

AMYOT  *BROUGH*

E. VINCENT BRITON.

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AMYOT BROUGH



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Some Account of

Amyot Brough

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(Briton)*

*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

Volume II.

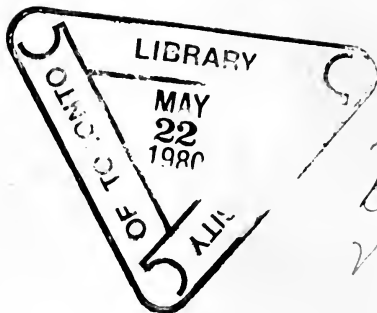


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AMYOT BROUGH.

CHAPTER I.

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 for 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; while 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 rue-

fully. '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 forgotten 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 you are 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 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.’

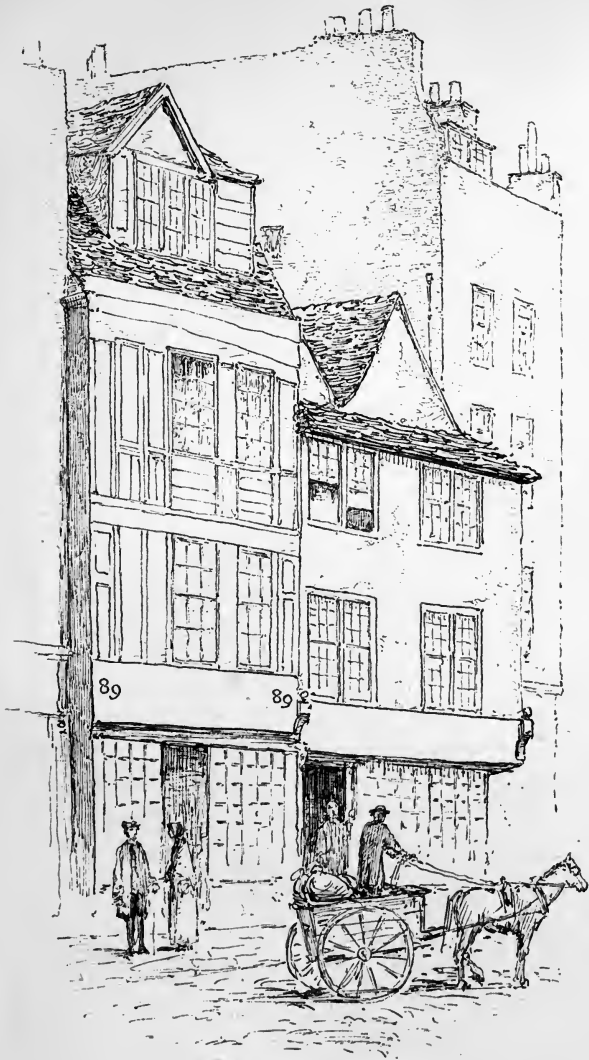
‘ Not at all?—then am I very glad, altogether content; whatsoever misadventure has arrived to you, if that captain is not in it, I will deliver you, you will see.’

‘ 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.’



In Drury Lane.

‘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 further 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 manœuvre.’

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 for 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 reproaching 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 II.

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 playfellow 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 unpleasant 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 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 further ; 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 horri-

fied 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 what he had been thinking about.

During the last few weeks—nay, I should rather say for months, but 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 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 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 rebels 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 world.'

'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 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 any one 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 III.

Across the Border.

AFTER the evident signs of yielding given by Amyot Brough towards the close of his conversation with Jack Pownal, it will be hardly necessary to say that he did not abandon his profession, and that when the 20th started for the North, he was at his post, and did not fail to march and in due time arrive at his destination, the town of Stirling. Had he known for how long a time he should be quartered in Scotland, it is to be doubted whether his friend's eloquence would have had sufficient power over him to keep him to his duty, but luckily, when they left London behind them, it was with the strong persuasion that the peace lately signed would be of short duration, and that before long the war would again break out on the Continent.

