with the light infantry and some highlanders to attack the Lighthouse Point battery. It was a task much to his liking. We were at it before dawn, and the French had not enough of notice of our coming to get under arms. The battery was charged and taken with amazing rapidity, and then Wolfe led us on to some lesser works. They, too, were taken at a rush, and their guns at once turned on the town, much to the displeasure of the inhabitants, who, having the wits to perceive we were unpleasant visitors, had the good sense to say we might have their town. So Louisburg was taken on the 26th of July. The place is ours, and the French garrison are to be sent as prisoners of war to England. So, at last, we have done something to wipe out the Minorca stain, and we are not a little content with ourselves.

'As usual, I have come off without a scratch. I am bullet-proof, I do believe. Lord Howe was killed in a skirmish, as one may have told you; his brother, the new earl, is that same Captain Howe who went on our famous expedition to Rochefort, the man who never opens the lips; but he is brave as a lion, all the same. He and our brigadier were marvellous good friends on that same expedition, which, if they had had their will, would have turned out in quite other fashion than it did.

'And now, Amyot Brough, my well beloved, I have told my tail—I pray thee, do I spell that word as should be? I am ever perplexed thereat, and the men here are not entirely to be trusted in such important matters. Write to me speedily, and give me much information relative to all your engagements at home. I take refuge in the long words that are more commodious than those short ones, which spell themselves in such tiresome fashion that one's head turns round only to think of them. But, again I say, write to me, and specially tell me how much money has been spent on these pleasure trips to the coast

of France. I am truly sorry for our brave enemy here, the French general, whose Government is starving him, and ruining him, and telling him that they have full confidence in him that he will abide at his post so long as we leave him place to stand on. He is a brave fellow, according to what men say, and as religious a soul as ever breathed.

‘But I must, it truly is necessary that I terminate my letter. I say nothing to you on a certain subject and a certain lady, because we are always inclined to dispute on that subject, and a dispute in a letter is senseless, above all when the response will not arrive for months. On that point, you know my mind; there is not one woman in the world that is worth the thought you have wasted on your Drury Lane beauty, and by this time I hope well that you have seen your folly. For the rest, I trust all goes well—the fair Mrs. Arnold Pomfret, the grave parson her husband, and, above all, the charming lady at Westerham. If only one could find a wife after her fashion, I would enter the state of matrimony myself, but, in fine, such ladies exist no more. Adieu.

‘Your true friend,

‘JOHN JAMES POWNAL.’

Much of the above Amyot read aloud, but it need scarcely be said that he kept the last paragraph to himself; his sister, however, leaning over his shoulder, caught sight of it, and whispered:

‘Is it so? Have you seen your folly?’

To which inquiry he merely replied by a shake of the head.

She kissed him, and said no more.

‘And do you really hope to take part in the next campaign, if peace is not concluded before next spring?’ Arnold Pomfret asked, recurring to this subject a few days later.

He had, in the meantime, been roused by Amyot to take a more evident interest in the war, and had been brought by the latter to own that he had been deficient in the duty of teaching his flock to think of their fellow-countrymen in arms, and of their country's glory.

'Yes, indeed,' Amyot replied; 'for though our battalion of the 20th has been formed into a new regiment—the 67th—and is likely still to be quartered in England, I hope for an exchange into a regiment going on foreign service; but first I must take a journey to the North.' He looked at Joan, and added gravely, 'It is well to set one's house in order before going to war, and our old lawyer at Penrith has been urging upon me to go there, and see to many little matters. Our old friends Michael and Deborah are desirous to give up the care of the farm, so I must either let or sell the place; which do you counsel, Joan? Then I must see that the old people are comfortably provided with a pension and a cottage to their liking, and there are other matters concerning some cottages which belong to me, which must be settled.'

'It will be pleasant to visit the old place,' Joan replied. 'Shall I ever go there again, I wonder; but, brother, I have a tender feeling for Broughbarrow—I trust you will not sell it; who knows, when peace is made, you may greatly wish to settle there? Surely, if a tenant could be found, it would be best to let it for a few years.'

'I doubt whether I shall ever wish to settle anywhere,' Amyot said somewhat gloomily; 'but the loss of an arm or a leg might compel me to be peaceable for the rest of my days, therefore, Joan, I incline to think as you do about Broughbarrow, and if I do not come back from the wars, you can train up little Peace to make butter and cheese, and send her to live at Broughbarrow.'

'Brother!' said Joan, shivering; 'I wonder I ever rejoiced as I did when you received your commission—yours is a fearful life!'



'Not at all—don't be anxious—I shall come back to plague you yet ; but, as Jack Pownal tells me I have an awkward way of putting myself in the way of bullets, it is wise to leave all in order. I would not have you tormented with business, sweet sister.'

Here Joan's self-command failed her entirely. She laid down the sewing on which she was occupied, and went to gaze out of the window. Arnold Pomfret left the room, and Amyot followed his sister to her retreat, and taking her hand caressingly, said :

'I was a fool, Joan, to speak to you of these matters. I should have told Arnold, but you are so brave, I forgot myself. It is merely the thought of my late ugly wound that so distresses you ; but having come well through that trouble, can you not hope for the future ? And in truth, dear Joan, seeing we are much separated by necessity, and cannot see each other as often as we would, should what you dread come to pass, you must just think of it but as an extraordinary long separation, which must needs come to an end at last, and wait patiently till the joyful meeting sets all right again.'

'We have loved each other, Amyot, as brother and sister seldom do.' Joan sobbed.

'So much the better for us. You have a power of loving which oftentimes surprises me.'

'Nay, Amyot, how could I help it ? Have you ever done aught to vex me ?'

'Much, I should think. There are many years in my life I care not to think of, and many sharp speeches that abide in my memory ; but I do not say forgive me, sweet sister, because I know you have never done aught else. But there is another matter on which I would rather ask your counsel than Arnold's if it will not be painful to you. It is but a trifle. May I speak, and you will not weep ?'

'Ay, surely ; tell me anything.'

'It is but the disposal of some money that has accumulated in the lawyer's hands. I have the wish to buy with it Blencathara House, which is for sale ; and, Joan, will you think it strange, I have not thought to leave it to you or to your children ?'

'Blencathara House ? Oh, it is the old home of the Kirkbrides ! I understand you, brother, and am heartily glad ; but why should you ask me ?'

'Why ? Oh ! because we have no secrets, and you might one day think it strange. But that is all ; and now we will forget our gloomy talk.'

## CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. DARLEY CHANGES HER MODE OF DEALING.

MANY times during the last few years Amyot Brough had told himself that he had lost all affection for the North, and would feel no regret if he never saw his old home again. Nevertheless, when he found himself once more among the rocks and mountains around his birthplace, he became very conscious that these imaginings had been the result of a mistake, and that the love for his native place was as strong as ever. His heart warmed at the sound of the Northern tongue ; and when his old friends lamented that he had nearly lost the Cumberland accent, he felt inclined to resent the remark as a reflection on his character. And though during the last few years the state of the farm had certainly not improved, it seemed so home-like and so entirely his own, that he was glad he had determined not to part with it altogether.

But when he asked himself whether he meant ever to return thither, ever to settle down, as his father had done, so far away from all the din of the world, out of sight and almost out of hearing of all that now seemed life to him, the question brought along with it such a train of doubts and misgivings that it was hard to answer. And with each familiar spot reviving old memories, how was it possible to be rid of these doubts and wonderings ? Every turn, every hill—I had almost said every tree—spoke to him of Primrose, and yet Lance might return; the bells of Penrith church might yet ring for the marriage of these two, so long betrothed; if so, Brough-

barrow could never more be his home. Then, he bitterly told himself, a wandering life, abundant adventure, danger and excitement would alone make existence tolerable, and as he mused over the future, and tried to realise it as spent without the bride of his heart, the gloomy thoughts that had been such frequent visitors since his desperate illness, returned, and he was fain to wish that Jack had not found him, and brought him back to life again. But such a wish was, he well knew, a cowardly one; he was heartily ashamed of it; the breezes of the North were bringing health and strength each day; the next campaign would bring him work to do, work that might perhaps make even him forget the pain of his love story.

And thus revisiting old haunts, reviving old friendships, the days passed quickly by, and the call to action came even sooner than he had hoped. In fact, so slowly did business in that northern world progress in those days of our forefathers, that the two matters which had brought him thither were scarcely entirely arranged when letters reached him which determined him to despatch all with speed and return to the South. One informed him that Colonel Wolfe was in England, much the worse in health for the late campaign, but eager to be again employed. Mrs. Darley also wrote that she begged her grandson would visit her before he returned to his duty, which, she understood, he might now any day be ordered to do; and others reported various rumours with regard to a fresh campaign, which would certainly open early in the coming year.

Did that letter of Mrs. Darley's imply anything of hope? Amyot read it again and again, and could not find an answer to this question. She mentioned no one, only expressed a desire to see him to ascertain the state of his health. 'And yet,' thought the young man, 'surely she would not press me to return to Westerham merely for that reason.' Then he told himself that he was a

fool to hope, and yet he went on hoping, and in a very few days had brought all necessary busines to an end, and was once more on his way to Westerham.

'I heard a door slam as if the wall was coming down,' was his grandmother's greeting to him when he presented himself in her quiet sitting-room, where she sat peacefully knitting, by the side of a huge Christmas fire; I might have guessed it was you, straight from the land of barbarians. I pray you, sir, touch my hand gently—it is not made of iron!'

'Dear madam, I beg your pardon; I think it was the wind, not I, that shut the door: it is rough outside to-night.'

'The wind has put some life into your face; you are better, grandson, than when I saw you last. Yes, you may go to your business again, and try not to make your huge form such a commodious mark for the enemy. We will dispense with the glory of wounds, to be saved the trouble of nursing you.'

'It is unlike you, madam, to urge a soldier to be careful of his own life; my grandfather, as you often say, had more wounds than you could count.'

'Maybe; but I was young then, and had a passion for glory; now I am old, and prefer to be saved all trouble and anxiety. And Joan, too, she makes such a lamentation when any harm befalls you, that for peace' sake I am forced to hope you will come to no ill; and what have you been doing in the North?'

Amyot told her, and the old lady listened, and found much amusement in every trifling incident.

'It would be great sport to me,' she said, 'to see you making pretence to understand the concerns of sheep and cows, the value of land, and such things; but Penrith is too distant for me to make the journey. I must rest content with hearing your relation of what takes place, though when you return from those outlandish regions,

your tongue is apt to retain so much of the brogue, that your narrative is hard to understand.'

'Grandmother,' said the young man, with some confusion and embarrassment, when a short pause in their conversation seemed to permit the introduction of a new subject, 'had you any second reason for desiring me to come to Westerham at the present time, or was it merely that I might pay my duty to yourself—reason enough, to be sure—but still, I fancied your letter had another meaning.'

'Youth is full of fancies,' said the old lady, looking hard at him through her spectacles. 'I wrote nothing of any other purpose. What, Amyot Brough, dost thou imagine that I will permit thee to avoid this place entirely, because once thou hadst an unpleasant day here? No, indeed, I tolerate no such whims and delicacies; thou hadst had time to recover from that small rub, and must now take life as thou findest it.'

'Then you had no thought that I might find Primrose in a different mind?'

'I send thee on no more errands of that sort. Surely, by this time thou hast made up thy mind that she is not for thee? Nay, but did ever such an obstinate being walk this earth before? Well, take thine own way—be as miserable as thou wilt; I truly believe thou lovest thy pain.'

'Nay, madam, I am not miserable, but until she is married to Lance I shall not cease to think of her.'

'She will not be married to Lance, nor to anyone else, so she told me, and I thought her marvellous wise. But hearken, Amyot Brough: thou must needs see Primrose often while thou art here, since she comes daily to read to me, but remember, she has given thee her answer; torment her not again.'

Amyot received this command in silence, and brooded over it, while the old lady watched him furtively with a twinkle in her bright dark eyes, remarking to herself:

'I am in the right way now; these obstinates are hard to guide—at least, if one has a mind to be straightforward; but we shall see, we shall see!' and she rubbed her white hands softly, murmuring, 'I pulled the wrong rein before.'

It was not Mrs. Darley's habit to 'show herself very early in the morning in winter time: 'It is a time when we exist—we do not live—therefore, why make the days longer than need be?' she was wont to say. Amyot had therefore some solitary hours the next day, which he spent in laying to heart the advice or command delivered to him the night before, with what result will presently be seen.

The course of his meditations was somewhat disturbed, it must be allowed, by some wondering as to the time of day, when the daily visit spoken of by Mrs. Darley, was likely to take place; in all respect to his grandmother's wishes, he judged that it would be fitting for him to be out of the way when it occurred, but then, unhappily, he had no idea when that would be, and the old *Gazettes* which he held in his hand wrong side upwards contained some matter which he much desired to read; so the morning slipped away, and it was not till a slight rustle in the hall gave him a notion that Mrs. Darley was coming down, that he flung away his newspapers, and vowed he must go out.

