



JOHN GAMBRIL NICHOLSON  
*The Romance of a Choir Boy*

**THE ROMANCE  
OF A CHOIR-BOY**

**BY  
JOHN GAMBRIL NICHOLSON**

"All that life contains of torture, toil, and treason,  
Shame, dishonour, death to him was but name;  
Here, a boy, he dwelt through all the singing season,  
And, ere the day of sorrow, departed as he came."

R.L.S.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The last verse of a moving tribute by Robert Louis Stevenson to the teenage Bertie Sitwell, who died of tuberculosis on Davros in 1881. Stevenson himself was suffering from worsening tuberculosis, and was to die three years later.



## INTRODUCTION

John Gambril Nicholson was born in 1861 and died in 1931. He was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School, Saffron Walden, Essex, and at Oxford University. He subsequently spent his working life as a schoolmaster, teaching first at Rydal Mount School, Colwyn Bay, then at Arnold House School, Chester, and finally at Stationer's School, Hornsey, London; he retired from teaching in 1925. Nicholson is best remembered now as one of the circle of poets and writers that later became known - though not in their lifetime - as the "Uranians", writers in whose work boy-love themes featured prominently. They included Frederick Rolfe ("Baron Corvo"), Revd E E Bradford, and William Johnston Cory, the last best known for his *Eton Boating Song* and *Heraclitus*.

Nicholson encountered Rolfe - undoubtedly the most colourful of the group - while still a schoolboy in Saffron Walden; Rolfe was teaching at King Edward VI School and in 1880 he gave Nicholson a copy of his first book, *Tarcissus: the Boy Martyr of Rome*. Nicholson's friendship with the fascinating but quarrelsome Rolfe flourished intermittently over a number of years, finally coming to an end in the early 1900s, when Nicholson burnt a pornographic story that Rolfe had written. Nicholson's action, and Rolfe's fury, were both absolutely characteristic.

At Oxford, Nicholson had contributed to the undergraduate magazine, the *Chameleon* (issued once only), as also did Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas. He subsequently published four books of verse, *Love in Earnest* (1892), *A Chaplet of Southernwood* (1896), *A Garland of Ladslove* (1911) and *Opals and Pebbles* (1928). Much of his verse is boy-related, but by no means all; religious and nature themes are common. Nicholson also wrote two novels, *In Carrington's Duty-Week* (1910), a cricket-based school story, and

*The Romance of a Choir-boy*. The latter, written between 1896 and 1905, was privately printed by in 1916 by F E Murray, of Kew, London; this is the first edition since the 1916 printing.

*The Romance* has two outstanding strengths. The first is its achingly nostalgic portrait of an England which, though the author did not know or suspect it, was shortly to be swept away for ever - an England of exquisite, languid, Oxford-bound young men and forelock-tugging rustics, of picture-postcard villages, hay-carts and skinny-dipping urchins, of pale curates and pretty choirboys. It was, *par excellence*, the world of Hugh Hector Munro (Saki), who was writing at the same time and who probably shared many of Nicholson's tastes.<sup>2</sup> Munro himself was killed in the trenches in 1916 and, in real life, Teddy Faircloth and his friends would almost certainly have been obliterated in the mud of Ypres or Mons. Nicholson did not know just how poignantly symbolic were the golden, lingering sunsets that end several sections of his book.

But the greater quality of the book, the one that shines through the narrative from beginning to end, is the authenticity - the almost painful authenticity - of the central relationship between Philip, the man, and Teddy, the boy. Nicholson resists any temptation to idealise the friendship, but mercilessly paints in all its ups and downs, and it is this unwavering integrity, this timeless realism, that lifts his novel high above the banal wish-fulfilment of a conventional "romance". He depicts, for example - and perhaps it has never been better done - the repeated and bruising collision between the typical English boy's horror of any physical display of affection, and Philip's overwhelming need for just that. Philip's excruciating attempts to steal a kiss from Teddy, and the boy's resentment and

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Gabriel-Ernest*, about a wild boy from the forest, or *Reginald's Choir Treat*, a typical Saki extravaganza, in which the hero leads a rabble of naked choirboys down the village street.

anger when one is stolen by subterfuge, represents one of the most poignant - but also one of the most believable - elements in the story. If one sets *The Romance* along Nicholson's deeply-felt love-poems, there can be no doubt that the author is drawing on personal experience. Nicholson, as we would say in our own day, has been there.

Nicholson's was, in some degree, the common plight of men who are fated to love pubescent boys, but for Nicholson it was worse than for most, since his elevated principles would not allow him any physical satisfaction - even of the most mundane kind. His masturbation anxiety was apparent in *A Story of Cliffe School*<sup>3</sup> and it surfaces again in the very last pages of *The Romance*.

Yet even Nicholson's guard slips sometimes, hinting at wider possibilities. These glimpses, as in his poetry, often come in the form of *double entendres*, almost certainly unintentional. We learn of choirboys who, though seraphic in appearance, are "at the bottom" very different indeed, "especially in Oxford". And Philip, musing on the uneven nature of his relationship with Teddy,

"...tried to banish the little prick out of his now serene mood, though it stabbed him now and again..."

Or there are brief, tantalising asides, after which the subject is immediately changed. How one would have liked to read more about the choirboy Billy Stone, who winked at Philip during Evensong, and who was known as a boy "absolutely lost to all restraints of decency and propriety"!

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<sup>3</sup> "Why are we in danger? you ask. Because some of you are being swamped by the waves of sin into which you have fallen. I mean sins of impurity, sins of unchastity: evil thoughts, indecent words and pernicious deeds. I liken them to devouring waters because the end of wicked practices is *death to the body, death to the soul*." (from *A Story of Cliffe School*, c.1985.)

Sadly, Philip asks himself why “it is always the wrong people who are so mighty responsive, and for a moment he wished Teddy would wink at him sometimes in that arch way”.

But poor Nicholson, in the person of Philip Luard, is the unhappy victim of his own circular logic; it is essentially *because* Billy is so “responsive” and so “free in his favours” that Philip has placed him among “the wrong people”, and thus categorically out of bounds. Ultimately, it is difficult to dismiss the irreverent thought that a boating holiday with Billy Stone would have been a far, far better thing than was Philip and Teddy’s wretched ten days afloat.