That first winter in Scotland, the winter of 1748-49, was ever afterwards recalled by Amyot as the most dreary period of his existence, and even Jack Pownal, with all his cheerful sayings and merry songs and laughter,



Stirling Castle.

owned that he did not feel life there quite to his mind.

‘Are they all Jacobites, or do they not believe that we are made of the same flesh and blood, that they treat us so suspiciously? Why cannot they answer a plain question with a “Yes” or “No,” instead of answering one question by demanding another? I like that a man should have confidence in me; but here I feel always

that it is an enemy's country, and that the inhabitants have a notion that I am going to cut their throats or despoil them of their wealth. Yet are they big, fine men; why should they live in so much mistrust?'

These were his grievances. Amyot had other causes for discontent. It was with him a season of much waywardness and recklessness, when his strong will and passionate nature led him into many disorders, often bitterly repented, but nevertheless too frequently persisted in.

An agreeable surprise which occurred in the spring was the beginning of better things for Amyot, and not a few besides.

A change of officers was one day announced to him by a companion in this fashion:

'Brough, some one said that you knew our new major—is it true, and if so, what's he like?'

'What's his name?' said Amyot carelessly; but as the words 'Major James Wolfe' passed the other's lips, an exclamation of unfeigned delight escaped him, echoed by Jack Pownal and one or two more.

'Well, I need not ask if you like him.

Where did you know him? what age might he be?' his questioner continued; and thereupon followed much discussion, in which Amyot took a much more lively share than was his wont.

'Like him?—everyone does! How old?—about twenty-three; young, but he is strict, severe,' said Jack: 'we shall have some little scenes when he comes,' and he smiled as he thought of the rigid system of order and punctuality which Wolfe loved, and contrasted it with the notions of some then present.

Amyot, too, anticipated some increase of strictness from the coming change, and possibly with not quite so much satisfaction as Jack. Regularity and order were not at this time his favourite virtues; in after years he was wont to smile at the remembrance of these apprehensions, when his admiration for Wolfe had become one of the most vehement emotions of his passionate nature, and it would have been quite impossible to persuade him that anything which Wolfe decreed was wrong. Years afterwards, when he could scarcely bring himself to name the hero without tears, Jack 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 first 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 scrutinizing 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 scarcely met 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, not 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 learned 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 Maréchal 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 Pétite 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 of Amyot's allegiance which lasted until death—an allegiance as enthusiastic as it was humble, pleasant to the one, most wholesome to the other.

'He may say what he likes to me,' Amyot remarked to Jack Pownal, when the latter had laughingly told him that he was led like a bear in a string. 'I can take that from him that I

would bear from no one else—not even from you, Jack.’

‘I am well content,’ Jack replied; ‘and as he is like to be commanding officer here for some time—Lieutenant-Colonel Cornwallis being appointed Governor of Nova Scotia, and Lord George not liking the place—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 for 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 busi-

ness, 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 thy 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.



Old House in Penrith Churchyard.

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 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 such a fine-grown man, no chance now of his settling 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 ceear o’ yersell, bet I hasna telt ye a’. Fooaks has been 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 hear, they’ll easy dew es they moind; bet whiles yer t’ heeam, yer maister hear, an’ soa I shall sleep easy sa lang as yer in t’ hoose.’

‘But what are they likely to do—these terri-

ble villains—when they do come? Is murdering their fashion, or robbery, or a little of both?’

‘I has heeard nowt fer sewer aboot 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 seen 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 fooak’s hands ahint ther backs, and let ’em squall; sum wha wuddent bea quiet noway, has been 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 having 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’ hear ? cos fooaks ses soa, an’ fooaks es maistly reet. Ses Jemmy Stokes t’ mea laast weak, “’Tis yerturn sewerly, Mike,” an’ Deborah

she's heerd 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 believe us,' said Mike, looking much offended; 'tell him 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 party 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 hear it?’