Just at that moment of long-delayed decision, the door opened gently, and Primrose, in cloak, hood and mufflers, stood before him; a slight flush on her face from contact with the blustering wind, but quieter, more sober-looking, than of old. She started a little as he came forward, but recovering immediately, said:

'I did not know you had arrived. Doddridge did not tell me; he asked me to wait here till Mrs. Darley left her room. Thank you,' as he led her to a seat; 'do not let me detain you, if you were going out.'

Amyot assured her he had no such intention, or rather that if he had thought of such a thing, it was because he was dull, and had nothing better to do. She smiled then, but made no attempt to relieve his embarrassment by the merry sallies of former days; and for some moments the two considered each other in silence.

To Amyot this consideration brought the conviction that Primrose was much changed since last he saw her. The ever varying hue and smile had grown more subdued. Surely her figure was less round, her eyes less sparkling and full of laughter. Was it merely because her back was towards the light? He could almost have thought there were dark rings round her eyes, and a tremulous quiver about her mouth. He wished she would look at him; but as she sat beside the fire untying her hood and pulling off her long gloves, her head was turned slightly from him, and he fancied she avoided meeting his glance.

Did she not feel the awkwardness of that prolonged silence? Why would she not break it?—she who had so much more tact than he?

‘I have just returned from the North,’ he began at length. ‘Many old friends made civil inquiries after your mother, Miss Primrose, and regretted that I had no better news to give concerning her. I hope I find her better on my return?’

‘Better; oh no, far, far be it!’ Primrose replied, turning round suddenly; and then he saw that the quiet gravity she had hitherto maintained hid a much deeper feeling, and that tears were in her eyes, and anxious grief in every line of her sweet face.

He sprang towards her.

‘Primrose, what is it?’ he said eagerly; ‘my grandmother told me nothing!’

She drew back as he approached.

‘It is nothing new,’ she said; ‘but it goes on, and grows



worse—that is, harder to bear. Nothing is right. She cares for nothing; no one can please her; and yet it is not ill-humour, as I am apt sometimes wickedly to think. It is—well, I think it is a nearly broken heart, if such a thing can be. But why do I tell you this, Captain Brough? I ought never to mention it; I never do, except to dear Mrs. Darley. Oh, what should I do without her!

‘Can nothing be done for her? Does she hear nothing from her sons? Are they not good to her?’

Primrose shook her head as she tried to dash away some tears.

‘We scarcely ever hear from them,’ she said. ‘She has none left but me, and I——’

‘You are not her own; but she holds you as such.’

Primrose made no response.

‘She is good to you! She must be! You have stayed with her through every trouble. Tell me Primrose, she loves you, does she not?’

‘Yes—no doubt;’ the answer came slowly and wearily, and Primrose lifted her lovely eyes to Amyot’s face, with a mournful look which told more than words. ‘I am very silly this morning,’ she said. ‘I wish I had not come.’

‘Primrose,’ Amyot said slowly, ‘you said you did not know what you should do but for my grandmother, and you have been very good to me this morning in telling me your troubles. I will not tease you or worry you when you are so sad, but just for one minute, will you not ask yourself if you could not forget what you said to me last spring, and let everything be as it was before?’

She looked at him: wonderingly.

‘I have tried to forget it,’ she said. ‘I like to think we are friends still; but I feared *you* had not forgotten, and were angry with me still.’

‘Angry! Oh, Primrose, I never was!’ He turned away, and began walking up and down the room; then stopped suddenly, and added eagerly, ‘We will be friends

always, whatever happens. Say what you will, Primrose, we will still be friends! But tell me just once again, can it *never* be? can you *never* love me, not only as a friend most dear, but as my wife?’

She was silent; gazing into the fire, sitting perfectly still and motionless, her lips slightly parted, apparently lost in thought.

He waited what seemed ages, then less eagerly, with a shade of fear, repeated :

‘Will you not tell me, Primrose?’

Then, as if speaking to herself, her eyes still fixed on the fire, she said :

‘It would be such rest!’

He heard, but scarcely understood; and colouring deeply, she added :

‘Oh, I did not mean to say that! but you are so brave and strong, and I am so tired of struggling with myself, Yes, if you will; but I am not what you think me. Amyot: not even what I once was. I have grown cross and selfish—even Mrs. Darley will tell you that.’

‘She will not dare!’ said Amyot proudly. ‘Primrose, say it once again; I cannot credit my good luck!’

‘Then doubt it! No, I will not say it again. No, Amyot, no,’ as he tried to draw her towards him; ‘I have said more than I should have said. You must be content.’

‘But tell me, only tell me why you spoke of struggling with yourself! Primrose, I cannot but rejoice that you have consented, even if it be almost unwillingly, so greatly have I longed to call you mine; but yet the thought that you have yielded to my urgency merely because you are weary of it, does not bring the full contentment that I desire. It is not long since you told me you could not love me—dare I hope that you were not altogether right then?’

‘That is some while ago,’ she said, her eyes cast down and her head turned slightly from him.

'And your mind towards me has changed? Do I guess right? Will you not say so, Primrose, my dearest?

'Nay, Amyot; surely I have said enough! What more would you have?'

'Much more. I am hungry for you love, Primrose. I have wearied for it, dreamed about it; waking and sleeping, I have scarce thought of aught else for years past. I have waited and waited, and hoped and despaired, and despaired and hoped again. What, do I frighten you?' His tone had grown so vehement that her hand trembled in his grasp, and he saw her lip quiver. 'My darling, you shall say no word to me until you wish! I will wait again, yes, as long as you will, until it is not hard for you to say you love me.'

His voice had sunk to its gentlest tones; she looked up at him.

'It is not hard,' she said, 'if that is what you wish. I do love you, Amyot.' Then, struggling to free herself from his close embrace, she flashed at him one of her merry glances, adding, 'I thought I had to make some proper speech. I felt so monstrous silly, no civil speech or phrase would come. Did I not say it was rest to be loved by you? Surely that was flattery enough for even you. I hoped you had not heard it.'

'And it is true, and the surrender has not been altogether unwilling?'

'Nay, can you not credit me? Did I not own that there had been traitors in the camp? Captain Brough, permit me to say that you use your poor prisoner most ungenerously. Why wring such confessions from me?'

'I shall not rest till I have speech of these same traitors. I would I had known them long ago. I pray you, Primrose, make me further acquainted with them.'

'That you may altogether despise me? No, indeed; how *could* I harbour them? Why did I not rout them

out when first they showed themselves?—ah! why, indeed! How many times have I asked myself that question!’

‘Do not trouble to ask it again.’

‘Shall I not? Ah! but when the brave captain lays siege in such desperate earnest as he did just now—till sparks begin to fly and thunders roll—I shall quake as I did but a minute ago, and reproach myself again for admitting these same traitors. Nay, do not squeeze my poor hands so unmercifully! I told you but now that my brave spirits had departed—must I in still humbler tones plead for pity? Nay, do not look so penetrated with remorse—there is life left in me yet!’

‘But my rough tones and sudden moods have wounded you when most I should have striven to be gentle. I see now the reason of many things. Forgive me, Primrose; has my savage tongue often vexed you thus?’

He had dropped her hand, but his eyes looked earnestly into her face. She met his steady gaze, and the mirth died out of her face as she murmured:

‘Never once in all the years that we have known each other. Now, Amyot, are you satisfied and well content?’

‘Content? Nay, that he never is,’ said the voice of Mrs. Darley at the door. Her eyes, as she entered, had a far-away, pre-occupied look in them, giving the notion that things present were not much in her thoughts. ‘Is he grumbling already, my dear? We will be rid of him. A man sitting over the fire at mid-day is a dismal sight. Amyot, I have an errand for thee to the parson. Take this letter and bring me a written answer—I never trust a parson’s word, it is good for nothing; and while he is writing his letter, make yourself agreeable to his family. There are ladies staying there: see that you do not frighten them with your Northern manners. Come, be gone!’ She stamped her little foot, and Amyot had no choice but

to obey. 'And now, child,' said the old lady, 'is it to be reading or talk? Has the poor mother been very hard to please, and the back been too weak for the burden? Tell me. Your secrets are safe with me.'

'I know it, dear madam.' Primrose had risen from her seat when Mrs. Darley came in, and now stood behind her chair. 'I never told anyone but you, because I feared lest our neighbours might misjudge her—never until this morning; and then, I know not how it was, but Captain Brough drew it from me.'

'Why have you put yourself in that awkward place, that I cannot see you without dislocating my neck? Come round in front of me, and tell me what else have you told to Captain Brough: what secrets concerning me—what concerning yourself?' Primrose was silent, playing with the strings of her hood, and the old lady continued: 'Do you think I am blind, child! Did I not see what had come to pass when I came into the room? Can't I read my grandson's face? It is an honest one, and tells no lies, though it might be handsomer. Didn't I send him away because I wanted to hear the tale from you, rather than from him? Tell me, pretty one, what did you say to him?'

'Madam, if you can read his face, is mine a blank to you? Truly, I scarcely know what I said, but that I would be his wife. Does it please you, madam?'

'As naught else could please me. But tell me, Primrose, is it to be rid of his vexatious importunities that you have thus consented, or with a glad heart and ready will?'

'Dear madam, I scarce know where I am, so glad am I! Yet how to tell my mother, I cannot guess.'

'Leave that to me. She will complain and lament: yet that she does daily. I will tell her she shall not lose you, and no more she shall: we must devise some plan.'

'Oh no; I could not leave her! Oh, madam, if Amyot should ask it! But he will not—will he?'

'He will not ask what he cannot have. But tell me

child, when did you begin to love this persevering lover?’

‘When? Oh, I scarcely know—long since, I think.’

‘And yet you call yourself a truth-loving maiden!—and you told him you could not love him, only so long ago as the early spring. How did you explain this to yourself, Primrose?’

‘Did I tell him so, indeed?—surely not, dear madam. I said it could not be, and when I think of my mother, I am fain to say the same thing now; yet I did not mean to say I could not love him, though I tried to make him think it, so that he might be more easily content with my refusal. Was that wrong, I wonder?’

‘Well, well, let it be—it is no great matter; you shall not read to me to-day, child, but sit on Joan’s stool and talk, until we are interrupted by the dinner and thy clumsy lover. Be not too kind to him, Primrose—he is headstrong and wayward, and must be kept in order; and now he will be like a horse with the bit between his teeth, having got his own way and being determined to let us know it.’

‘Surely that is not like Amyot,’ Primrose said, blushing; whereupon the old lady grew eloquent, and told the girl, tale after tale of Amyot’s childish pranks and follies, in all of which Primrose found some trait of character to be admired, even where the faults were most glaringly displayed.

But before Amyot’s return she slipped away with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, extracting a promise from Mrs. Darley, that so soon as the wind should lose its keenness, and the cold be less intense, she would come and see Mrs. Kirkbride, and break the truth to her.

Amyot reappeared a few minutes after she was out of sight, not a little chagrined at the long delay he had been forced to endure, and was met by the old lady with all the appearance of grave displeasure.

'It was hard,' she said, 'that at her great age she could not indulge in a few hours' extra sleep without finding that all went wrong in her absence;' and when Amyot, with anxious concern, inquired what had happened to vex her, she said, 'Oh, nothing, it was of no consequence; she was growing old, and her will and her advice went for nothing; it was what she must expect she supposed,' and she sighed deeply.

'Is it I that am the offender, grandmother?' said Amyot; indeed, I had meant to follow your advice, but the opportunity came, and you will allow that I should have been a fool indeed not to have seized it and profited by it.'

'I will allow nothing, but that thou art the most awkward fellow in the world; thou sayest thou hadst no intention to offer thyself to Miss Solmes, yet the opportunity came, and so thou didst it. Go! you are a vaurien! a heartless rogue! I will teach Primrose what thou art worth. Have I not already told her such tales of thy temper and ill-usage of thy sister, that she has fled in horror, determined, it was plain not to meet thee again? But she shall know all; so beware, sir, how you set my commands at naught.'

'I wish Joan were here,' Amyot remarked, 'to tell me whether you are in earnest or in jest, dear madam.'

'It were a long journey to take for such small reason. For shame, grandson! Sharpen thy wits a bit; what can they do with thee in the army?'

'But, madam, you must needs be contented that at last Primrose has listened to me, and that you will have such a granddaughter.'

'And yet I am sorry for the poor girl: what has she done to deserve such a husband? She is sweet and gentle and most innocent, and a beauty besides; truly, it is to be hoped she may yet be rescued.'