Yet, in spite of everything, a kind of resolution is reached, and the book ends movingly, with Teddy reified - almost deified - as the living emblem of Philip’s self-denial.

On the debit side, *The Romance* has serious weaknesses; these are essentially the faults of a self-published manuscript, one that has never been peer-reviewed or edited. Misguidedly, Nicholson chose to use *The Romance* as a platform for his passionately-held views on a wide range of topics. And in doing so, he frequently - and in all senses - lost the plot. He had, for example, a deep interest in the Church and all its affairs. The editors are sympathetic to this interest, but we do not think that lengthy hymn-by-hymn descriptions of church services add anything to the story, nor does an entire chapter given over to a discussion of the virtues of a number of hymns of the day among a group of clergy; these passages have nothing to do with the main story, and were probably skipped by the reader even in Nicholson’s day. Much the same applies to ball-by-ball descriptions of cricket matches, laden with cricketing terms intelligible only to devotees. Such passages have been cut, or omitted entirely, with the result that the book has been reduced to just over

four-fifths of its original length. The undersigned takes responsibility for the deletions, also for the footnotes. I think - I hope - that I have done no more than would a good editor of Nicholson's day, if he had had one. The reader can be assured, however, that nothing having to do with the central relationship between Philip and Teddy has been omitted or abridged. And the editors do acknowledge that people exist in this world who have an interest in Victorian hymns and - even more incredibly - in cricket matches. So, if anyone wants to read the original text, they are most welcome: it is available on disk at a nominal charge, on application to the publisher.

Andrew May



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# **BOOK ONE**

## **A BOY**

## THE ROMANCE OF A CHOIR-BOY

### CHAPTER I

#### THE BATHING-PLACE

The little straggling village had passed the warm June afternoon in a peaceful doze. It was late in the “leafy month”, the weather was very hot, and the cottage doors stood open all along the dusty street. The men were in the hay-fields, with the exception of a few gaffers, who sat in their shirt-sleeves just within the doorways, or crept along on the shady side of the road, bent double over their stout sticks, and stumbling on the rough cobbles which did duty for a pavement. Once or twice a woman, who had not yet arrived at the end of her household duties, came out to the pump - a stout figure swaying between two iron pails, which gave out a musical clank as she set them down on the stones. She took them back one at a time, her print-hooded head bending well to one side, and her left arm, bare to the elbow, jerking spasmodically at a right angle with her body. At one or two of the cottage doors certain diminutive bundles of humanity surveyed the forbidden pleasures of the street. Cooped in like so many chickens by slats of board nailed across the doorway, they obtained glimpses of the unattainable beneath the barrier, or over it, or through a midway interstice, as was permitted by their respective statures, and their abilities in the way of standing erect.

All the children of a larger growth were in school, and to the incessant hum of bees and twitter of birds in the vicarage garden was added the almost equally incessant hum of childish voices, floating out on the heavily-scented air, through the open windows of the village schoolhouse. The building stood at the top of the street, exactly opposite the low, square, ivy-grown tower of the church, and the pleasant, old-fashioned vicarage which adjoined it. From the lower end of the street, precisely at the corner, came the occasional clink of a hammer on the anvil: the blacksmith was shoeing two or three carthorses, and the peculiar pungent smell of burning horn mingled with the scent of honeysuckle and roses and blossoming limes.

But when the church clock, with its clumsy gilt hands, marked the approach of the hour of four, the sing-song of the multiplication table died away, and shortly after the hour had struck there emerged into the road a swarm of youthful humanity of both sexes, and the chatter of their merry voices effectually dispersed the languorous spells which had brooded over the sunny scene.

It was Friday afternoon, and there was no more school till Monday morning. Nobody derived greater consolation from this thought than the worthy schoolmaster, Peter Varley, as he straightened things up at the end of the room and watched his assistant-master and his pupil-teacher doing likewise in their respective quarters. Presently, he went to the open door and stood there, getting a breath of fresh air while he waited for his subordinates to come in ere he locked up. His presence seemed necessary outside, for in the schoolyard a scuffle was going on between two of his boys, while half a dozen of their comrades looked on with the greatest interest.

“Now, boys!” cried the pedagogue, stepping forward upon the scene of conflict; “What’s this?”

The combatants released their hold upon one another and drew apart, glaring defiance. Varley looked from one to the other with a sharp, scrutinising glance, as if making up his mind which one he would address. He adjusted his spectacles firmly on his nose, as was his habit when such duties were to be done, and said, severely:

“What do you mean by it, Faircloth?”

The boy addressed was the smaller of the two combatants, and had thus far come off distinctly the worse in the fray. He lifted a pair of angry blue eyes for a moment, then dropped his glance upon the hat which he had just picked up from the grounds. This precious possession had been somewhat damaged in the struggle, and he tried with nervous, twitching fingers to repair the injury. Such a hat it was, too! Presumably made of felt, but of no precise shape or colour; perhaps as much a volcano as anything else. And when Ted Faircloth put it on his yellow head surely no Etna or Vesuvius ever covered more latent fire and turmoil.

He evidently was not going to explain the “meaning of it”, and Varley was turning to the other offender when a smaller boy volunteered a statement.

“Please, sir, that warn’t Ted’s fault. Moses Chapman kept right on a-teasing of him.”

Chapman had regained outward composure. He lifted his great round face and remarked, in self-defence:

“I on’y said as how he ain’t got no stockin’s. And he ain’t got none, nuther!”

“Yew story, Moses Chapman!” squeaked the indignant urchin who had laid the information. “Yew set on him fust, yew know yew did.”

“Dew,<sup>4</sup> I on’y wanted to see if he’d got any stockin’s,” said Chapman, taking a mischievous delight in witnessing the discomfiture of his speechless victim.

A smart box on the ear brought his enjoyment to a speedy termination, and Varley said, indignantly:

“You let the boy alone, or I’ll thrash you. Mind you, I won’t have it.”

Chapman turned away, muttering that he would tell his father, he would. Then, in a very different tone of voice, the master said:

“Never mind, Ted, my lad. I wish I could leave off a few of my things this hot weather! Don’t you take any notice of what Moses says.”