‘Hear what? No, Deborah, I hear nothing.’

‘Noo, noo, listen! I’s e heeard it ower an 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 to 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 toward t’ shippen,’ suggested Wilson, in a low voice.

Amyot obeyed. All there was quiet, and nothing was to be seen. A restless cock, dis-

turbed 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 a while, 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 landlord 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 De-

borah 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



The Griffin Inn, Penrith.

‘Oh, Maister Amyot!’ sobbed the poor woman, ‘wha wud hae thowt it? Ta cum in

broard dayleet—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 dying 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 theear,' she said, pointing to a dark passage which led to various outbuildings. 'Na, he's no hurt, bet he's summat ta tak' ccear 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 terble girt uproar; bet Mike an' I, we ses, "Ye bide theear, sir!" and we fetched girt steans 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 anoof.’

‘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 beeant 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 been 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 anyways 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 IV.

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 marvelous 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 school-fellow?’

Amyot nodded.

‘And he 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,



Stybarrow Crag.

I did not wonder that no one had tracked them, nor do I pretend to know whereabouts they had their hiding-place.'

'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 suggested, 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 or 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 fear 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 disturbed by reason of Guy's wild ways, and here it were well to tell you that he has lately married my aunt's woman, Felicité, 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 you 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 have 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 Prim-

rose 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 the 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 a 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 V.

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 horseback 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 peeped 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 christ-

ened, 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 terribly 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 the 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 naught ; 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 who go forward, but 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 insect 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 naught 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 agonized 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 hast 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 sigh ; 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 am I, 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 pillows 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 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 license 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 nor 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 was 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 VI.

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 sore 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, be-

lieve 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 any one 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 some one 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 opening, 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 otherwise; 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 in 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 VII.

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 marvellous 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 has 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 upon 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 sug-

gested 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 many 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 doats on Guy still.’

‘Tell her that he has gone abroad. Why say any more?’

‘She will hear it from some one 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. Some one said the other day that we have as many as 3,000 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 ; 16,000 men assembled there ; but America, and our boundaries 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 VIII.

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 lieutenant-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 the 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—make 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 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’ 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 alehouses, 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 lieutenant-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 lane, he found himself suddenly accosted by the lieutenant-colonel.

‘We are near some old haunts of yours, Lieutenant Brough. I am about to pay a passing

visit to my old 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



Garden of Squerries Court.

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 play-fellow.'

'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 countrymen, 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 purpose 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 overconfident, 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, marvelously 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 thee, 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 her 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 bad 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 IX.

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, Primrose? That she had no claim on you, but much the reverse? That did she get her deserts it would be hanging, and nothing less? Women 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 storms 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 his 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 some-

thing 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 further, 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 despatched 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, her 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 drooped 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 are 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 some one 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. Tomorrow 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 X.

In which many Questions are Debated.

‘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.

Then began another melancholy period in Primrose's history—a dark autumn and still darker winter. 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.

'If you choose, you can go and live there. You are your own mistress,' she repeated, whenever Primrose timidly introduced the subject, but she knew well that the girl would not leave her.

'Do you wish to be rid of me? Do you hate me altogether?' Primrose would say, with that beseeching look which she could never resist; and then the old woman would reply:

'Hate you? No, child; you are the one thing left to me!'

And then Primrose would cover the thin, trembling hands with kisses, and the subject of removal was dropped again.

But at length she gave way. The post one

day brought a letter for Primrose from her one friend, Joan Pomfret. It was long since she had heard from her, and the letter was received with such rapture that Mrs. Kirkbride could not 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?’

‘These March winds are cold for travelling,’ said 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,

seeing that he is with his regiment in Gloucestershire, helping to quell 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 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 babe 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

baptized 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 catechizes 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 all about him; he is a born 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.

Two days after this, Arnold Pomfret came to fetch home his wife and infant daughter. He had spent two days in London on his road, and came full of sadness at the unhappy termination of the long suspense regarding the luckless Admiral Byng.