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN WHICH THE SCENE SHIFTS TO ANOTHER CONTINENT.

‘So soon! and you are glad?’

It was Primrose who spoke, standing in the parlour of their little cottage with both her small hands in Amyot’s grasp. He had come hastily from London, and leaving his horse tied at the gate, had taken her by surprise, and told her somewhat too suddenly the news which had drawn from her this exclamation:

‘So soon! and you are glad? glad to leave us all?’

‘No, no, my own, not glad to leave you! but glad to go, I must needs be. Why, it is what I have most earnestly desired.’

She gazed at him.

‘And this is your farewell visit? and it is scarce six weeks since——. But I am not going to complain: since you are glad, I will try to be so too.’

‘That is just like you, Primrose, and when I come back from this campaign I shall find you ready, shall I not? You will not bid me wait again?’

‘I cannot tell; my mother’s state—much must depend on that. But tell me more—do you really sail next week, and this is Friday?’

‘Yes; did I not say so? On Tuesday the expedition is to start, my new regiment, the 47th, being among those chosen. Colonel Wolfe, now major-general, is appointed to the command of the force directed against Quebec. Mr. Pitt found out his worth after Rochefort and Louisbourg, and sent for him a few days ago, and offered him



the command, much to the surprise of many, who talked of his youth; he is but thirty-three, you know. It is just the thing for him; he accepted gladly, though his health is shattered, and men wonder how long he has to live. He, too, must leave the lady of his heart, so you see it is but a soldier's fate that I have to bear.'

'I thought he had given up all other loves, and had no mistress but his country?'

'It is a new thing, I believe; yet they say he is much in love with Miss Lowther. James Wolfe does nothing by halves: he will be much in love or not at all.'

'And you will be long on the sea? There are dangers there! Oh, Amyot! shall I ever have a moment's peace while you are away?'

'Many, I trust, dear one. Think to yourself, "It is not always a storm, so I will trust now they are in smooth water." And then, when we arrive, say again, "They cannot fight every day, so to-day I hope he is in no great danger." And thus each day will pass, and when the news of some great victory comes, you will be glad to think that Amyot Brough was there.'

'If Amyot Brough comes safely out of it.'

'Oh! of that never doubt. Away with such notions! Look up, Primrose, and tell me that you will never doubt that you shall see your lover again, my darling. I shall begin to be faint-hearted myself if you look so sad.'

'You faint-hearted, when you are panting to be gone as that restless horse at the gate! I pray you, Amyot, how can a man who calls himself a Christian be thus bloodthirsty?'

Amyot laughed.

'Am I bloodthirsty? Nay, Primrose, you do not comprehend me. War is a horrid thing—everybody knows that—yet am I glad I am a soldier. Is it a mighty strange contradiction? Well, perhaps it is, and I cannot explain it. Are you afraid of such a savage husband?'

'Nay, you have a tender side, your grandmother tells me; but I cannot jest to-day, Amyot. Your news has drawn a dark cloud over all my sky.'

'And was it tolerably bright before?'

'My mother is more restless than ever. Have I told you, Amyot, that for the last week she has been steadfastly determined to leave this place and go back to die at Penrith? Naught that I can say in remonstrance moves her. Go she must, and go she will; and I am half disposed to yield, thinking, maybe, the return to her home might do more for her than all the medicine in the world. But it is her old house she desires; and so clouded is her understanding, that she cannot perceive that it is in other hands, and that we may not go there.'

'Would you be happy there?'

'I? Oh, yes! If she were more content, I should be glad there, or anywhere. I love this place, and your dear grandmother; but for my mother's ease and peace, I would willingly return to Penrith. But how can we?'

Then Amyot told the tale of his purchase of the old house.

'For you, Primrose, and for your mother, I bought it. Why should you not spend the time of my absence there? It is standing empty.'

'You bought it for us?' she said. 'I cannot think why. I was nothing to you then.'

'It was a fancy of mine,' Amyot replied carelessly. 'Shall I write, Primrose, and tell someone you think of going there, and to see to the old place, and have it in order for you?'

'You are very good,' she said. 'How shall I thank you?'

'By sending me away with a smile,' he said, as the clock struck. 'I have but a few minutes to bid my grandmother farewell. I must not linger. I will write to you further about this matter.'

‘And must you go so soon?’

‘I must. And yet, love, when I look at you, and have you in my arms, I could forget everything, abandon everything—duty, His Majesty’s service, my engagements—all might go, if I might but stay with you.’

She clung to him one moment, then drew herself away. He understood the movement, and said :

‘You would despise me if I stayed at such a cost?’

‘Yes,’ she said honestly. ‘But you would not—I know you would not! Don’t look at me, or mind how I look. I shall be better soon. Now, I will come with you to the gate and see you mount.’

\* \* \* \* \*

Two months later, and Amyot’s eyes rested on a far different scene. Instead of the quiet Kentish village, with its green fields and gently flowing narrow river, before him lay the wide St. Lawrence, and on the farther bank the rocky heights crowned with the walls of Quebec, and not far distant, the ever rushing, foaming torrent of the Montmorency Falls. Amid these new scenes and their varied excitements, the short period of happy love seemed like a dream, and Amyot could scarce at times persuade himself that the hope of so many years had at length been realised.

It had been a moment of delicious triumph when he had told the tidings to Jack Pownal; but the utter disbelief with which the latter had received the intelligence, had for a moment staggered him, and as he sat and watched the slowly rolling waters of the majestic river, or scanned the dark heights on the opposite bank, thinking of those happy days in quiet England, when love, not war, was uppermost in his mind, he wondered whether Jack was right, and whether his self-conceit and fond imaginations had deceived him.

‘The fair Primrose has given herself to you? Nay my good fellow, you have been betrayed into some folly when

I was not there to protect you. She loves you? Don't tell me. If she loved you, why have you been sighing for her in vain, all these long tedious years? She has played you some little trick, knowing that you were about to depart to the ends of the earth, and might never come back. I believe nothing of your tale—let us talk of something else.'

And thus he always treated Amyot's rhapsodies of love, with the result sometimes of half persuading him to doubt Primrose's constancy; sometimes, and that, perhaps, more often, of exciting Amyot to bursts of wrathful indignation, which much amused his friend.

'Oh! we will fight about it, if you please,' he would reply, perfectly unmoved; 'but it is scarce worth the pain. Come, friend Amyot, put such follies as love out of your head, and tell me how does this affair please you? Look at that place yonder, and tell me what chance you think we have of taking it?'

'I believe in General Wolfe,' was Amyot's curt reply.

'And so does every one here,' Jack Pownal rejoined; 'but it is a tough piece of business. Hast met with many friends, Amyot?'

'Some few, and one that I have not seen for many years. I had entirely forgotten him till he came up to me, and asked me if I was not at Swinden's Academy at Greenwich, and then I knew Jack Jervis.'

'What! the fellow that commands the *Porcupine* sloop? The general and he are much in each other's company. I like the look of him. Yonder lies the sloop, if I mistake not. She piloted the way when the transports came up the river. How still the water is to-night, Amyot! it is time to turn in.'

It was a still, dark night; the camp on the Isle of Orleans was wrapt in silence, the sentries paced their rounds, and quiet and order were complete. Amyot, having no duty to perform, no call to keep awake, was

soon fast asleep, dreaming of Primrose, and walking with her in the green lanes of Westerham. He woke and thought of her; fell asleep again and dreamed of her anew; but this time not so tranquilly. He fancied they were in Westerham church; Arnold Pomfret was there, waiting to marry them, but, by some strange mischance, the bridegroom was not himself but Jack Pownal; and he, watching the ceremony in great indignation and misery, could find neither power to move, nor voice to speak, when, lo! the wall of the church seemed to sway and totter, there was a strange rumbling sound—it fell. He awoke, much surprised to discover that the quiet of the camp had given way to a sound of trampling feet, and much tumult.

‘A night attack, a sudden surprise,’ he muttered, as he sprang to his feet and hurried out into the open air, meeting at every step startled forms in every kind of strange attire, all asking eager questions which none could answer. ‘What is it? where’s the enemy? an awful uproar, but what does it mean?’ men asked each other. ‘Where are the watch? what do they say?’ ‘You here, Jack?’ ‘You here, Amyot?’ ‘For goodness sake tell us what’s the uproar all about?’

‘Hush, Amyot!’ said Jack, with a suppressed laugh; ‘the mischief’s plain enough. The French have sent a troop of fire-ships down with the tide, and one exploded with such a din that the watch thought their heads had been blown off, and they ran away to look for them, and scared all the camp. If I were they, I wouldn’t come back. Figure to yourself, I pray you, the general’s wrath.’

‘And the ships—are they floating among the fleet?’

‘They’re blowing up at their leisure, most of them at a safe distance. Some men have been despatched by the admiral to row to them, and tow them away—a pleasant office, isn’t it? but they have gone at it like true Britons singing and shouting to one another.’

The tumult was beginning to subside; the excitement of the soldiers rapidly passed away when it was evident there was no enemy at hand, and nothing for them to do. The perilous task of towing away the dangerous present which the French had sent them, was safely and courageously accomplished by the sailors, and the danger to the fleet was over for the present.

'Those fellows have more steadiness than our men,' a young ensign remarked to Jack Pownal the next morning; and the latter shrugged his shoulders replying:

'One of them called out to his mate, "Well, Jack, didst ever take hell in tow before?" but he went at it bravely.'

'What will befall the officer of the watch, think you?' inquired the young man, somewhat anxiously, as Jack was turning away.

'Nay, I do not know, nor will I pretend to say; the general ordered him to be placed under arrest—you heard that, I suppose, and the discourse of much severity which he administered to the men this morning? Do you know the fellow?'

'He is a relative of mine,' the boy replied, blushing; 'and though you may scarce credit it, Major Pownal, as brave a fellow as ever breathed.'

'I am altogether ready to believe it,' said Jack kindly; 'but the question of more importance is, will the general believe it?'

'Some men say he will be tried by court-martial and straightway shot,' said the young officer, in a faltering voice, looking anxiously at Jack for a re-assuring word.

'Never listen to such tales; there are men who are forever hanging and shooting their friends beforehand, and find a marvellous great pleasure in the performance. I foretell a better fate for your relative, so don't look so miserable about him.'

'Major,' said the lad, imploringly, 'if you hear anything with any certainty concerning his fate will you tell me?'

'That I will, my boy; and if I meet the general, I'll tell him what a brave fellow your cousin is. Tell me his name: it may be more convenient to have it off by heart; and though it has been in every man's mouth to-day, I have not given my mind to remembering it.'

The young ensign replied eagerly, and thanked Jack Pownal for his kindness; while Jack, who saw a group of officers at a little distance, walked off to join them. They were gazing up and down the river, commenting on the late attempt of the French against the fleet; and among them Jack spied the young general.

'Now's my time,' he thought, as Wolfe approached him with his usual friendly greeting; and at the first opportunity he introduced the name of the unlucky officer, remarking carelessly that he believed his character had always been of the best.

'So Brigadier Monckton tells me,' the general replied. 'He has urged me to consider his former good service, and so I have determined to let this night's performance pass without further comment; but Jack, my old friend, the men must learn greater steadiness, or we shall be undone.'

Jack assented, and shortly after he had good reason to acknowledge the force of Wolfe's remark, when, being among the officers in command at an attack on the redoubts at Montmorency, he had as much difficulty in restraining his men from rushing forward in disorder, as their unlucky captain had had in keeping his guard at their posts. On this last occasion much more might have been done, so all agreed, had the men paid prompt attention to orders and allowed themselves to be led.

It was on the 31st of July, that this attack on the French entrenchments near the Montmorency Falls took place. Being manifestly the spot most easy of attack, the French had constructed a line of entrenchments, running from the Montmorency River, opposite to the Isle of

Orleans, as far as the mouth of St. Charles' River, on the left of the town of Quebec; on the farther side precipitous cliffs seemed a sufficient defence from any attack.

For some time the bombardment from the British camp at Point Levis had been carried on with the utmost persistency, but without producing any manifest effect on the defences of the town. The town, therefore, it seemed evident, could only be carried by an attack on the entrenchments of the enemy. This Wolfe accordingly determined to attempt, and on the 31st of July, he succeeded in effecting a landing on the shore below the redoubts of Montmorency. Great hindrances and difficulties attended this attempt. As it turned out, the assailants had been ill-informed of the nature of the shore, and when the boats conveying the troops approached the beach, a line of rocks stretching out into the river barred the way before them.