It was kindly said, and accompanied by a hand laid gently on the boy’s shoulder. He had brightened up considerably already, and almost gained control of himself. However, he didn’t trust himself to reply. A look was the only recognition he gave of Mr Varley’s interposition as he walked slowly out into the dusty road.

Standing a moment outside the gate, undecided which way to go, the boy presented a queer figure. The sunlight fell on him in flakes, coming through the leaves of the trees, and the red scarf he wore round his neck made a spot of colour on his otherwise sombre apparel. His jacket was much too small for him, and the waistcoat was the more important garment of the two. They were both of a brownish tint, but nothing like one another in texture. His trousers were of

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<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, at any rate (Author’s note).

corduroy, very much rubbed at the knees: they came down precisely to the tops of his great, clumsy, rusty-looking boots, which were much too big for his feet. As to stockings, Moses Chapmen had only said the truth; Ted could scarcely take a step without displaying an inch or two of bare leg.

The village street was now in something like its former deserted condition. Most of the children had gone into their houses, or disappeared round the corner. Farmer Luard's big meadow was being cut, and Faircloth knew that one of his brothers was driving the horse-rake. He was not inclined to go just then to see the operations; there would be a number of boys down there with whom he wouldn't care to be. He turned in the other direction, and made for the river. That was the best place on a sweltering day like this, and he could find a spot where he might bathe untroubled by the society of any of his schoolfellows.

He turned off the high-road into a meadow, vaulting the gate with an agility which seemed out of keeping with his ungainly costume. At the far side of the gate grew a continuous double line of low, stumpy alders, marking the course of the stream. As he sauntered along the hedge-side, he began to whistle loudly. A boy could scarcely help whistling on so sunny a day. There was not a single cloud in the deep-blue sky, and by this time Ted's eyes were equally innocent of shadow. As he walked he leisurely unbuttoned the superabundance of waistcoat, and untied the woollen scarf at his throat. On the bank of the river he sat down to unlace the great hob-nailed boots, and threw them off with a sigh of relief. A city arab would have laughed at the idea of them, but in the country, where surely to go barefooted in summer was only reasonable, the most poverty-stricken child cannot sink to that depths of destitution!

Ted next unbuckled the narrow leather strap he wore around his waist, and laid his trousers with his coat and waistcoat at the foot of a tree. He was now clad in a blue-patterned calico shirt, and the ill-used headgear before mentioned. In this airy costume he remained for a few minutes, while he examined a heel that had been rubbed into redness by the rough interior of the boot. Standing on one leg in the long grass, he held the other foot in his hand, heel uppermost, and looked at it over his shoulder. This done, off came the shirt over his head, and he scrambled



down the bank and into the water, with the hat still on. He could no more dive nor swim than most rustics; none of his schoolfellows, in all probability, could have swum across the narrow river to save their lives. At this point, however, it was possible to walk across; at no place hereabouts - except in a hole - was the water up to the boy's neck.

Ted was enjoying most thoroughly the cooling bath, when a chance look at the bank revealed his tormentor, Moses, mounting guard over his clothes! He began to wade hastily to the side, but Moses remarked, offensively:

“Now, then, mate! What good are 'ee now? I'll larn 'ee to git me clouts for nuthin'”

He held Ted's boots in his hand, and the bather stopped irresolute, expecting to see them flung into the deepest part of the stream.

“I never told nuthin',” he declared, passionately, the colour mounting up again into his sunburnt cheeks; “don't you meddle with they boots, Moses.”

“Eh, but I'll thraw them where yew'll never get 'em ag'in,” leered Moses; and the next minute they would have gone. But an impatient and commanding voice broke out with:

“Drop that, boy!”

Moses and Ted both started with surprise, the former mechanically letting the boots fall, as he gaped open-mouthed at two figures lying in the grass not ten yards from the spot where he stood. His next movement was to slink away towards the gate of the meadow. One of the recumbent forms was that of Markham Castle, the eldest son of Lord Velis's agent, and Moses had felt Markham's foot behind him once or twice in a way he did not desire repeated!

But it was not young Castle who had spoken; his companion had uttered the angry exclamation. He was now getting up, pushing his straw hat back from its former position on his brows. Ted did not at first recognise him, not having seen him at all for more than six months, and not so closely for nearly twelve, and during that time Philip Luard had developed an incipient moustache.

In one hand he held something which riveted the boy's attention to such a degree as to make him stand spellbound for several seconds, with his eyes on it. It was, as a matter of fact, a hand-camera.

"Got a towel, boy?" he asked.

His pleasant, bantering tone took the edge off the abrupt question, and he stooped to pick one up from the grass.

"No. That doesn't matter, master."

He took a smart run along the bank for forty yards, and came scampering back, with the comical hat held in his hand.

"Such boys aren't used to towels," said Markham, rising lazily to his feet, and extracting a cigarette from his case.

He, too, had one of these despised towels over his arm, for the two young fellows had been bathing at this identical spot.

Markham was wearing brown leggings, and a peaked cloth cap; he looked what he was - a smart young farmer. He was a great deal broader than Philip, and his fair complexion and healthy look was in marked contrast to his friend's dark and somewhat delicate appearance. They had met first in the hayfield, where Philip had taken some snaps of the workers; and then had strolled off for a dip and saunter together.

"Much obliged 'ee, master," said Ted, on his return.

Whether he meant he was grateful for the rescue, or for the offer of the towel, Philip did not know. Ted was already almost dry, and ready to assume his garments once more. The complexion of his face and hands was amusingly different from that of the remainder of his body, and if had no stockings today a faint line round each sturdy leg showed that he was by no means innocent of the use of garters. Philip noted these points as he lingered on the spot a moment. Markham was already turning to go, but as Philip hesitated he wheeled round again and addressed the boy:

"You're a Faircloth, aren't you?"

“Yes, Muster Markham.”

“He comes down to field for us in the evenings sometimes,” explained Markham.

“Does that lout bully you?” asked Philip.

“Well, he do a bit. But that don’t do me no harm as I knows on.”

“A clout on the ear wouldn’t do him any harm,” said Philip.

“He’s had one a’ready this arternoon,” said Ted, calmly, as he struggled with his shirt.

“Who gave it him?”

“School-master.”