'Englishmen should bear reverses better,' he said, 'and in the doubt which none could solve, mercy should have been shown. The anger of the people had had time to cool. The King might surely have been guided by Mr. Pitt.'

And so indignant was he, that Joan could scarce venture to show him a letter from Amyot, in which her brother highly approved the condemnation of the admiral, declaring that whether he was a coward or a fool was little matter; both soldiers and sailors would learn from his fate that England expected great things from them, and would ill brook disappointment, and that this lesson was one sorely needed at that moment. Amyot had not heard him say so in precise

terms, but he was much inclined to think that his oracle, Colonel Wolfe, thought as he did. At which sentiment Mrs. Darley laughed, and exclaimed :

‘Has not the boy found out that most of his own ideas were first formed in the brain of Colonel Wolfe, though it may be possible that Amyot does not always grasp his entire meaning?’

‘And in this case most surely not,’ Arnold Pomfret replied. ‘Colonel Wolfe is not likely to be influenced by the clamours of the angry mob, or by the bitterness of the Court, nor is he the man to wish that ships and lives should be recklessly wasted. Amyot has certainly misunderstood him.’

‘Perhaps not entirely,’ the old lady replied. ‘Colonel Wolfe’s passionate love for his country may have made him determine in his own mind that more might and should have been done by the admiral. His mother, who writes often to me, told me that her son was much inclined to esteem him a coward, and was also impressed with the conviction that Englishmen were too slack in their devotion to their country’s service ; an opinion in which I am disposed to agree, grandson Arnold, if

you will permit me, though I have better hopes of you, now you have Mr. Pitt for your Minister.'

'Mr. Pitt and the King have fallen out on this business. My father thinks he will scarcely continue in power,' Arnold replied.

'There, that is the way with you. He spoke his mind, I suppose, about the poor admiral, and the King was affronted. What poor creatures you are!'

'My grandmother is always one of us when we prosper. She is French, and nought else, when the tide of fortune is against us—madam, it is ungenerous in you!' Joan remarked.

The old lady laughed.

'Truly, I love the winning side,' she said. 'I married an Englishman, but he fought under the Duke of Marlborough. He would have groaned to see these days, when ships go to sea, and admirals peep at one another from a safe distance, and come home and say it wasn't safe to fight—somebody might have been killed.'

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 liked 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 divers kinds, yet have I no regrets to speak of.'

Mrs. Kirkbride looked amazed; then, doubtless remembering that the French are light-hearted 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 XI.

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.’

‘I 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 fight the French in America, when we are sent to fight them nearer home? Is it merely the long voyage that 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 he was 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?’

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?’



Rochefort.

‘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 something in time, I suppose; though it will 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 illtreated 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 of 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 schoolfellow, 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 agonized 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 strange 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 singular 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 any one 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 speedier death on the battlefield. But, by degrees, the periods of wakefulness grew more frequent and longer—in Jack's words, 'Amyot 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,' Amyot 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.'

Amyot 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 repressed, 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 Wolfe 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 miserable. 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 famous 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 expedition ; 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 wretched-

ness—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 these 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.

CHAPTER XII.

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 Amyot *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 their 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 Pomfret 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 tremulousness 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.