In this perplexity, the general flung himself into a small boat, and set himself to find a point where a landing might be effected; this he succeeded in accomplishing, and in a short time this, the first difficulty, was surmounted. But the impetuosity and ardour of a body of grenadiers from Louisburg frustrated all the plans of their superiors. The Marquis de Montcalm, strongly posted between Quebec and Montmorency, poured down a most destructive fire upon the assailants, and the grenadiers, who formed the van of the attack, wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, rushed forward, eager to seize the outposts of the enemy; the rest of the army had not yet landed, and finding themselves unsupported, the grenadiers were soon thrown into confusion and driven back with great loss. All that their general could do was to conduct the retreat with all possible order and steadiness, which he did with great skill, everywhere exposing his person with the utmost intrepidity.



'It is much to be desired that this check may be a lesson to you,' was Wolfe's comment on the affair to his troops; 'the best officers can do nothing unless the soldiers attend to the word of command.'

But the failure of this first attempt, and the heavy loss that attended it, weighed much on his spirits, and threw him into a low fever, while the troops, depressed by inaction, grew daily more hopeless and discontented; and in this manner the month of August passed, and September found nothing of consequence accomplished.

A second attempt of the French to make havoc among the English fleet by sending fireships among them had caused some alarm and excitement, and some amount of damage, and had impelled Wolfe to send a message under flag of truce to the enemy, to intimate that the next flotilla of this perilous nature should be promptly towed alongside of the vessel containing the French prisoners; and this message had the effect of discouraging the besieged from any more such attempts.

'I had a notion,' said Amyot one day, 'that the two other expeditions which departed from England about the same time as we did, were to join us here after they had despatched other business. Have you any notion, Jack, what General Amherst can be doing?'

'Knocking General Montcalm's fine forts along the St. Lawrence to pieces, I trust; but we hear nothing of him. That Marquis de Montcalm must be a fine fellow, judging by what one hears. How cleverly he has succeeded so far in cutting off our settlers on the coast from the far west by building that chain of forts! Were he but properly treated by his superiors in France we might soon be despatched to our homes again. What think you, is he amusing himself with our idleness as he watches us from his nest on the top of those rocks? We must buy for ourselves wings if we are ever to gain possession of that same nest of his.'

'Is it to devise a plan for attacking the place that the general passes so much time on board Jervis' sloop, sailing up and down the river? I would gladly hear that he had hit upon some notion; I am weary of staring at those cliffs, and watching the ships as they lie down yonder.'

'Patience, good Amyot; you have yet to learn that the beautiful science of war consists much in doing nothing at all. When there arrives something to be done, be well assured the general will set us to the doing of it!'

'He is ill and weary himself. Can you not see it, Jack?'

'I have eyes, my boy, and for the most part I use them. I have also a tongue, but in the use of that I am less liberal, and for two reasons, both excellent in their way; first, my tongue will not learn to speak good English, though it is much improved; and secondly, because men are wondrous clever at repeating all the foolish things one says.'

'Fiddlesticks! between you and me anything may be said!'

'Is it so? Then repeat that desperate sharp speech of yours, which I but half heard yesterday, concerning Commander Jervis. Others were present, and so I restrained my curiosity; but all the same, it devours me.'

'What did I say? Oh, that he—but never mind, he knows his own trade, and I had no call to meddle with him.'

'Well, that is probable; but what had he done?'

'Did you not hear what a narrow escape he had, he and the general too, cruising down the river? The wind suddenly fell, or grew mischievous, I know not which; and the sloop drifted right under the walls, whereupon the enemy, perceiving it, opened a heavy fire.'

'But you don't say so? and what happened then? Where was I, that I heard nothing of this affair?'

'I can't say; everyone was talking of it. Well, Jack Jervis did what he could, having got into such a plight; he ordered out his boats, cheered his men lustily to their oars, and they towed the sloop out of danger. But, I say, when he has Wolfe on board he ought to manage his sloop better.'

'Just so. What was the fellow about, not to keep the winds in better order? But being by ourselves and no one listening, tell me, Amyot, you, who know his friends, is this malady of the general's truly dangerous? Do they thus speak of it?'

'I scarcely know; he himself thinks it so, and it was said to-day that he had been forced to take to his bed, and had told the surgeons that he knew it was all up with him; but he prayed them to set him on his legs again just for six months, that he might finish this affair. Yet, I warrant, it is not as he fears; he is active and light of heart when free from pain, and his father lived to a fair age; he died just after we arrived here.'

'Then we must hope for him; but this illness falls most inconveniently. The men are much depressed on his account; they miss him, and cannot believe there is any chance for us if he should die.'

'He die, Jack! I tell you, these are but a sick man's fancies.'

'Well, well, not so fierce! Does the fair Primrose know how you can still bluster? The general won't die, of course; and yet something tells me that he will.'

'Jack, what has come to you? You used to be such a merry fellow, one could scarce dare to talk of death!'

'As one grows older one learns many things,' was Jack's reply; 'and in particular one learns that, whether one likes to talk of it or not, men do die, and oftentimes at very inconvenient seasons. I may tell the men to hold up their heads and cease lamenting, but, in effect, if

Wolfe dies, the English won't take Quebec this campaign, nor the next either.'

'He won't die, I tell you!'

'If you are so sure, go walk yourself about the camp and tell the men so; but when you have well considered their dejection, you will lose all hope, as I have done.'

'This fervent love of yours for Wolfe is something new, Jack. In old days you scoffed at me for my devotion to him; now, it appears, you go beyond me.'

'But, no, yet truly I cannot say, Amyot; I could tell you scores of things, that when they arrived last year were hard to bear: bad news from my home, all that could be of pain and shame and trouble, and you were not here, and but for Wolfe, I should have put an end to my troubles and myself at one blow. Why have I never told ye? Why, but because it is hard now to think of it, and not grow wild, and the worst is over; thanks to him, I struggled through it—I care not to go over it all again. And what I say to you, scores of other men would say, if they cared to tell their secrets. See how proud they are when he asks them to dine with him! Is it because he's a general, do you believe? No; it is because he is Wolfe!'

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHEN ENGLAND JOYED AND WEPT.

'He is well again, did you say, Amyot? Then, was I wrong? Well, I am glad; and the men are glad. Did you ever see general received with greater transports of joy than he when he showed his face again yesterday? Yet, am I wrong? but I do not know; something tells me he will die!'

'Something! you are an old woman, Jack! He is all alive again, and the men—why, Quebec is a trifle; they are ready to conquer the world!'

'Yet Quebec still remains impregnable; three or four attempts have failed signally; Montcalm holds it fast, and the admiral is beginning to make much talk about the Canadian winter and his ships. Will it be Rochefort over again?'

'No; a thousand times, no!'

'But what to do?'

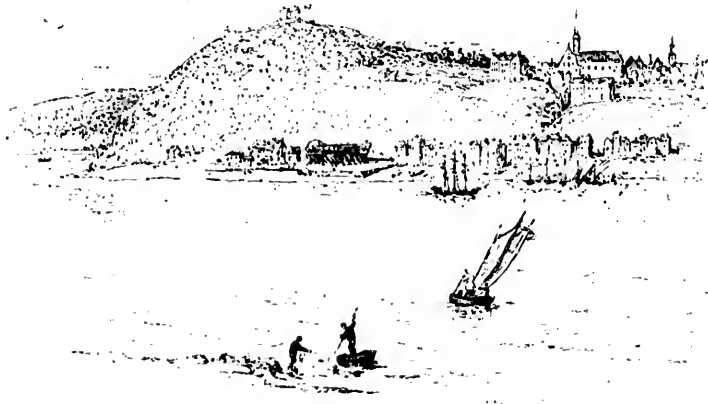
'That is not for me to say. Ask Captain James Cook, who is for ever busy sounding the river, if he has not some idea in his head; he is a wise man, we all know.'

'I'll torment no man alive with foolish questions; but there's an air of something doing—let's hope we shall hear what. I have always a curiosity prodigious, devouring, when I see preparations, and comprehend not wherefore.'

'Major Pownal, you are wanted; one of the staff is laid up; the general bade me ask you to come to his quarters.'

'So much the better for me,' was Jack's comment, as with eager alacrity he obeyed the summons.

Amyot and many others looked after him with envious eyes, as he sped away towards Wolfe's quarters. A council of officers was just breaking up: the Brigadiers Monckton and Townshend, and several others, were parting from the general as Jack entered. An atmosphere of bustle and excitement seemed to pervade the party, and Jack's spirits rose, as his conviction was confirmed, that some great stroke was impending. There was a flush on the young general's face, a light in his eye, as he looked up from some papers on hearing Jack's step, and met the



QUEBEC, IN 1761.

latter's glance of inquiry with a courteous greeting; and then, without loss of time, told him why he had sent for him, and what he required of him. He spoke rapidly and decidedly, as he went on to unfold to Major Pownal the plan he had laid before the council, and the decision arrived at; but stopped suddenly as he saw the anxious look with which Jack was regarding him.

'You think me rash, madly rash, Major Pownal?' he said in a somewhat altered tone.

'General,' Jack replied, 'I ask myself, can British

soldiers make themselves into cats or mountain goats? I ask myself, can I so transform myself?’

Wolfe laughed.

‘We shall see, we shall see!’ he said; ‘it is not such a bad place as you may think. I have examined it well and often; and, Jack, was it not you who once, with your French politeness, assured me the men would follow me anywhere?’

‘And I repeat it; but, sir, are you sufficiently recovered to take the command?’

‘Jack, the thought of it gives me life. To do nothing is killing me. But I am better—why talk of that?’

‘Up the face of that cliff, and in the dark, too?’ Jack repeated.

‘Ay, in the dark, to be sure; but there will be light enough for our purpose, and the ebb tide will serve us well. What, not convinced, Jack, old fellow? Are you not weary to death of this delay?’

‘That am I, and no mistake; and the matter is decided, therefore there is no more to be said. General, have you further orders?’

‘No; but stay a minute. I pray you put your heart into this business, Jack. We are lost if we doubt; I tell you it can be done.’

‘Then, assuredly, I doubt no more; but, general, if I may but speak——’

‘What is it, Jack? You are not yourself to-day, man; I looked to see you full of zeal in this affair. Any ill news—the poor mother, the lost sister, tell me? I have forgotten everything in my late sickness and worry.’

‘Nay, nay, nothing of that sort, general. I was rather thinking of the Montmorency affair and Louisburg, and desiring much that you would be persuaded to take better heed to yourself in the coming business than on past occasions. All the world marvelled, and with reason, that you escaped unhurt from the hail of bullets

at Montmorency Falls, and I take it we shall scarce be so lucky as to come upon M. de Montcalm entirely unprepared. We must look for hot work, and I would pray you not to be too rash.'

'Is that all? Why, Jack, what an ado about nothing! What is my life worth? Not much, as the surgeons will tell you. And look you, my old friend, I ask the men to do a somewhat singular thing, as you plainly perceive; then, it is but likely that they will look to me to lead the way. But thanks for your kind thought, Jack; we shall be much together in this business. I am glad of it, yet burden not yourself with care for me.' He spoke lightly, yet Jack could detect some sadness in the tone with which he added, as if speaking to himself: 'Of aught beyond the conduct of this night's affair it is scarce worth while to think.' Then with more animation, he resumed: 'But to our business, Jack—I need not keep you longer. You know the hour, and what must needs be done, and I will show you the way to the cliff.'

'Small doubt of that,' Jack remarked to himself as he departed; 'and wherever the fire is hottest, the peril most desperate, there without doubt will he find himself. And how to hinder, I know not. Yet, who but he would have thought of my private miseries at such a moment? But now to work.'

And in the bustle and excitement of the succeeding hours, Jack's misgivings were soon forgotten. The fiery enthusiasm of the young leader had inflamed every man, from the highest officer to the youngest private, and Jack Pownal was no exception to the rule.

'This place, where is it?' Amyot asked, when his friend told him of the general's design. 'A steep cliff you say, and General Wolfe has spied out a narrow path which is likely to be ill-guarded. Where is it, Jack?'

'About a mile and a half above the town; the path is



but little used. M. de Montcalm has the air of being secure against attack on that side, and leaves it little watched. Above are the heights of Abraham ; it is there we may have some warm work.'

Jack had by this time quite forgotten the difficulties of the ascent, and was in imagination already on the heights.

Did those doubts and fears return when, on board one of the ships employed to transport the 5,000 troops down the river, Jack's eyes rested on the destined spot ? If so he said nothing. The ships passed slowly on, and at last dropped anchor. On board were about thirty flat-bottomed boats ; these were quietly lowered into the water, and in death-like stillness and complete silence, the first division of the army, 1,600 men, embarked in them. To the men it seemed a thing of course that the young general should step into the first, ever impetuous, ever rushing to the front. Looking at his face as he followed him into the boat, Jack Pownall read there high resolve, strong determination and intense excitement ; but the light of confident hope shone in his keen bright eyes, and those around grew confident in his presence.