As the boy had other protection, Philip didn’t feel inclined to patronise him any longer. Besides, as Ted gradually clothed himself, he became in the young collegian’s eyes a much less interesting figure. So now he was ready to go, but Markham added one more question:

“Not left school yet?”

“Not yet. But that ’on’t be long before I dew. I’ll be wukkin’ for yew come Michaelmas, I reckon.”

“Aye, that’s right.”

Then the two lads walked away.

“I like that boy,” said Markham; “he’s a civil young beggar, and his people are a decent sort. His mother lives in one of those cottages down by the lodge.”

“He’s a wonderfully pretty boy for a rustic,” said Philip, accepting a cigarette; “but they all talk such a shocking lingo.”

“Oh, he talks rather well, I think. He’d improve if he’d come in the choir. Cecil told me he wouldn’t. His people don’t come to church.”

“Where do they go to, then?”

“Walk in to the Methodist chapel at Croxton, I daresay.”

“How old’s that youngster.”

“Oh, about twelve or thirteen; ask Varley - he knows all these things.”

“Oh, I don’t want to know particularly,’ said Philip. “Whew! how hot it’s been today. Well, I suppose you’re going back to the hay?”

By this time they were on the high-road, and their ways parted. Markham went back to the hayfield, where his duty lay. He was learning farming under Philip’s father, and this was his first hay-making season. Philip was going home for some tea to the pretty farmhouse which lay in the opposite direction. But he remained leaning on the gate, contemplating the smoke of his cigarette, for several minutes after Markham had disappeared. He was fiddling with the fittings of the camera in his hand, when Faircloth came up to the gate. Then, despite his avowed indifference to the answer, he felt inclined to put to the boy the same question he had last asked his companion.

Ted jumped over the gate, and they walked a little way up the road together. Philip was really impressed with the boy’s pleasant, unaffected manner, and allowed him to handle the camera which caused him so much wonderment. An explanation of its method of working brought them to the lane down which Philip had to turn. He sauntered into its welcome shade with a friendly, “Good-bye” to which the younger boy replied with a deferential “Good-day, master”.



## CHAPTER II

### AT THE NETS

Ted had half a mile more of dusty high-road to traverse. It was five o'clock, and his mother would be expecting him, so he stepped out briskly despite the heat, and soon passed the lodge, with its numerous latticed windows, standing just inside the fine gates of the park. The Eagle Lodge was at one of four entrances to Velis Court, and to Ted it appeared only a trifle less magnificent than the mansion itself. The occupant was in his shirt-sleeves, doing a bit of mowing on the edge of the gravel drive. He looked up as Ted passed, with a sidewise nod of the head.

"Hallo, Teddy, my lad! Can ye keep warm?"

This facetious enquiry, frequently heard in this district on a blazing summer day, seemed to the boy to require no answer. He walked on beside the leafy hedge on the opposite side of the road, catching glimpses of waving green barley through the frequent gaps in it. The sound of the lawn-mower grew fainter, and the pipe and twitter of birds took its place as he came up to his own garden-gate.

As he walked up to the open door, between the beds resplendent with phlox and wallflowers, a girl emerged from the neighbouring cottage. She had a white flapping bonnet on her head, and carried a tin can and a blue handkerchief made into a bundle.

"Hallo, Ted! Ain't yew had your wittles yet?"

"No. I'm a-goin' to git 'em now."

"Well, there now! If I wasn't just a-settin' out to the field myself. That's gettin' latish, ain't it?"

"Hand 'em over there, Lizzie; I shan't be more'n a few minutes."

The girl gave him the can and the bundle over the low hedge that separated the two gardens. They contained her father's tea, and Ted would soon sally forth with his brother Harry's meal similarly disposed. It was one of his customary duties during hay-time or harvest, and he was always ready to take John Marsh's provisions also, to save Lizzie the journey.

Lizzie March was a comely, strapping girl of eighteen, who "walked out" with Ted's other brother, Joe Faircloth, who was employed on the Velis estate as an under-keeper. Joe was in the cottage when Ted entered. He had a very fair position, and was a good catch for Lizzie, whose father was a common labourer, earning fourteen shillings a week.

It was pleasantly cool inside the threshold of the Faircloth's cottage; the latticed window was wide open as well as the door, so that there was a current of air right through the two rooms. As the boy came in, he looked across the dark room into the lighter kitchen and out into the sunny back-garden, where the shadows of the apple-trees were gradually lengthening towards the cottage-wall.

Mrs Faircloth and her stalwart first-born had taken their tea, and the woman was filling a can for Harry. Ted sat down and bolted several huge chunks of bread, spreading them with dripping from a yellow basin. There was a dish of red and white round radishes on the table. Of these he also partook freely, washing the whole down with copious draughts of lukewarm tea from a big blue mug with a white handle. In ten minutes he was on his feet again, preparing to betake himself to Farmer Luard's field - a modern David bearing refreshment to an agricultural Abinadab.

The simile strikes me as affording a means of describing my hero. Ted was not exactly "ruddy"; his broad, smiling face was too far gone in sunburn to be called rosy, though the glow of health was on his rounded cheeks. His hair was not red, like the shepherd-boy's, but yellow,

and cropped fairly close. Without his hat he had a remarkably youthful appearance, scarcely looking his twelve years and odd months. His mouth was a rarity for a country boy; it was well-closed, to begin with, and his short top lip arched up in a graceful Cupid's bow beneath the insignificant little nose. He was stiffly made and broad across the shoulders, but he had a somewhat slouching gait, owing perhaps to his uncouth wearing apparel. Above all this, and more impossible to convey in words, there was a fresh, ingenuous, honest look about the boy, and he met fearlessly the eyes of all the world with his own blue orbs, in which wonder was just about this time the frequent expression, but which had not learned to express shame.

The air was cooler, and the sun's rays had lost much of their power to burn, as Ted went along the road, with his hands full. In spite of this, he walked slowly; his feet were tender, and one heel in particular was paining him. He was glad to reach the hay-field and sit under the hedge to rest, when the provisions were safely handed over to their prospective owners. Harry Faircloth, a great burly young fellow of seventeen, had been driving the horse-rake all the afternoon. Up and down the field he went, the curved iron prongs collecting the swathe and dropping a heap of fragrant hay obedient to the pressure of the driver's foot. This was applied about every ten paces, and the long, straight lines which lay across the meadow were increasing steadily as the work went on, the spaces between them showing green and fresh by comparison.