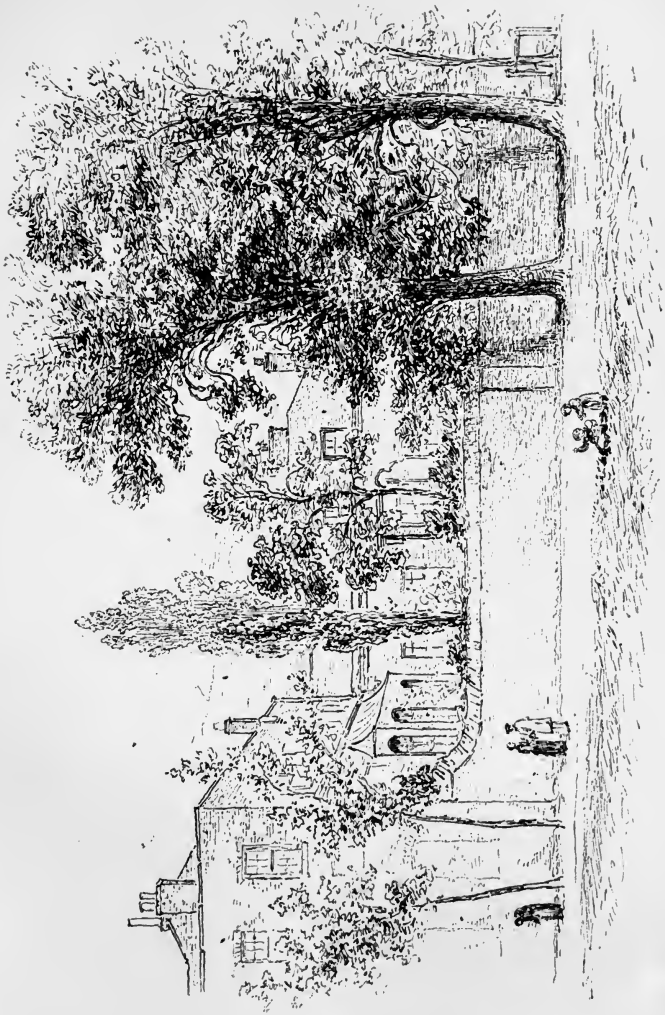
And so the change to Westerham was deferred, much to the wrath of Mrs. Darley, who had set her heart on undertaking the task of bringing her grandson back to life, and was most unwilling that anyone else should have the credit of his cure. Secretly, Amyot had a further reason for delay—of which more 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 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.’



Chesterfield Walk, Blackheath.

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 are 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 catechized, 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 tale 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 marvellous 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 that 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 loved 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 realized? 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 realized, 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, and, 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 to 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 play-fellow 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.’

CHAPTER XIII.

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 Siwnford 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 grandmother’s 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 person; 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 how martial of 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 ecstasy? 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, marveling 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 Pownal, 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 Freshwater 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 upset, 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 Light-house 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 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 tale—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 there. 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 XIV.

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.

‘You will be called upon to undertake many repairs before you let it, Captain Brough,’ his adviser said to him. ‘I believe I ought to have dismissed that old man long ago, but I was tender-hearted, and knew you would not wish to disturb him; but he has not been up to his work for years, and the other men did just as much or as little as they liked. But if you don’t object to do what is really needed, I have as good a tenant for you as I can wish to find.’

He then entered into details which were not, I fear, very interesting to the young officer, and would be tedious, indeed, to the readers of his history. He found Amyot very ready to agree to all he proposed, by no means so keen to secure his own interests as he would have liked to see him, and, strange to say, much more interested in some other matters than in the disposal of his own house. The improvement of some cottages on the property, and the provision to be made for Michael and Deborah, were evidently more engrossing. Amyot had heard of a certain small house near the river Eamont, which Michael had fixed upon as a

desirable home ; and, if it could be had, he was determined that the old man should be gratified. The lawyer thought any cottage would do, but Amyot checked him with the reply :

‘ My sister and I owe much to the old couple. We cannot forget the night when my father was lost, and how Mike laboured for his rescue. Anything they desire, they must have, if I can secure it for them, and they want very little. I will go and see this place, and call on you again. But to that other matter—the purchase of the house I named to you. Did they accept the sum you offered, and is the business settled ?’

The lawyer replied it would soon be all arranged—probably before Captain Brough returned to London. And Amyot, satisfied, after a little more talk, took his leave, and started to walk in the direction of the bridge, to inspect the house on which the old couple had set their hearts.

It was easily discovered, and, as Mike had assured his master, it stood empty.