In unbroken silence the troops had embarked in the boats, and still in unbroken silence they passed on their way, the darkness and stillness adding intensity to their excitement.

A young ensign by Amyot Brough's side almost choked, so fearful was he lest he should draw his breath too audibly ; the oars scarcely touched the water, so anxious were the rowers that their dip should not break the silence of the night. Every ear was strained to catch the faintest rustle along the banks, as the boats glided along under the shadow of the overhanging cliffs. But all was still ! No voice of bird or beast broke upon the stillness : the night was calm—scarcely a leaf stirred. The only sound that broke the silence was the voice of the

young general, who, perhaps to still his own excitement, or that of others, repeated in a low voice to those around him, Gray's beautiful lines, 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.'

Jack Pownal, and doubtless others, listened and wondered. Was there no omen in those words, 'The paths of glory lead but to the grave'?

He looked at Wolfe, and saw that while his lips spoke the words, his eyes were still intently fixed upon the cliffs—seeking what? that scarcely to be discovered path on which so much depended. Whither would it lead?

Jack's forebodings revived; but that subdued voice continued to the last stanza, ending with 'The bosom of his Father and his God.'

Then, scarcely pausing, the young general added:

'Gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec!'

No one spoke, and he said no more; but continued to gaze through the darkness at the thickly wooded cliffs until the appointed spot came in sight; and when the boat touched the shore, he was the first to spring on land, and search for the upward path.

For a moment even his venturesome spirit seemed to quail; overhead hung the almost precipitous cliff; thick trees and brushwood, mingled with loose rocks, covered the face of it; the path was but a scratch—hardly to be seen in the darkness.

'Well, we must have a try,' he said to those who followed him, as he dashed at it, closely pursued by his men, while Jack struggled vainly to keep him in sight, as, with his usual vehemence, he forced his way up the giddy ascent.

'Strange that none hear us,' muttered Jack to himself, as crashing boughs and much rustling of leaves seemed as if they could not fail to betray the presence of unwonted intruders. 'My good fellow!' to a burly private soldier

close behind, whose difficulties drew forth many a gruff complaint, 'spare your words and keep your breath : you will need it yet ere the top be reached ; so much discourse may bring answers in the shape of lead.' Then, as a heavy stone came thundering down the cliff, forcing the punting man backwards in its downward course, and threatening more mischief ere it reached the bottom, he murmured, 'That sort of warfare is not to my taste. Hey ! what was that ?' as a sound scarcely to be mistaken fell on his ear. 'Don't disturb yourselves yet, my good friends, I pray you ! Is there never a summit to this hill ? and the general—why, I have lost sight of him this century or more !'

While Jack thus lamented and struggled upwards, slipping, springing, and clinging to broken roots of trees and friendly branches, and in like manner privates and officers made slow but steady progress up the path, others of the boats, having drifted lower down the river, landed their freight at a point where no path whatever was to be seen up the rough face of the cliff.

Among the troops in these boats were some companies of the 78th Highlanders, who, little dismayed by the frowning aspect of the hillside, made straight at it, and by dint of clinging to trees and bits of rock, forced their way boldly up the precipitous height.

It was when about half-way up, that the unusual disturbance and rustling among the trees, drew the attention of the lonely sentinel as he paced to and fro upon the summit, and the long-expected challenge 'Qui vive ?' rang through the air.

Promptly, and without hesitation, came the fitting reply, 'La France !' from the Highland captain, and the sentry, satisfied, shouldered his musket, and continued his round.

With still more stealthy tread the troops crept on, congratulating themselves that the French deserter,

brought lately into the camp, had supplied their general with that convenient password.

A few minutes more, and the edge of the cliff swarmed with troops; the guard, alarmed too late, turned out, fired one volley down the precipice, and then fled in terror, their captain alone standing his ground until overpowered.

'They are off to the town,' Jack Pownal said. 'M. de Montcalm, the fox is in your poultry-yard; bestir yourself ere it be too late!' He met the general's glance of exultation, and added, 'Ere the day breaks we shall be ready for him.'

By this time 500 men had reached the top, and had taken up their station as guard at the head of the path by which their comrades were to ascend. The boats had returned to the ships and refilled; battalion followed battalion quickly, each formed first on the shore below, and then again on the table-land at the top, as fast as they arrived. When the day broke, 5,000 men stood in their ranks ready for the attack.

'So far all goes well: the general is satisfied,' said the officers among themselves; 'The men are steady and orderly, but, how long must we wait thus? M. de Montcalm, we are ready for you!'

The sun had long risen when from rank to rank passed the murmur, 'They are coming!' and a movement, a kind of quiver of satisfaction, ran along the lines. Then, as the lines of the French army came in sight, the order was given, 'Load with an extra ball!' And, fearful lest in their ardour, his troops might repeat the error which had proved so fatal at Montmorency, their young general flew from line to line, urging them to be steady, and await his order before firing.

It was a terrible ordeal! Amyot Brough and many others groaned with impatience as they saw the French line open a heavy fire, and found that every moment it grew more murderous.

The British troops fell thick and fast; but confident in their leader, devoted in their loyalty to him, the ranks stood firm and motionless.

Jack Pownal, close beside the general, ground his teeth as he saw that Wolfe had been struck in the wrist, and that more than one well known to him had fallen under that deadly hail. But still no word passed the general's lips. Calmly wrapping a handkerchief round his wrist, he paid no further heed to the hurt, but continued at the head of the 28th to watch with satisfaction the patient endurance of his men, as with their guns shouldered, they remained motionless, or only moved to fill up the ghastly gaps made by the French fire in their ranks.

'And yet he's right; he always is,' Jack repeated to himself. 'But what is it now? Yonder poor fellow has got his death-blow! He was one of the first to scale the cliff, and the general marked it; he sees everything! What is he saying?'

Wolfe had stooped over the wounded officer, and Jack was soon at his side.

'He must be moved to the rear, Major Pownal. You will do well, never fear; and assuredly you have earned promotion. I will not forget; or if,' turning again to Jack, 'if I should not live to see to this, let it be mentioned to Brigadier Monekton. Be sure it is not forgotten.'

And, having thus satisfied himself, Wolfe resumed his post, and with earnest gaze watched the onset of the enemy.

Not till the French were within forty yards did the eagerly expected word 'Fire!' pass his lips. Then in an instant a volley, distinct as one shot, burst from the whole British line, taking deadly effect on the advancing foe. They staggered, rallied, continued their onward march, while some ran aside, shrieking with agony;

others fell from the ranks in dismay; many sank without a groan. Their general, still undaunted, continued to cheer them on with voice and word; but their lines quivered and shook, and each moment showed more plainly the frightful force of the long-suspended blow.

Their hesitation was quickly perceived by Wolfe. At once he ordered the whole line to advance. Slowly and steadily the troops obeyed, returning with all speed the volleys of the French. Then, feeling their advantage, they pressed on with the bayonet, quickening their pace to a run, as they dashed over dying and dead, driving all before them. It was in this charge that Captain Brough received a sword wound in his left shoulder: but of that more anon.

Wolfe had led the charge in person. For some minutes Major Pownal and others near the general had been aware that he had been wounded in the body; but he made light of his suffering, until another ball struck him on the breast, and he was seen to reel on one side.

'Support me,' he said to a grenadier officer near at hand, 'that my brave fellows may not see me fall.'

He sank as he spoke, and in a few minutes was carried to the rear, and laid on the grass.

The troops dashed on; and though Montcalm, still resolute and courageous, galloped through his broken ranks, striving to rally them, it was all in vain—they broke in every direction: and at the very moment when all hope died in his breast, the brave Frenchman also fell mortally wounded.

While the victorious British troops were driving all before them, a mournful group was lingering near the dying general. Some one proposed to send for a surgeon, but to this Wolfe replied:

'It is useless, it is all up with me.'

Once and again, as Major Pownal afterwards related, he raised his head, and tried to clear the fast-gathering

death-mist from his sight, eagerly endeavouring to discover what was passing on the field; but soon the effort was too painful: he lay back and seemed scarcely conscious. Suddenly, from an officer standing by, broke the cry:

‘They run!—see! they run!’

Wolfe started as if from sleep, and asked eagerly:

‘Who run?’

‘The enemy, sir,’ said the officer; ‘they give way in all directions.’

‘Go, one of you,’ said Wolfe, speaking still in a firm voice, ‘to Colonel Burton: tell him to march the 48th with all speed to St. Charles’ River, to cut off the retreat.’ Again, after a slight pause, the young general murmured: ‘Thank God! I die content!’ Then, turning on his side, as if seeking an easier position, he quietly breathed his last.

Not many yards from the spot where Wolfe lay dead, his second in command—Brigadier Monckton—fell desperately wounded; while, not far distant, Montcalm had been struck to the ground by a mortal wound. The fall of their general was the signal of utter ruin and dismay to the French. Pursued by the Highlanders with claymores, by the 47th, 58th, and 78th Regiments with fixed bayonets, they fled from the field, many taking refuge in the town, others continuing their flight to the camp at Beauport.

The victorious army immediately encamped outside the town, while the whole fleet moved into the basin, to be in readiness to bombard the citadel. Not many hours had passed, however, before it was evident that no further resistance would be made; the victory was felt to be decisive, and in a short time the English army took possession of the place.

One of the first acts of the English generals was to take possession of the general hospital, situated about a mile from the town, on the south side of the St. Charles’ River; and thither the wounded of both sides were carried, a body of men, under the command of an officer, being stationed

there on guard, reassuring the terrified nuns, and securing order and quiet.

Our friend Jack Pownal had been busied with this service—watching for hours the melancholy business of carrying in the wounded, and the surgeons engaged in their ghastly work : doing all that in him lay to comfort and help—till utterly overcome with fatigue, he resigned the task to other hands, and was turning away wearily to seek rest in the camp. As he descended the steps of the building, he observed a number of persons grouped outside, grief and consternation in their faces, while the words : ‘C’est fini : il n’existe plus,’ fell on his ear; he turned round with an inquiring look, and, amid exclamations of grief, caught the words, ‘le bon marquis, notre général,’ and guessed at once that the brave Frenchman had that minute terminated his career.

Jack’s ready French tongue commended him to the bystanders ; and—forgetting that he was English, and one of their conquerors—they poured forth their grief—their love and admiration for the departed general—into his sympathising ear. He was their father—their benefactor.

‘The bravest—the kindest of friends!’ exclaimed an old Canadian. ‘He has not forgotten us! From his death-bed he wrote to the English general, imploring his protection for us—praying that we might not have reason to regret the change which has befallen us.’

‘I saw him,’ cried another, ‘brought into the town by two soldiers, bleeding from his terrible wounds. He prayed the surgeons to tell him how long he had to live, and when they said, “But a few hours,” “So much the better,” he replied ; “I shall not live to see the English in Quebec.” And in his mortal agony he cried : “It is my consolation to have been conquered by an enemy so brave.”’

‘And by one who knew his worth,’ said Jack to



himself as he turned away, and his mind, released from the strain of present duty, rushed back, and plunged into the remembrances of the last few hours. In a strange kind of waking dream he passed along, scarcely noticing the way he was taking, until, as he drew near the English encampment, he began to ask himself what had befallen this one and that one among his many friends. He had seen more than one whom he well knew carried into the hospital, and, with a dull kind of anxiety, he wondered why Amyot Brough, who he knew had been wounded, had not been brought there. 'It must have been but a scratch,' he thought. 'I shall find him in the camp.' And there was comfort in the thought. And then his eyes, heavy with fatigue and want of sleep, scanned in a dreamy fashion the ruined walls of the captured town and with little of triumph or exultation in his face or bearing, he was beginning to ask himself diverse unanswerable questions, when his eye fell on the figure of an English officer leaning against a broken wall with all the appearance of intense suffering and overpowering fatigue. It was fast growing dark, but Jack's heart gave a sudden bound as his eye fell on the well-known form. He was at Amyot's side in a moment; and as the latter raised his head at his approach, and the eyes of the two friends met, they grasped each other's hand with a pressure that meant more than words could say; but no words would come.

When they did speak, it was Amyot who broke the silence :

'Well,' he said, 'it is a complete thing, I suppose?'

'Yes,' replied Jack; 'Colonel Townshend expects to receive the formal surrender in a day or two. Are you badly hurt, Amyot?'

'I don't know. I was trying to get back to the camp to have the cut dressed; but it seems a monstrous long way, and I don't believe I can get there.'

'Lean on me,' said Jack. 'You should have gone to the hospital last night.'

'There was work to do.'

They spoke in short abrupt sentences. Each knew the other's thoughts. Each equally feared to reveal his own. Amyot, leaning on his friend's arm, felt his chest heave with the effort to restrain his emotion, and said wearily :

'Don't, Jack—don't give in—there's a good fellow.'