Ted did not stay long to watch the machine at work, or the mowers who were bringing down the long grass in the next field with a monotonous *swish-swish* of their scythes. He crossed two or three fields, and climbed over a light iron fencing into the cricket-field. Here, as he expected, there was nothing to be seen at present but the nets standing empty. He had not been long lying on the turf behind them before the clock struck six, and Philip and Bolton, his father's groom, came along. The field was immediately behind the Luard's house, the river, crossed by a long



footbridge, running between the two. It was one of Philip's fads, and his father had indulged it at considerable cost; Philip had been captain of his school eleven, and had been tried both as a fresher and a senior for the 'Varsity. Next season he was confidently expecting to gain his blue; he was considered to be a brilliant bat and perhaps a still better bowler.

Arthur Castle soon made the third player - a slightly-built fair-haired young fellow, who had gained his colours at Marlborough as a bowler the previous year. He was not a particular chum of Philip's, who thought he saw a trace of patronage in Arthur's languid droll, which was not apparent in his brother Markham's bluff, good-natured manner. Arthur was going to learn surveying, but at present was assisting his father in his office at Croxton, and doing a great deal of riding about the Velis estate, which extended over a large part of the county. Ted knew him "to speak to", but liked him less than he liked Markham. Arthur had a choice vocabulary of bad language, and neither Philip Luard nor Ted Faircloth thought any the more highly of him on that account.

Some of the village boys turned up to field as soon as practice commenced. Ted liked to get well out in the long field, as a rule, but this evening his foot hurt him, and he stood behind the net while young Castle batted, reaching under for balls that lodged inside, and tossing them back to the bowlers. While Philip had his batting, Ted was bold enough to creep inside the net, and did useful work in the same way; at some risk to himself, as there was scant room for a wicket-keeper behind the sticks. Markham came down later on, in his ordinary clothes; his boots were in his brother's bag, and he had half an hour's practice before they gave up for the evening. Mr Luard sauntered on to the field as soon as the nets came down, a fine, big man, with dark side-whiskers. He farmed eleven or twelve hundred acres, and probably made five or six hundred a year out of them.

“Put a flower in Muster Luard’s coat,” agreed his men, “and he’ll hold his own in a crowd.”

He took an interest himself in the cricket, and invariably made one of his son’s players when Philip organised a team.

When the practice drew to an end, the four or five boys came round the young players to look out for coppers. These were almost always forthcoming, though the practice of “scrambling” them was a very unfair one to the smaller urchins, who were seldom lucky enough to secure a coin. Ted never took part in the fray: he felt it to be somewhat of a degradation to accept pay for his efforts; or, at any rate, to go shoving forward to ask for it. Had anyone offered him the penny he might have taken it, but to-night, as usual, he helped Bolton to take down the nets and carry them into the shed, instead of hanging round Philip and the Castles.

Then the wicket for the morrow’s match was inspected, and some watering and rolling was done in the cool of the evening. Ted did not go away till nearly eight; it gave him pleasure to assist his betters, and he made himself extremely useful. Had he heard Arthur Castle’s remarks about the advisability of allowing great clumsy boots on the pitch, he might have been wounded. But they were spoken aside, and nothing marred the serenity of the evening for him.

It was indeed most serene. The sun set in a golden glow behind the little wood, and the western sky went through every shade of yellow till its hues deepened into brown. The rooks about the farmhouse were making a great clamour. The dew began to fall heavily, and clouds of gnats congregated along the hedgerows and under the trees. A mist was rising all along the course of the river, and the trees stood out above it like islands in the sea. Everywhere there was the fragrant scent of hay. As Ted turned out on to the high-road the church clock struck eight, and a young moon showed over the village.

The long day' work was done. Men were going home wearily, their tin cans in their hands, their feet raising little dust-clouds as they tramped along. In the village street candles and lamps were beginning to twinkle from cottage windows, where the place of a blind was supplied in most cases by geraniums or other pot-flowers grown on the broad sills. But Ted turned his back on the village. The Friday night choir-practice was of no interest to Ted.

The "Waggon and Horses" at the corner had, as yet, no fascination for him, even on pay-nights: his brother Harry, however, was usually to be found in its vicinity at that time, and the boy met him at the garden-gate. At Chalk End, boyhood was very much curtailed by the necessity of earning a living as soon as possible. At fifteen a boy could earn seven shillings a week as a farm-labourer. Thenceforth he assumed manhood, smoked a short pipe, frequented the pub, absented himself from church on Sundays, and looked about for a sweetheart. At eighteen he was an eligible husband; in some cases, a father already.



## CHAPTER III

### BED-TIME

Ted went inside and found his mother out. Joe was in the front-garden, leaning on the fence and talking to Lizzie, who was among the flowers on the other side. The boy took off his coat and boots, lit a small hand-lamp, and sat down to read. There were less than half-a-dozen books in the house; his favourite was an old bound volume of "The Penny Magazine", which had belonged to his mother since her days of domestic service in Croxton. He turned over its leaves tonight very languidly, and soon began to think instead of reading. Finding his inclination for literature so small, he shut up the book. Then he had a wash in the kitchen, and took a turn round the garden behind before going up to bed. It was far more pleasant outdoors than in: the air was pure and sweet, whereas the lamp smelt vilely. They were burning paraffin in it, though it was a benzoline-lamp. The oil, purchased from an itinerant vendor, was the worst kind imaginable. But Ted's bare feet grew cold, and he did not stay out long. He ascended the winding stairway of eight or ten steps, shut off from the kitchen by a door, and proceeded to the window of the bedroom which he shared with his two brothers. The cottage had only four rooms; this bedroom was the largest of them, and contained one large bed, and one small one, which was really a child's crib, shut in on all four sides. It was a front room, and, leaning his elbows on the window-sill, Ted looked through the open casement up and down the road that glimmered white between the hedgerows. There was nothing much to see. Across the road lay a wheat field, beyond which was a belt of trees. Above the dark outline of this "planting" shone a white star, the only conspicuous object in that part of the sky, though there were others which became visible to a searching eye. To the ears of the boy came the subdued sound of the two voices in the garden, the tinkling of sheep-bells from the park, the occasional rattle of wheels on the road, and once the heavy breathing of an engine that snorted through the railway-cutting over at

Shendon. The intolerable stench of the oil-lamp was pervading the cottage, but Ted's head was out of the window, and he only smelt the scent of flowers and new-mown hay.