‘ Seeam es if ’twere meeant for us,’ Mike had said ; ‘ sewer ye’ll knaa it by a foin bit o’ readin’ ower t’ dooar—rakkan it’ll bea ’es Lunnon foak talk. Likely ye’ll mak’ it oot—I canna.’



Eamont Bridge.

Amyot *could* make it out, though it was not exactly in the common tongue of ordinary Londoners; and he wondered whether it was merely the attraction of this fine sentence over the door which had led the old man to such earnest desire to end his days in the house.



Cottage at Eamont Bridge.

‘I doubt much whether he would entirely agree with the sentiment,’ he said to himself, as he read the words ‘Omne solum forti patria est,’ and smiled to think how little Mike cared to hear of any land outside his parish, and how entirely convinced he was, that in no respect

could any other place equal or bear comparison with the country-side where he had been born and bred.

He had tried, while sitting in the chimney-corner with the old couple the night before, to interest them in the great deeds being done by Colonel Clive in India, recounting the story of the great battle in the past year at Plassy, of the taking of Fort William, and of the overthrow of the cruel rajah ; but Mike saw little sense in such proceedings.

To the perpetual question, 'What good will it dew?' Amyot had sought to reply by telling the old man of the vast trade which might be secured to England if she—not France—held sway in India ; Mike was entirely satisfied that France should be put down and kept in her place, being, as he had always heard, a country full of knaves and cheats and pickpockets ; but he did not see what call either country had to meddle with another.

'Fooaks should keep to theirsels, and bide each in his ain place,' was his opinion ; and to think of people sailing half round the world for the very purpose of quarrelling with their neighbours was an idea that made him downright miserable. 'Can't mak' oot where

these French really do leeve,' he remarked at length. 'Thought as how t' bit o' land they'd a right tew wasna so verra fur awa; but you speak o' gaan a ter'ble girt way to git at 'em.'

And again Amyot sought to make it clear to his clouded intellect that these renowned neighbours had been taken with a desire to establish their dominion in America and Asia, and that the English felt it incumbent on them to put an end to such ideas.

'It 'll cost a ter'ble girt lot o' brass,' the old man said. 'I doubt if it beant waste o' toim and money; an' tell me, maister, be this all t' doin' o' yon man they call Mr. Pitt?'

Amyot admitted that it certainly was Mr. Pitt who had decreed that the French must not be allowed to win any more battles, and that it was time for the English to show they had some fight left in them; but the old man grumbled, 'Where be all t' money to coom from, hooap he meens t' pay t' most o' it hisself?' and Deborah interposed, inquiring whether the captain, as she was proud to call Amyot, meant to go all that terrible long way to help in the fighting, adding:

'You should think o' yer sister an' t' farm an' sich loike.'

‘Yes ; but I must think of my country too,’ Amyot had replied cheerily ; to which Mike had answered, with a stare of blank amazement :

‘Yer couuntry is heear, maister ; sewer you’ll be fergettin’ it entirely if you gaa across t’ watter t’ squabble wi’ t’ French about their misdoin’s ; better bide at heeam, say I.’

‘But you don’t understand. The French think to have a New France across the Atlantic, but we say no, it will spoil our trade ; they build forts and stop our merchants ; we will put an end to such doings : it shall be New England—not New France—in America.’

‘’Tis bet a pertence fer fratchin and fightin’,’ said the man, not to be convinced. ‘Hooap you’ll coom back safe an’ soond, maister ; bet I doubt it. And noo tell us about yer sister an’ her hoosband an’ t’ barns.’

They had not heard of little Stephen’s death, and Deborah wiped her eyes as Amyot told the tale, saying :

‘An’ t’ think I hasna seen her sin’ she were a lile barn hersell, an she a mother wi’ a child in heaven ; ’tis likely she’ll be ter’ble changed, captain ?’