"The victory that day was turned to mourning." Who said that?' asked Jack. 'It has been running in my head all day.'

Amyot made no reply. The pain of his wounded shoulder was hard to bear ; he dared not trust his voice to speak of that other wound much more hard to be endured. He staggered on, then sat down again to rest.'

'Come! this won't do,' said Jack, roused to anxiety by his friend's exhaustion. 'You want rest as well as a surgeon. I hope they will have room for you at the hospital ; but, for the present, let's get to your tent. Make another effort, Amyot—it is but a few paces now.'

The few paces seemed hundreds ; but they brought him what he so sorely needed—rest and surgical aid.

Jack watched while the wound was dressed, and then sat down by the side of the bed, and hid his face between his hands.

'Now, tell me all,' said Amyot ; 'you were there, and I wasn't.'

'Some other time,' said Jack, in a choking voice, 'not now, Amyot. I've been going over it, and over it, and over it, till I can't rejoice in the victory, or care what happens next.'

Some large tears were making their way down Jack's face, and falling quite unheeded by him ; his utter weariness deprived him of all power of self-control. He flung himself on the ground and groaned.

Amyot lay back on his pillow, looking very worn and sorrow-stricken.

'Tell me all you saw and heard, Jack,' he repeated. 'They say he was content.'

Thus urged, Jack struggled through his narrative of the general's death.

'Content, ay, that was he; it was for England and England's glory he strove and toiled, not for his own, else would he have thought it hard to die without receiving the honour and thanks he had earned. Amyot, think you he is content now?'

'Content, ay, surely; he had his desire—just so much of life as was needed to do his work—he asked no more.'

'I met your old friend Commander Jervis to-day,' said Jack, growing more calm as he spoke; 'and he stopped and asked for you, and then he told me a singular thing. The general, he says, sought him out the night before this affair, and spoke to him of the coming attempt on Quebec, telling him that he had a firm conviction that he should fall in the next day's battle; and then he unfastened the breast of his coat, and drew forth a portrait of the lady to whom he was attached. This he gave to Jervis, and begged him, if all happened as he anticipated, to carry the picture to England and return it to the lady—I forget her name—to whom he was betrothed.'

'Miss Lowther,' Amyot suggested. 'It is mighty strange, Jack.'

But Jack, having told his tale, relapsed into hopeless grief. He soon departed, promising to come again in the morning, and Amyot was left to rest.

But the rest was long in coming, and when at last he fell asleep, it was to start and groan in his slumber as he found himself going over in his dreams the scenes of the last forty-eight hours. Now he was straining up the precipice, clinging even more desperately than in reality

to breaking trees and slippery rocks; now he was stumbling, falling from the heights; now again, clinging, now pressing on. More than once he awoke shuddering, to fall asleep and dream again, if not of the precipice, of the deadly hail of fiery bullets, of the faces of the dead and the dying. Again he heard the battle cries; Wolfe's ringing voice, now urging and exhorting to patience, now cheering to the charge, and then he awoke, groaning to think he should never hear that voice again. Towards morning his sleep grew quieter, and when the surgeon visited him he declared himself refreshed. Jack Pownal was as constant in his visits as other duties would permit. The next day he came in hurriedly, and, sitting down on the foot of the bed, said:

'I cannot stay many minutes. The order is given for the whole army to attend, and several officers beside you are laid up. There is much to be done.'

'To attend what and where?' asked Amyot in bewilderment.

'To escort the general's body to the ship in which it is to be transported to England,' Jack said with averted eyes. 'What are you doing, Amyot?'

'I must be present. I would not be absent from my place for anything,' Amyot replied, beginning to put on his clothes.

Jack stared at him gloomily, and at last said:

'You must get leave from the surgeon.'

Amyot made no reply; but in a few minutes, said:

'I'm ready; lead the way, Jack.'

Jack again demurred, and a young surgeon standing near the tent, to whom he appealed, spoke of the fear of fever ensuing; but Amyot was obstinate, and in a few minutes more the two friends had left the tent, and were walking in mournful silence towards the place where the troops were mustering to render their last homage to their dead chief. They walked slowly; Amyot from weakness, Jack out of consideration for his friend.

With solemn pomp, and almost as silently as on the memorable night of the attack, the troops fell into their ranks. It was a gorgeous sight, and unspeakably sad. Many old men wept, the young men groaned, as their victorious leader was borne into the midst of them sleeping in death. From the heights he had so bravely won, they carried him with high honour, arms reversed and mournful music, to the shore of the stately river, where lay the fleet at anchor, their flags half-mast high. The city, also mourning the loss of its honoured chief, looked on, as its brave enemy passed on his strange triumph, the path of glory leading to the grave. As far as they might, his soldiers followed their young general, then returned to hold what he had won.

That evening, Amyot Brough, who had flattered himself that his short confinement to his bed had wrought a cure for him, felt himself seized with sudden chills, rapidly succeeded by burning fever, after which he was conscious of nothing for many days, until at last he woke to find himself a prisoner in the hospital, where, he was told, he had been ever since the night after the general's funeral. How he got there he never knew, nor troubled to inquire. He lay still, and thought of his former illness off the French coast; wondered whether the effects of this wound would be as lasting; thought of Primrose, and questioned in a dreamy way whether it was likely he should ever see her again.

He was lying in a long room with many beds; but it was quieter now than on the first days after the battle, when groans and moans were ceaseless, and much cursing and swearing was the order of the day. Some of the patients were asleep, but one in a bed at a short distance from his, was tossing and complaining, now in French, now in English, and giving the attendants no small trouble.

Amyot lay and watched this man, alternately pitying

his sufferings, and indulging in anger against his impatience, occasionally uttering a word of sympathy, but more often muttering a wish that he would cease grumbling and go to sleep. After a while, he noticed that his neighbour was visited by a young woman carrying a child of about a year old in her arms; she looked like a French maid-servant, but from their conversation, Amyot soon discovered she was his wife. She came frequently, bringing fruit and dainties to tempt the sick man's appetite; but he turned grimly away, and treated her attentions with disdain. Sometimes she wept; but evidently she stood in great awe of her soldier-husband, who treated her like a child, and spoke his wishes with rough authority.

Amyot pitied her, and wondered whether she really loved the rough, surly fellow who scarcely welcomed her when she came, and yet railed at her whenever she failed to appear as early as usual. He would talk to his boy with something like good-humour, but towards his wife he was always cold and repelling. And yet she had a sweet, modest face and manner, and her little daintily dressed figure was pleasant to see. Others besides Amyot longed to break the fellow's head when he scowled and growled at her, but perhaps the wife understood him better than they.

One day, the surgeons going their usual rounds lingered longer than usual in their examination of the surly Frenchman's wound. Amyot, watching them, saw their faces grow unusually grave. One shrugged his shoulders, looked at his companion, and muttered some mysterious word under his breath, on hearing which the other nodded: then they replaced the bandages, and one of them passed on, leaving the other standing beside the bed, speaking in a low, grave voice to his patient.

It was only the last words that reached Amyot's ear:

'Il ne vous reste que bien peu d'heures; comprenez-vous, monsieur le capitaine?'

The sick man growled a reply, and the surgeon passed on. Amyot tried to see his neighbour's face; but he had turned to the wall, and it was not till his bright little wife came tripping in, that he either moved or spoke.

'He will behave decently to her to-day, at any rate,' thought Amyot, as—judging it dishonourable to hear more of their discourse than he could avoid—he tried to think of something else, and began a conversation with his nearest neighbour on the other side—a young Englishman who had just parted with his right leg, and needed much consolation in consequence.

But before long his delicacy and reserve were forgotten, and he found himself listening, in spite of himself, to the earnest dialogue proceeding on the other side. From the words he caught, Amyot guessed that the husband had communicated the doctor's verdict to his wife, and was now explaining to her his intentions regarding herself and child. She sobbed and cried; promised implicit obedience in one breath, and in the next complained piteously that what he asked was very hard.

'You promised to go to England with me if ever I should ask you,' he said reproachfully. 'Now that I may not go—now that it is certain I shall never see my native land again—I am yet determined my son shall go, and be brought up an Englishman.'

'But,' she urged in reply, 'Quebec is English now. He will be English all the same if he stays here.'

'Will you promise to do my bidding?—to grant my last request?—if you like that mode of speech better,' he said impatiently.

'So hard!' she murmured, 'to leave country, friends, and home, and go across the wide ocean alone with the baby. How could she?'

'It was not hard,' he protested. 'She had the money at home; and once in England, and with his mother, all

would he well. For his sake, his wife would be cared for. Again—would she promise?’

‘She would try—yes she would; but if she found it very difficult, he must forgive her.’

‘No; on no account. Keep your promise, Elise, or some evil will befall you and my son.’

She wrung her hands, and burst forth in bitter lamentations; whereupon one of the Ursuline Sisters hurried to her, and taking her hands, urged her to be calm, and not agitate her husband.

‘She cares little for that,’ the sick man replied. ‘These women are all alike; they must please themselves whatever fine promises they make when the knot is tied. But listen, Elise: one thing I command you—if you choose, against my will, to stay here when I am dead, at least send my boy to England.’

She had grown calmer under the nun’s soothing; and, placing her hand in her husband’s replied:

‘No, my husband; we will go together. You shall have your will; so you will at least speak one word of love before you die?’

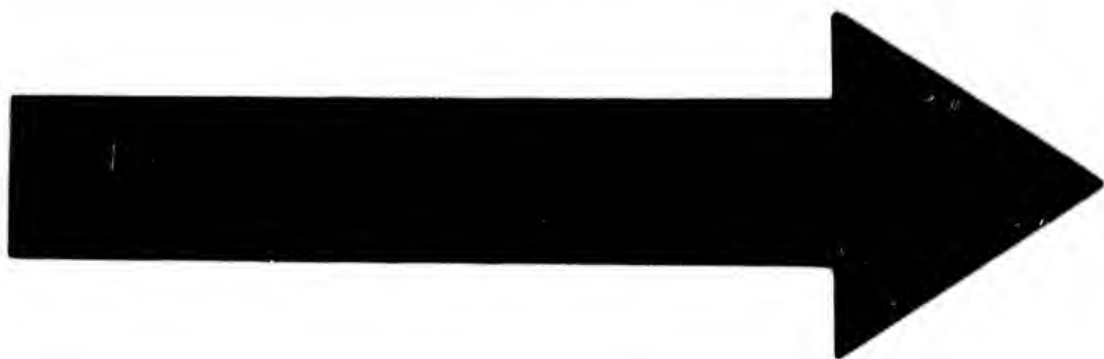
‘Love’—aye, that is ever your song! Love is a dream. I know nothing about it: but I care for you, Elise, in a fashion, and I am sorry to leave you so soon. I thought we should have many merry days together. Now say adieu, and leave me; I shall die best alone.’

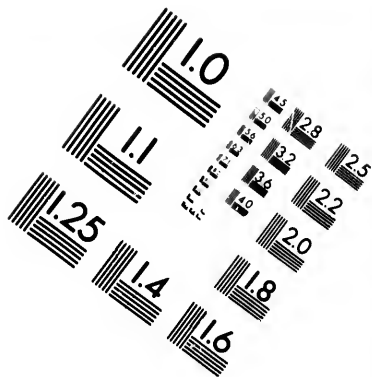
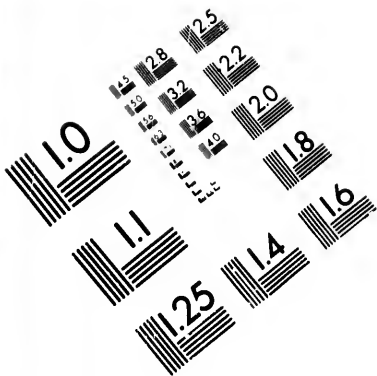
She looked at him with longing, yearning eyes, then held the child’s face to his lips for a kiss, touched his pale brow with her ruby mouth, and hurried from the room without looking back.