Presently Mrs Faircloth came in sight, bearing a basket on her arm. She had been to the little grocery-store for tea and sugar and a loaf of bread. Ted waited till she entered the house, and then called down the stairs:

"Don't forget my stockin's, mother!"

He had only one pair just now, and they had been hanging on the clothes-line at the back since morning. Ted had had enough of their absence, one way and another. He began unconsciously to recall the joys and sorrows of the day. On the whole, it had been a pleasant one for him, and the most delightful incident in it was Philip Luard's protection and patronage. Ted had no chums of his own age, and his temperament favoured hero-worship. He admired Philip to a certain extent, because he had a powerful wrist-stroke behind point and a puzzling break both ways; but, above all, because he was intellectually the giant of his acquaintance. Philip had been a scholar of Charterhouse, and was now a scholar of his college: the Castles hadn't as much brains in their two heads put together as Philip had in his little finger. At any rate, so Ted decided it. It was the old story of admiring the incomprehensible; the boy was not likely to look up to Markham because he could superintend the hay-making, or to Arthur because he sat on his horse like a centaur. But Philip, with his Greek and Latin; with his dark, searching eyes, and thin, intellectual face; with the touch of nobility that came from a superior mental calibre - he was, in Ted's eyes, a figure that towered far above the Castles.

And Philip had patronised him; openly, by the riverside, and on their homeward way; and tacitly, when Ted's presence in the net was tolerated, and his help accepted in shoving the roller. So his honest little heart was very happy. He was seldom contented with his lot; there was within him a latent ambition to rise above his circumstances - how or when it was to be accomplished he knew not. But to-night, for once, at any rate, he envied nobody in the world. He had caught sight of the first star in the twilight - a harbinger of countless thousands yet invisible. A vista of dim possibilities opened before him as he clambered into his crib. Before he went to sleep he

had studied the nearer end of this vista more closely; the morrow held promise of another pleasant afternoon, and he fell asleep, hoping his new protector would “come off” in a fashion very highly different from that in which he had performed in the 'Varsity trials.

While Ted was getting to bed, Philip was strolling about the rose-garden, cigar in mouth, thinking of the boy. Just as the uneducated mind was attracted by the educated, so was the unhealthy and commonplace appearance of Philip contrasted most unfavourably, in his own ruminations, with the robust and striking bodily beauty of the boy. Philip was too moody by nature, and far too introspective and romantic, to possess a healthy mind in a healthy body. He knew better than anyone how hollow-cheeked and careworn his face was; how a passably fresh look was only arrived at by judicious manipulation of hair and clothing. He was subject to very frequent attacks of headache, and neither slept well nor ate well. Since he had been a child he had been delicate; he was spare without being wiry, and athletic without possessing much endurance. If he had made a name for himself, it was, in all respects save as regards mental attainments, despite natural qualifications rather than by virtue of them. Ambition had spurred him on all his life to make the very best of any abilities he had in any direction whatever, so that at one-and-twenty he was looked upon by his acquaintances as a most accomplished young fellow. But he himself knew with how little it had all been done; in a word, he felt himself to be decidedly shallow. Thus he envied depth wherever he saw it, and compared himself to his own detriment with everybody that was genuine or spontaneous.

Thinking about the boy he had befriended, he recalled, as he sauntered under the pale stars, so many points wherein the rustic had the advantage of him. Ted had looked his best in an absolutely unclothed state. He had enjoyed his bathe unreservedly. He had displayed genuine interest in Philip's camera. He had been content with his share in the cricket, and delighted with his participation in his work on the wicket. How different was his own case! What would he not give to be as natural and simple himself!

Sitting down on the seat outside the arbour, with great dewy roses dangling over his head, he reviewed his own personality severely yet impartially. He had a certain amount of aptitude for

classics; but far less than anyone imagined. He appeared fairly well-informed on general matters; but was often astounded in his heart of hearts at his own ignorance. He could be faked up into presenting a passable appearance; but his looking-glass told him how easily he could look positively ugly, if not repulsive. A reputation for good temper and suave manners was his; but he knew his own narrow and peevish thoughts. He posed as a great athlete; yet how many less-esteemed cricketers could make strokes that were utterly beyond him! Those who knew him casually might think him healthy as young men go nowadays; his heart knew its own bitterness. Admitting that he was a fair exponent of tennis, billiards, rowing, swimming, hurdle-racing, riding, football - what were they as distinctions? He could write erotic verse in the old French forms, play the piano a little, sing a little, act a little - so could hundreds of men. He photographed in a very amateurish fashion, he cycled, he danced, he skated: but in no company was he ever able to pose as *facile princeps*.<sup>5</sup>

Discounting himself thus was a favourite pastime of Philip's. A fit of dissatisfaction seized him now and again, and the result of it (or was it the cause?) was always the same - a violent attachment to someone who could supply his deficiencies. It had happened several times since he had gone up to Magdalen. Then he had found invariably that his idol had its clay feet, and he had turned his back on it.

Even so had he tramped a Northern moorland, stumbling towards the patch of golden blossom that lit up the boggy, cloud-haunted waste; only to find the gorse too tough and prickly to touch, to gather, or to bear away.

On this Friday evening he was wondering if life would continue to be an endless series of illusions and delusions succeeding one another *ad infinitum*. Even if it would, he was obliged to admit that illusion, while it lasted, was very agreeable; and, after all, who in this world was ever known to have attained his absolute ideal? A couplet of Robert Louis Stevenson" came into his head:

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<sup>5</sup> In the first rank.



*“The world is so full of a number of things,  
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings!”*

Philip smiled, despite himself, as he said the words aloud, and went on to ponder them in his mind. The thought was often occurring to him - one of those flashes of inspired utterance which light up the gloom as infallibly as an inch of magnesium wire. But magnesium would be a trying kind of illumination for constant use, and Philip muttered, as he rose lazily from the wooden seat:

“If one could only live up to it!”