Amyot thought not. Older, taller, of course,

his sister was, since she left Broughbarrow, but the same in all other respects as the little maiden who had watched by his pillow on the night of his father's death.

'She is the same sweet sister to me,' he said.

'Ay, you ever called her that when in a good way wi' her; yer mother taught you. It was, "Amyot, kiss sweet sister;" "Amyot, take care o' sweet sister." An' you thought it wer' her name; bet I mind it wasn't allers sweet you were t' her.'

'Na, na; yer were a fractious, bodderin bit o' a lad by times,' Mike put in. 'An' most o' all arter t' father was deead. He had t' whip hand on yer.'

And thus Amyot learned to know the estimation in which he had been held at the very time when he had been treated with most deference and consideration, and had fancied himself a hero and a favourite with all around him.

'What a fuss they used to make about me,' he reflected. 'The young master must choose his dinner; he was older than his sister; he must have the first word; and so on. How well I remember it. And now they tell me I was fractious. No doubt of it. I've made the

same discovery many times since ; but doesn't it ever enter their heads that they had some hand in making me so, I wonder ? Still, they were marvellously good to me : for my father's sake, I suppose.'

And then Amyot remembered that he had yet to visit many of his old haunts, and that the graves in the churchyard must not be forgotten.

How strange it seemed to stand again under the shadow of the church tower, to look at the familiar stones of the Giant's grave, to watch the lads troop out of the Grammar-school, and then pass by the large house with the tall iron gates, and along the familiar road which led to the Beacon Hill. He must go there again, if it were only to call to mind that night when Primrose slept in his arms, kept warm by the dog Tory, to whom she ever after loved to say she owed her life.

Was it wise thus to cherish that remembrance, which now could only renew his pain ? Although Amyot knew that Mrs. Darley would shake her head at him, and Jack Pownal would call him a love-sick fool, did they know the thoughts that filled his mind as his feet spurned the dead leaves which strewed the red soil of the hill, yet on he went, stopping now to listen to the

howling wind and recall Primrose's childish fancies concerning fairies and little folk—now lingering to try to discover the exact spot where that ever-memorable night had been passed ; then sauntering on again, trying to bring before his mind's eye the childish figure which had tripped by his side, and wondering whether, if they returned to live at Blencathara, Primrose, when she walked along that path, would ever think of him. It was scarcely likely.

Lance might return, the bells of Penrith church might yet ring for his wedding with Primrose ; for surely it must be some lingering tenderness for him that had made her so certain that she could never love Amyot Brough. And, if such marriage did take place, Amyot felt that Broughbarrow would be no home for him, and assuredly he would never visit the Beacon Hill again.

It was not a cheerful walk, but he persevered, though the wind blew hard, to reach the top. He liked to feel the rough gusts in his face ; the raging wind seemed in sympathy with the tumult of his soul, and the loneliness of the hill-side accorded well with his mood. A solitary sheep was roaming about at the summit ; by

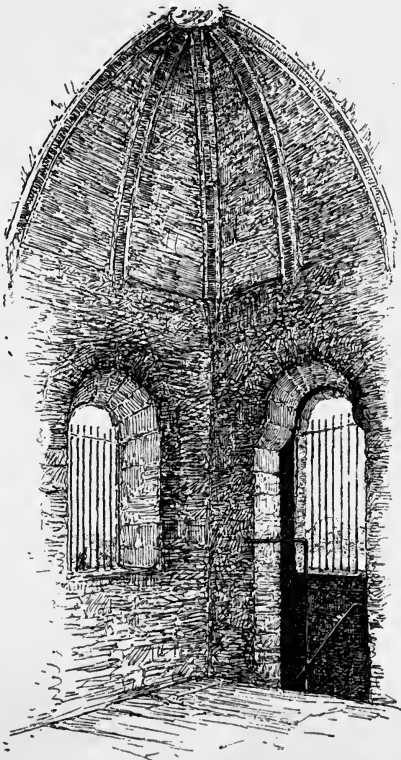
some mischance it had lost its fellows, and was complaining piteously.