The sick man moaned; then, turning towards Amyot, said, in English (hitherto he had always spoken in French):

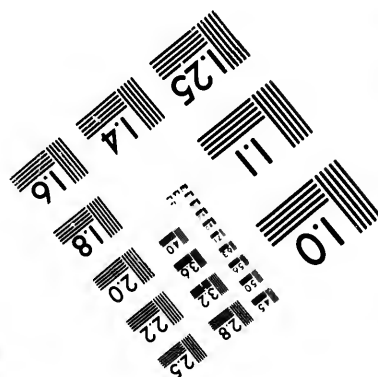
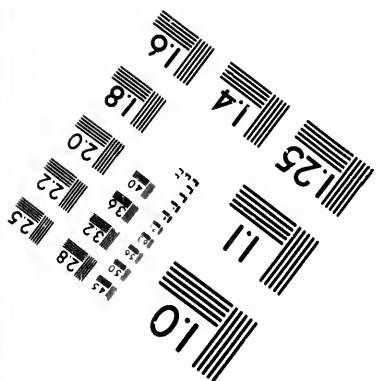
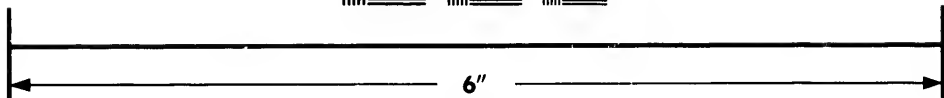
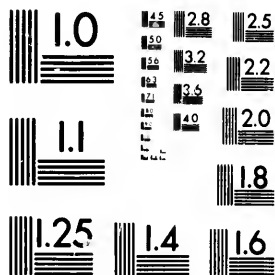
‘Captain Brough, you do not know me, but I know you; who I am is of small consequence; I have borne many names since I left England, fifteen years ago; but







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in a sense I am English still, though once I vowed quite to forget it. You may have heard what passed between my wife and me?' He looked for a reply, and Amyot assented. 'She must go to England—my boy must go to my mother: she will love him for my sake. Now, may I make one small request?'

'I can guess it before it is spoken,' Amyot replied. 'It is that I will aid her in her journey, show her how to go. Am I not right?'

'Precisely so; and you consent?'

'If it is in my power. Tell me where to seek her; and when I leave the hospital I will do all I can. You need not tell me where she is to go. Your mother is now at Penrith, in her old home, Lance Kirkbride. It is possible you did not know it.'

The sick man started up, and fell back pale as death.

'I thought you did not know me,' he said faintly.

'Nor did I until you spoke my name; then many things became clear to me. Your little son's face had perplexed me, reminding me of something, I knew not what. Now I know that it was your own face when first I saw you years ago in the Penrith school—what an age it seems!'

'It is a mistake ever to look back,' said Lance bitterly; 'but I cannot talk more, I am worn out. When you go home, you will tell my mother you saw me die—poor mother! Did I say I did not know what love meant! Yes, I did love her.'

'I will tell her so,' Amyot replied.

'Yes, do; and tell her I sent her the best I had—my little son.'

'And your wife?'

'Yes, my wife.' Lance's voice was growing weak; he closed his eyes, and seemed to dose. Then suddenly rousing himself, he said, 'My wife's name and present dwelling are written in this book.'

He fumbled beneath his pillow with one weak hand, pulled thence a small pocket book, which Amyot took and placed beneath his own, then he sank to sleep again.

From time to time the Sisters came and looked at him, adjusting the pillows or wiping the clammy sweat from his forehead; but no one lingered near him. Alone, as he had wished, with no hand in his, no loving face bending over him, Lance Kirkbride passed away.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH WE TAKE LEAVE OF MANY FRIENDS.

THE year 1759, memorable in English annals as the year when England set herself right with the rest of the world, and learned once more to respect herself—this wonderful year was on the point of expiring, when Amyot Brough entered London by the Plymouth coach, invalided home to avoid the severity of a Canadian winter.

London looked very cold and dreary, and a thick fog greeting him, reminded him of Major Pownal's parting assurance that he would find London far more disagreeable than Quebec, which would serve him right, since his friend was well assured that the plea of ill-health was nothing in the world but an excuse for running home to get married.

'You're not fit to be a soldier, Amyot,' Jack had asserted. 'Half your time you are lying in bed or kicking your heels about doing nothing, because, forsooth, a bullet or two found their way into you, or somebody scratched you with the wrong end of his sword. The country does not want such soldiers as you. I'll see if I can't get you dismissed the service.' And when Amyot had assured him that he need not be jealous, he would be ordered home soon, he had retorted, 'I; what for should I desire to return home? There is no bride waiting for me. Are you very sure, my dear fellow, that yours is still waiting for you?' But to this question Amyot had not deigned to reply.

But the long voyage had intervened since they had

parted, and little of the invalid was now to be seen in the tall traveller who, as a gentleman from Quebec, had received so much honour on the coach-journey from Plymouth. Amyot had grown very weary of his glories before London was reached—very tired of the cunning questions by which coachman and guard had sought to draw from him a full narrative of all he had seen and done in the famous city, and very silent and morose when the great general's name was mentioned.

Conscious that he had not displayed himself in an amiable or pleasing mood, as he drew near his journey's end he made an effort to enter into more friendly converse with his fellow-passengers ; and the coachman, encouraged by these improved signs, ventured to inquire if the ship in which he had crossed from America had done much fighting on the way.

'None,' Amyot replied. 'Why should she?'

'Why, indeed!' said the guard. 'I reckon by this time there ain't many French ships left to fight. We've settled most of them.'

'They Frenchmen are a poor set,' remarked the coachman. 'It won't do to be too hard on 'em. It wasn't to be expected such ships as they build could make fight in a storm.'

'Nor any ships either,' Amyot asserted ; but the coachman begged his pardon :

'To English ships a trifle of a storm was no matter, as Sir Edward Hawke had taught the French in Quiberon Bay.' And Amyot felt his ignorance and wisely kept his peace.

'I must have missed some part of the story,' he said, when repeating this conversation to his uncle an hour later in the familiar drawing-room in Queen's Square. 'I had heard of Admiral Hawke's victory over the Brest fleet ; but of the battle being fought in a storm, I had heard no mention.'

'Battles both by land and sea are managed in strange fashion nowadays,' Mr. Pomfret replied. 'A battle was won in Germany the other day. Why, the troops and ships too should have been in winter quarters long ago; but the ardour for conquest which Mr. Pitt has wrought in our nation is prodigious.'

'Have you heard Mr. Garrick's new song in honour of our victories, nephew Amyot?' his aunt inquired. 'It will scarce please you, being mostly in praise of the exploits of our fleet, but I must teach you to sing "Hearts of Oak," when we have leisure; it will suit your voice, and your father was a naval hero, though you are not. But, nephew Amyot, let us forget wars and victories for the time; indeed, I am entirely weary of such things—sick of the thundering of guns and pealing of bells—let us talk of something pleasanter.' She dropped her voice, and in a lower tone added: 'When are you minded to go North to fetch your bride?'

'Very shortly,' Amyot replied. 'Yet I do not know, madam, if she is willing to leave her home as yet.'

'If it is colder in the North than here; she cannot fail to be willing,' his aunt replied. 'And where will you take her, nephew, always supposing that she be willing?'

'Straight to my grandmother at Westerham. So it has been long arranged, and Primrose loves to think of it.'

'To live with my mother? Amyot, you are a brave man!'

'Who knows how soon I may be ordered abroad again? My own house is occupied, and Primrose loves to be with my grandmother.'

'And you, Amyot?'

'And I also, madam.'

Here Mr. Pomfret broke in upon the conversation between his wife and her nephew, to resume the thread of his remarks on the strange fashion in which war was carried on.



'And what think you, nephew, will be the fate of Lord George Sackville? He is not an officer after Mr. Pitt's style. Can you fancy him scaling a precipice at the head of an army, or taking his ships into battle in a storm?'

'Happily, Lord George was only second in command,' Amyot replied. 'Prince Ferdinand knows how to use English soldiers. The King will surely dispense with any further service from Lord George. But I know little about these things, sir, having been so long absent. We, at Quebec, were much rejoiced to hear of the glorious day of Minden, but the news was long in coming to us. What is it, aunt?' For Mrs. Pomfret had thrown herself back upon her sofa with a little shriek, followed by a ringing peal of laughter. Her husband stared, and said:

'I did not know that we said aught so entertaining; but I am glad, my love, that you are amused.'

'No, indeed, it was nothing you said. I am sick of these endless talks concerning battles and sieges; and as for Lord George, I am so weary of his name that it would be a real satisfaction to me if he were shot—which you say is not likely to happen. I was laughing at a sudden thought of mine. You must know, Amyot, that since her poor old companion, Miss Johnstone, died, my mother has been much depressed and lonely; wherefore I cannot say, since Miss Johnstone was only a burden and no use at all. But so it is: and all her friends, seeing her thus lonely, have recommended young persons suitable for companions. But my mother will hear of none of them. She says she is weary of old misses and young misses: the old misses fall sick and die, the young are not satisfied till they are wedded, and she has therefore determined this time to engage a married couple, with whom she trusts there will be peace and contentment, since they will have satisfied their craving for matrimony, and if tolerably comfortable, will not be for ever talking of dying. I had pictured to myself an elderly and perfectly

hideous pair, since my mother is wont to surround herself with monstrously peculiar people; and when it popped into my head that you and your intended bride are the married couple of whom she spake, I could not restrain my mirth.'

'It is precisely the right arrangement,' said Mr. Pomfret. 'The old lady is growing too feeble to be left to her own solitary life. You would not agree, my love, to my wish that she should take up her abode with us; therefore, nothing could be more suitable than this plan of our nephew's.'

His wife shrugged her shoulders.

'She will make them both Methodists,' she said.

It was in the beginning of February—when the snow-drops were peeping forth, and some gleams of sunshine gave hopes of coming spring—that Amyot brought his bride home to his grandmother.

'If you find her ways and somewhat strange speeches vex you, as my aunt seemed to fear, you will tell me, will you not?' he had said as they drove into the village; but she had looked at him with the laughing, fearless eyes of her happiest days, and replied:

'No, Amyot; I will tell you nothing of the kind.'

'But if, as she grows very old, she should grow querulous—old ladies often do—what then, my own?'

'Then she will scold you—I know she will—and I shall listen, much diverted; and when you lose your temper, as I have seen you do when she carries her tormenting over far, then I will rush to the rescue and say something monstrous provoking, so as to draw your wrath on me: that is my little plan, Captain Brough. In what light does it appear to you?'

'As most monstrous treachery,' Amyot replied, as he helped her to alight, the chaise having stopped before the door. 'Now, then, for our first essay! Where is my grandmother, Doddridge?'

'In the oak parlour—she feels the cold terribly,' the old butler replied.

And Amyot led his wife thither.

'Shut the door behind thee, Amyot, and bring thy wife close. Dost think I want to see *thee*?'—as he bent to kiss her hand. 'Truly, I have ugly things enough about me! Untie her hat, and let me see her bonny face! Ay, truly it does my eyes good!'

'And how didst thou leave thy mother, and the new daughter, and the little grandson, Primrose?' inquired the old lady, when the evening meal was despatched, and the trio were seated round the hearth, the young wife's hand imprisoned between her trembling fingers.

'Oh, wondrous well!' Primrose replied. 'Return to the North has been life to my mother, and the coming of the little grandson a great source of comfort. Elise, too, though pining much for home and friends, is growing more contented, and amuses herself with English ways, and will in time grow to feel at home.'

'That is well,' said Mrs. Darley, and she looked at Primrose with a sigh of relief. 'Then she is content to do without you?'

'Oh, but I have promised that whenever she feels a longing for me I will go to her. I promised, and Amyot promised.'

'I promised anything and everything,' Amyot replied.

'But I promised nothing,' said the old lady with solemnity; 'and the matter rests with me: it can in no wise concern you, Amyot. Primrose has come hither to dwell with me. I have had change and disturbance enough in my life: henceforward I mean to have peace and quiet.'

'Yet, if I may venture to differ from you, madam, it must in some degree concern me where Primrose dwells.'

'Nay, in nowise. What! do you not know that in this arrangement you are of no account whatsoever?—

and why? Because, it being a well-known, and well-ascertained fact, that Mr. Pitt spends his days and his nights poring over the map of the world, to see if by chance there remains no other continent to conquer, it is but natural to conclude that he will shortly discover some corner of the world not yet greatly observed, and, having discovered it, will send all the idle soldiers he can find to make it part of the British possessions; and in this wise will you, Amyot Brough, find occupation, and Primrose and I much rest and quiet. Is it not so, Primrose?’

Primrose glanced with laughing eyes at her husband, and replied :

‘Whatever Mr. Pitt does will be right and good in Captain Brough’s eyes; and whatever you do, madam, shall be right in mine.’

‘Nay, do not flatter the old woman, child. I love thee right well, but I never flatter. In fact, my daughter Pomfret more than hints that I am hard to live with; and awhile ago so many things went wrong in this house, that I was almost convinced that she spake truly. Poor Johnstone died—not that I think I am much to blame for that. She was ever bent on proving herself both older and more feeble than I; and if it gave her satisfaction, I have no right to blame her for it. Then my cook and Doddridge quarrelled; they had lived in the house thirty years in peace; but war was the fashion, and they almost came to blows; that was a trouble to me, and I fancied myself to blame. I had not given them work enough or trouble enough, and so they made both for me. But I found a cure for their miseries and mine too.’

‘And this cure, madam?—pray let us hear what it was!’ her grandson entreated.