Then he pitched his cigar into a dew-drenched plot of strongly-odorous mignonette, and went towards the house. The floor-lamp was being lit in the drawing-room. and he walked in through the open window and sat down on the piano-stool.

“Tired, mother dear?”

“Not now, dear,” his mother replied.

She did not turn round from her operation of adjusting the great fringed shade, but the dullest observer might have deduced from her tone her love and pride of her big boy.

“Aren't those roses fine?”

She moved a big bowl of huge yellow tea-roses from the table to the stand in the window, holding them out for Philip's approval as she passed him.

“Lovely!” he said.

He buried his nose in the bowl for a moment, but he really cared nothing for flowers, despite his sentimental nature. Wheeling round on the stool, he faced the keyboard, and with a light touch played a fragment of his favourite nocturne; then threw off his lethargy, jumped up briskly, and took the fastening of the long windows out of his mother's hands.

“Supper!” cried the hearty voice of his father from the adjacent room.

Mrs Luard gave the lamp a parting touch, and Philip, with a hasty “Half a minute!” went upstairs three steps at a time to look at his negatives.

There were five of them lying in the bottom of the bath under a shallow stream of running water. He took them out one by one, holding each in turn between his eye and the little benzoline lamp on the bracket. The last one apparently pleased him most; he scratched the back of it clean with his finger-nail, and smiled as he laid it down tenderly in the water.

“Philip!”

“Coming!” he cried, in response, and went in to supper apologising.

Later on, in the drawing-room Philip lounged on a settee near the lamp, and looked listlessly through a little square anthology of verse already well-thumbed by him. His father talked of hay-making to his mother; he heard nothing of the conversation till the name of Faircloth arrested his attention.

“What’s that, father?”

“I said Harry Faircloth picked up the horse-rake very quickly.”

“Oh!”

Philip returned to his book, suppressing a remark which was on the tip of his tongue. He turned over the pages slowly - aimlessly, he would have said; but in reality he was looking for a sonnet to suit his mood. Something with a tinge of gladness, because of the summer day scarce dead; of melancholy, because of the gathering dusk; of mystery, to match the shadowy garden, the great elms, and the river gleaming beyond the lawn. Something with a touch of peace, for the serene stars’ sake, and of hope, for the little moon’s. Something sensuous, to combine with the rich perfume of the roses; tender, to suit his memories of the day.

We read into true poetry our own emotions, and he found what he wanted. One such utterance - a woman's love-sonnet - was there, with everything not only understood but expressed. This was Mrs Meynel’s “Renouncement”, so highly esteemed by Rossetti:

*I must not think of thee; and, tired and strong,  
I shun the love that lurks in all delight -  
The love of thee - and in the blue heaven's height,*

*And in the tenderest passage of a song.  
 Oh, just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng  
 This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;  
 But it must never, never come in sight;  
 I must stop short of thee the whole day long.*

*But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,  
 When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,  
 And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,  
 Must doff my will as raiment laid away,  
 With the first dream that comes with the first sleep,  
 I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.*

Philip was tired now. He went to bed, taking his precious negatives up to his bedroom, where he ranged them along the mantel-piece.

He shut the window after he had blown out the light; his room was low, but large, and he had no craze for fresh air, especially at night. As he pulled the latticed casement close, he heard the distant tinkle of a sheep-bell, just as Ted Faircloth had heard it more than an hour before. But the boy was, by this time, if Philip could have seen him, sleeping quietly in his narrow crib, to the accompaniment of the two big brothers' snoring.

"*Sleep makes us all Pashas,*" thought Philip, as he stretched himself on the cool sheets. It was a long time making him one, however. He was tired, bodily, but his mind had another hour's hard labour before it would come into the somnolent frame.

## CHAPTER IV

### A VOTIVE OFFERING

Ted woke at half-past five next morning, roused by his brother Harry's somewhat ponderous movements about the bedroom.

"Let's go and bathe, Hal," he suggested, raising himself on one elbow.

"Ain't got no time, boy," retorted his brother, sitting down on the bedside to lace up his great rusty boots.

He had no shirt or coat on as yet, and when the boots were fastened he took these garments on his arm and went lumbering down the dark stairway to perform his morning ablutions. You would have looked in vain for toilet accessories in the bedroom; the young labourer took a tin bowl and a piece of yellow soap from the kitchen sink, and obtained water from the pump outside the back door - used by the occupants of both cottages. Ted lay and listened to the sounds from below: the rattle of the bowl, the clank of the pump-handle, the gush of the water. Then he leaped out of his crib and began to dress himself. His grey worsted stockings were lying close at hand, and before drawing them on he examined critically the feet that had been so sore the previous day. He gave a satisfied little sigh as he finished tying the stockings up below the knees with two strips of tape, and stood up straight for a moment to yawn lazily before he concealed their glories beneath the corduroy trousers, which, for their part, awoke no feelings of joy in his breast. Collecting the remainder of his costume, and casting a glance at the slumbering form of Joe, the boy proceeded downstairs. Harry was operating on his hair, with the help of a comb and a small looking-glass that hung on the wall over the sink.

"There's plenty o' time now," said Ted, as he passed him.

"Tell 'ee there ain't, then. That's ha-past foive a'most already."

He knotted a kerchief loosely about his neck, and looked in the cupboard for a bite of bread.

“Ef you’re a-goin’ to bathe, that ain’t no good for ye to go a-scrubbin’ yerself like that there,” he observed, in deliberate, good-natured tones.

Ted was spluttering under the pump, and rubbing the yellow soap well into his eyes and ears.

“Bathin’ ain’t no good for cleanin’ of ye,” remarked the boy.

“That’s all very well for boys to go a-swimmin’,” added the elder lad; “men ha’ got to wuk!”

He strode through the cottage, and marched off to the field whistling merrily. Ted dried his face and hands meditatively on the towel behind the door. It wasn’t much fun going to bathe alone, after all; and it wasn’t over-hot just at present. To his bare back and arms the fresh morning air was decidedly cool, and he put on the blue shirt gratefully. A moment more was spent in reflection, and then he followed his brother to the hay-field, gnawing at a crust as he went.