‘We may grumble to each other, old fellow,’ said Amyot, as the creature came near and stared at him, ‘and nobody will be any the wiser. I like this place.’

He went inside the Beacon Tower, climbed the narrow stair, introducing his tall figure with some difficulty, and leaning his arms on the deep edge of the window, gazed forth towards the north, and thought, not as in his boyish days, of the old border raids and the lighted beacons announcing the coming of border foes, not even of his own past life and its many changes, but of the uncertain future and all that it might bring.

The lonely sheep went bleating about the hills, making its sad complaint, and his hungry heart echoed the cry for friendship and for love. Then he laughed at himself, as happily he had been able to do since health and strength had begun to return, and asked himself who could have better friends than he, and recalled to memory the story he had heard from many of his brother officers, of Jack Pownal’s heartfelt grief when he, Amyot, had been found to all appearance dead at Aix, lingering with much

satisfaction on the many acts of kindness, the many genuine congratulations on his recovery,



In the Beacon Tower.

he had received from others of his military friends.

There had been times during the past year

when he had wished that Jack had not found him then ; but the fiends that muttered such dark thoughts had vanished, Amyot hoped, never to return. He was ashamed of such a wish now, and would never have confessed it to anyone living, though he had once let fall some such complaints in the early days of weakness and depression, and had listened in reply to some of those vehement, burning words with which James Wolfe was wont to fire the spirits of those around him.

Struggling ever with disease and suffering as Amyot well knew his friend to be, his words were as a trumpet-call ; and the sick man's courage to face life for the sake of the work to be accomplished, rather than for the pleasure it might bring, revived at once at his bidding. And now the breezes on the Beacon Hill seemed to have a like effect ; it was glorious to gaze on the wide expanse of country below him, the distant hills, the quiet lake, the glistening rivers, all so dear to his heart ; and to think that now might his native land be honoured as he would have her—her sons could no more be called cowards, since the tide of victory had begun to turn, and England, not France, might yet hold America.

Returning to Broughbarrow full of these thoughts, Amyot found letters awaiting him which made him very desirous to bring his business to an end 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 business 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 hast 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 from 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 your 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 fright 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 so, 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 XV.

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 scarcely 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 Louisburg, and sent for him a few days ago, and offered him the command, much to the surprise of many, who talk 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 will 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 some one 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 further 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 realized.

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 scarcely 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 reassuring word.

‘Never listen to such tales; there are men who are for ever 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 con-

sider 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 further 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 fire-ships 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 at home, 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 she 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 no board he ought to manage sloop his 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 you ? 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 XVI.

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 latter's glance of inquiry with a courteous greeting; and then, without loss of time, told him why he had sent



Quebec, in 1761.

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 up 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 Pownal 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 panting 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 hill-side, 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 Monckton. 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 sympathizing 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 divers 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 mourn-

ing." 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 awhile, 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 bred 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 be 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 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 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 doze. 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.

CHAPTER XVII.

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 snowdrops 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 had 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 Prim-

rose 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 reverence or duty 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 unpleasing 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.’

‘Amyot’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



Westerham Church.

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.’

‘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 recognize 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 that 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.’

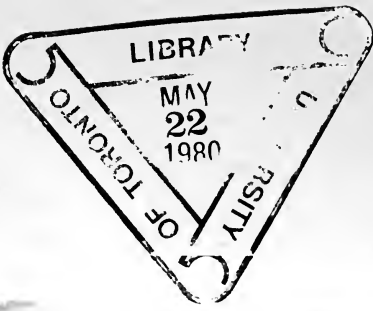
‘ Father—father ! ’ cried little James. ‘ I’ve run all the way home and back to tell grandmother that Major Pownal has come ; and she has sent Cousin Peace into the garden to gather every one of the strawberries, and little Jack is helping her ; and Peace is crying, and says she has a bad toothache, 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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