‘I made them marry!’ the old lady replied triumphantly. ‘I had some trouble, but I made them do it; and now there is peace in the kitchen—rather like the last

peace we made with France, it is true. They still play each other ugly tricks, but all the same they call it peace; and there is no screaming or loud talking; so I am well content.'

'And that ended your troubles, I trust?' Amyot inquired.

'Nay, nay; not at all. This year, the wonderful year, as they call it, brought nothing wonderful to me, except it may be a wonderful number of sleepless nights. You will remind me, Amyot, of my own counsel to you on that matter some two years ago; but what is good for a young man does not always suit an old woman, and these sleepless nights conquered me. And what brought them, do you ask? Nay, that I care not to confess, else shall I never more have duty or reverence from you. I think it may have been the danger which threatened that poor Marquis de Montcalm. Yes, it must have been his sad plight that took my thoughts for ever across the ocean, and made me think of roaring cannons, and fields strewn with dead and dying. I fancied I heard voices call my name each time the wind whistled in the chimney. It was a strange freak, was it not?'

'A very displeasing freak,' said Amyot gravely. 'I hope those visions and sounds have passed away long ere this.'

'Ah, yes!' said the old lady, sighing. 'It was a foolish fancy, and a silly weakness to be so occupied with the fate of that brave marquis, for it could have been nought else. Could it, grandson?'

'Truly, madam, your pity was well bestowed; none deserved it more.'

'Well, well,' said Mrs. Darley, 'that trouble's over, whatever the cause might be. Doddridge prophesies new ones; but we will wait till they come before we settle how to be rid of them.'

'I should like to hear Doddridge's prophecies,' said

Primrose. 'He has such a long face and solemn air. Is it an earthquake that he fears?'

'Nay, nay, my child. You are the subject of his fears, and yet, not you, but your peace and welfare. "Do I mind what a life Master Amyot led his sweet sister? Does the young mistress know?" Such have been his questions for many a long day; and my answer you well may guess.'

'To mind his own business,' said her grandson, reddening.

'Just so, Amyot. "See that you set him a good example, Doddridge," say I. And Doddridge departs to the kitchen, and tells his wife that madam has small hope of peace now her grandson is coming home. Ah, Amyot! see the fruit of the seed you sowed. This is the tempest we have to fear, Primrose. Doddridge has been master here for many a long day; it pleases him but ill to think that times are changed.'

'But it pleases you, dear grandmother; and that is all that matters,' Primrose said, with loving eyes gazing into the old lady's face.

'Yes, yes; it pleases me. I love to have you to make much of me—none have since Joan left me; and I like well to have that troublesome husband of yours safe back from America. Ah, Primrose, how much precious time you and I wasted on pen, ink, and paper, while he was away; and he—why, we both knew full well he never wasted a thought on us.'

'Did I not!' said Amyot warmly.

'Nay, child; don't believe him.'

\* \* \* \* \*

I had thought to say adieu, but no, I add a postscript to my story; and why? good reader: for the best reason in the world—to please myself. Forgive me if it please not you.

Six years have flown since Amyot Brough brought his

bride to Westerham. He has been much away with his regiment in many lands, but Mrs. Darley's house has been Primrose's home at all times, excepting when he has been quartered where she can be with him; and it is at Westerham once more we seek him. And as we travel along the London Road and up the wide village street, we are conscious that another traveller is following the same track as we—a traveller from far-off lands, from sultry climes, if we may judge from his face and colour.

'Mother—mother!' cries an eager little voice, from within the tall iron railing, as we approach Mrs. Darley's abode. 'Mother, may I go a-walking with Cousin Peace? she bade me ask you.'

There is a slight rustle among the bushes, and from the further part of the garden comes Primrose Brough, but little changed, save that her dancing step has grown more sober and demure, her figure somewhat rounder, her face more thoughtful; but the eyes are still full of love and merriment, the voice as joyous as when she was a child.

'Listen, little son,' she says; 'if I permit you to go walking with Cousin Peace, you must go no further than the fields around the church. When father returns home from his ride he will come with Aunt Joan and me to seek you, and he will not be pleased if he finds you have wandered far.'

'Yes, mother,' said the boy, his eager feet restless with impatience to be gone; but she stopped him again.

'Last time I sent you out with Cousin Peace, it was "Yes, mother," to all I bade, but you forgot. James, do you remember what father said to you then?'

The child grew quieter.

'That I could never be a soldier unless I learned obedience. Mother, I won't forget to-day. I may be a soldier, mayn't I?'

'We will see. Now go: Cousin Peace is waiting.'

'An old man's wife and child,' said the stranger to himself. 'He was right—she is wondrous beautiful. And Amyot is not at home; then I will follow the children, and discover of what stuff the next generation of our army is like to be.'

'What is it you want to show me, Cousin Peace?' asked Amyot's little son, as the two children ran hand in hand towards the village. 'Is it the white lamb with black legs and face? I saw it yesterday.'

'It is no lamb, and it is nothing in the fields. It is something in the church, which I found out on Sunday.'



WESTERHAM CHURCH.

'In the church? Mother said we were to stay near the church, Cousin Peace.'

'We shall be near the church if we are inside. I don't see how we can be nearer,' Peace replied. 'And they are cleaning it to-day, so the door will be open.'

Little James was not quite satisfied with this reasoning, and pondered it with serious face, whereupon the traveller remarked to himself:

'Amyot's son; but who could doubt it? His heavy brow and deep-set eyes; the mother has not bestowed her beauty on him, but the child pleases me better as he



is. What can Cousin Peace have to show him in the church? Some little demon on a tombstone, I'll warrant. There's much love for the horrible in woman-kind.'

Thus amusing himself, the stranger followed the children into the church, where Peace, holding little James by the hand, was pointing to a tablet over the door, and saying :

'Look, Cousin James, they have written your name up in the church. Come ; you know your letters ; read it for yourself.'

The boy blushed.

'It can't be mine, Cousin Peace. People's names are written on the church walls after they are dead, and nobody would put mine there. Father would not let them.'

'But it is,' persisted Peace. 'Look ! in large letters, just that you may read it : "James Wolfe."''

'But that isn't all my name. Cousin Peace, you are silly.' Here little James's eyes met those of the tall stranger gentleman who had followed them into church, and looking up in his face, he said : 'She does know all about General Wolfe, sir, she is only pretending.'

'She pretends very often, I should guess,' was the reply. 'And you, too, little man, do you know all about General Wolfe ?'

'I know a good deal,' said the boy modestly. Then, lifting his head proudly : 'My father fought in his army at Quebec, sir.'

'And your father tells you about his wars, and shows you his wounds, I suppose ?'

'No, never ! he never shows his wounds or talks about them. Once, when he was ill, I saw the cut on his shoulder ; but father does not know I saw it. Mother let me see it.'

'And your cousin, here ; she does not care for heroes and wounds and tales of battles ? She is all for peace.'

'Oh, that she is not, sir. My father says she would make a better soldier than I. And my father has a friend, a brave soldier like himself, who saved his life once, and Cousin Peace says she will marry none but him. Only she hopes that when he comes back from India, he will have a wooden leg and only one arm. She does not care for wounds like father's, which nobody can see.'

'Cousin James !' said Peace, much disturbed. 'Your tongue is more mischievous than I ever dreamed.'

'Nay, nay,' said the stranger, smiling ; 'what harm is done ? Tell me the name of this friend of your father's, my lad. I have been in India, and perchance may be able to tell you of what stuff his legs and arms are made.'

'His name,' said little James, much honoured by the stranger's notice, 'is Major Pownal ; but my father, for the most part calls him Jack. And I have a little brother Jack, called after father's friend. Did you know him, sir ?'

'James, I hear your father's voice,' said Peace. And at the same moment the shadow of passing figures fell across the door, while a deep voice exclaimed :

'You say you bade him stay near the church, Primrose ? It is the second time the child has played us this trick. A boy of five to keep us thus waiting ! It is well I am at home to teach him a lesson. His mother is too easy with him, is she not, Joan ?'

'His father, as it seems to me, is somewhat rough,' a soft voice replied. And little James slipped down from his new friend's knee with heightened colour, saying :

'Father is angry. Cousin Peace, we must go. Good-bye, sir.'

'I will come with you,' said the traveller, rising. 'I want to see your father who fought at Quebec. See, they have gone down the churchyard to yonder field. Ah, your little cousin will soon overtake them,' as Peace

started off in pursuit. 'Your mother bade you wait near the church. Well, you are near now. What, are you afraid of your father? Stay with me, and I will protect you.'

'Oh, I'm not afraid—at least, not exactly; but when father is angry——'

'It is not precisely pleasant. I can well believe it, my boy; but here he comes with your little cousin.'

'It was not hard to recognise the gentleman from India!' Amyot exclaimed as he approached; 'though I had not heard of your coming, Jack. Why, you are not changed a whit. But how came you here and not to my house?'

'I saw your little son, and followed him; we have been looking at the tablet in the church, and having much discourse concerning your deeds in arms—it is a martial spirit, Amyot,' and he glanced at the boy, who still held his hand.

'Run after your mother, James, and ask her to wait till we overtake her. Tell her this gentleman is Major Pownal—ah! you had guessed as much, had you, boy?'

'When you called him "Jack," father—not till then—else I would have kept Cousin Peace's secret better.'

'What secret? Never mind—run after your mother.'

'Nay, but you should have heard the secret, Amyot. It is that I am the bridegroom, elected by herself, of your fair niece Peace, only that I lack the necessary qualifications of a wooden leg and arm. When you romanced concerning your old friend in the bosom of your family, Amyot Brough, you should have mentioned that he bears a charm against bullets and cold steel, and has never had a scratch in his life. I much fear the young lady will be disappointed.'

'I never heard my niece's romance. How shocked her mother will be, and she too, when she discovers who you

are! But here is my wife, and my sister whom you knew many years ago.'

'I wondered much why my husband quitted us so suddenly,' Primrose replied, in answer to his salutation: 'but we wonder no longer—do we, Joan? I have ever felt something was wanting to my happiness, so long as my husband's dearest friend was not known to me; though indeed, Major Pownal, I have sometimes forgotten that I had never seen you, so familiar has your name become in our home. Shall we defer our walk, Amyot, and take Major Pownal to see Mrs. Darley?'

It was so decided. Jack Pownal had left his stick on a bench in the church, and turned back to find it, Amyot accompanying him; the two ladies waited, then followed them into the church. Jack's eyes had wandered to the tablet which little James had shown him: Amyot's were fixed on the ground.

'Meeting you recalls it all,' Jack was saying. 'Amyot, I changed into another regiment going to India, because I wanted to forget it all. I have seen plenty of bustle and change there, and made hosts of friends—acquaintances, I should call them—but I have never found one like him: have you?'

'Never," said Amyot.

'What was it, Amyot? Tell me. I have often asked myself, but never found the answer. I have tried to do for others what he did for me, but have always failed most signally. I can't fire men to do things they never dreamt of; I can't rouse the spirit in them that he did. Some one said once, that he was to an army what powder is to their guns. That is a good enough simile; but what I ask you, Amyot, is, how he did it?'

'I don't know. I can't say. Was he ambitious? I suppose so.'

'Ambitious, without doubt. What's a man good for without ambition? But that doesn't answer my question.'

'Nor can I answer it. He had a desperate sense of duty, a ceaseless anxiety to be doing, and a passionate love for his country. Will that help you, Jack?'

'All this I can pretend to in some degree. I suspect it is the degree that makes the difference. I'm a lazy dog at times, Amyot.'

'So he once told you.'

'Well, there's an eager young soldier waiting for you at the door; you were right to give him that name. Amyot, christen all your sons Wolfe. If he had not taken you in hand, your sons would have had small reason to boast of their father. Has your fair wife—I own you have better taste than I thought you had—has she ever heard of your Stirling and Perth doings before the major came on the field? I thought then that you would assuredly end your days at Tyburn. What! is my memory troublesome? Then let us get out of the church—it is no place to talk of such doings.'

'Father—father!' cried little James. 'I've run all the way home and back to tell grandmother that Major Pownal has come; and she has sent Cousin Peace into the garden to gather every one of the strawberries, and little Jack is helping her; and Peace is crying, and says she has a bad toothache, and wants to go to bed.'

'If I may venture to surmise,' Major Pownal remarks gravely, 'Cousin Peace has a great talent for pretence.'

But my postscript grows long and tedious; and yet, with all my striving, I fail to accomplish that which I desired—the discovery of the moral of my history. Major Pownal has helped me through many a tedious page of my hero's experiences, and I had trusted to his aid to guide me in this difficult quest; but, alas! in this matter, his and my wit alike are discomfited: and if a moral be entirely needful, kind reader, seek it for yourself.

THE END.

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