The smell of wallflowers was the strongest of the many sweet odours that went up from the cool, moist earth. He plucked a blossom that was swinging above the level of the garden-gate, and tried to fix it in his coat. But there was no button-hole, and he hadn’t a pin; so off came his hat, and the charms of that remarkable head-piece were further enhanced by a spring of gilly-flowers thrust beneath the band.

The twittering of small hedge-birds was incessant on both sides of the road. Dewdrops hung on every spray and leaf and blade. A pearly haze was thinning away gradually; the blue sky was already visible directly overhead. Everything was very still, and a horse’s whinny came from a distant stable, followed by the deep, musical “Gee-whoa!” of the man who was harnessing a team to a timber-wain.

The Eagle Lodge seemed to be asleep, wrapped in a vaporous blanket; but even while Ted looked it woke up. Its multitude of long, narrow windows caught the slanting rays, and the building opened a score of twinkling eyes. It made the boy think of Philip’s camera, and for a moment he imagined himself the possessor of the magic apparatus, roaming about to catch the fleeting effects of the early morning. This shows how little Ted understood of the capabilities of

a fixed-focus hand-camera, but the thought led to a much more practical idea, which he at once set about carrying out.

He walked briskly along the road till he came to a lane on the left. Turning up it he pursued his way over the deep, grass-grown ruts till he reached a gate leading into a sloping meadow. There was a beaten pathway along the side of it, under the hedge; and Ted eagerly set to work to gather dog-roses.

They grew abundantly, and he made a careful selection of the very best he could find. Then he added a few blue flowers from the hedge-bottom, and surrounded the bunch with broad green leaves. He tied the clumsy nosegay with a bit of tough stalk of grass; Ted possessed neither knife or string.

Then, by a field-path and through a coppice of young larches, he bore down on the Luards' house. At first he ran, with his posy of wild-flowers held in a hot little hand; gradually, however, the pace steadied down, and when he drew near the house it became a very slow walk. And as his speed slackened, an anxious expression in Ted's bright eyes deepened, till at last he stopped short and held counsel with himself.

The wild roses were, of course, for Master Philip; but how was the offering to be conveyed to him? Was he likely to be ready to receive gifts at six o'clock in the morning? Ted felt, as he thought it over, that there wasn't the remotest chance of his seeing his patron just then, and his natural shyness might have prevented him from proffering his gift, even if Philip had come that very moment through the gate of the stable-yard. How much less, then, was it possible for him to take them round to the kitchen-door, and leave them there with a message that would ensure Philip's knowing whence they came?

While the boy stood hesitating, just around the yard, an aged farm-servant shuffled across it, carrying a pair of milk-pails which depended from a yoke over his shoulders. Ted took a step forward, laying his hand on the iron fastening of the gate.

"Yew be off there, yew young varmint!" growled the man, looking up at the sound.

He shambled towards the boy, who turned and fled as precipitately as if he really had been premeditating a theft of milk or eggs! The surly old fellow proceeded to his work, with sundry chuckles over his own success; the boys at Chalk End were not wont, as a rule, to answer his ill-natured remarks with anything but youthful impertinence or a shower of stones. This one, however, had fled like a sheep at whom the sheep-dog dashes. He ran down the lane as fast as his feet would bear him, and only stayed his flight when breath failed him. Even Ted would not have been routed thus in ordinary circumstances, but the presumptuous nature of the project must have made him more nervous than usual.

He stood in the middle of the lane, getting back his breath with long-drawn inspirations. His face was red through its rich sunburnt colour, and the clumsy little hands that held the posy twitched spasmodically. He looked at the blossoms: they had suffered in his rapid flight, and there was scarcely a whole one to be seen: a big beauty, which he had carefully put in the centre, had lost every single petal.

With an exclamation of anger and disappointment he chucked the whole nosegay into the ditch, and flung himself down full-length on the side of the grass. The pity of it presented itself vividly before his mind, and he sobbed as he lay with his head on his arms.

A vague idea occurred to him of lying there until someone came along and pitied him. The thought was succeeded by the reflection that he was being rather babyish, and then he got up, dried his eyes on his sleeve, and wandered slowly out of the lane and along the road.

Presently he came to the gate where Philip had waited for him the previous afternoon; he clambered upon it and sat on the gate-post, his feet on the top rail, his elbows on his knees, his face between his hands. But his grief soon abated, and his disappointment passed out of remembrance, as a smoke-wreath disperses and fades in the blue sky. The indefinite feeling of loneliness and despair gave place to an interest in the ridiculous antics of a lanky-legged foal that gambolled round a staid old grey mare in the meadow. Soon he gathered a handful of coarse grass from the foot of the gate-post, and spent some time in trying to persuade the ungainly creature into allowing itself to be fondled. Having succeeded in patting its neck and stroking its

mobile nostrils, he became suddenly aware of the sensation of hunger, and made his way home for breakfast. It was nearly eight o'clock, and, though the morning was no longer bright, the air was excessively close. The sky had clouded over, and Ted guessed that the great heat of the past day or two was about to culminate in a storm, or, as it would have been locally designated, a "tempest".

When he reached the cottage-door, he found his mother pouring the boiling water from the kettle into the teapot. Joe sat in his shirt-sleeves awaiting the making of the tea. He, too, had been out to attend to his duties in the plantations, though he had allowed himself a later rising than his two more energetic brothers.

"I reckon that's a-goin' to rain, Joe," remarked the boy, as he entered.

"Not afore noon, I reckon," replied Joe, drawing his wooden-bottomed chair up to the table.

The screeching of its legs on the brick floor almost drowned his prognostication of the weather. They ate "dripping-bread" again for breakfast. The "family" was at home at Velis Court, and the abundance of dripping in the Faircloth ménage betokened the fact as clearly as did the flag that hung listlessly against its staff on the top of the tower. Ted's appetite was sharpened by the morning ramble; he ate away manfully at the homely fare, and the blue mug was replenished twice ere he sat back in his chair. The untoward fate of the floral offering had not spoilt his breakfast, and now, as he lolled with his hands in his pockets he whistled merrily. What boy could be miserable on a Saturday morning in summer - with the prospect, too, of a cricket-match in which his hero was to play an important role?

But Ted was not quite duty-free. A voice called him from outside, and Lizzie passed his father's "victuals" into his hands. Then his mother filled Harry's tin bottle with tea, and tied the red handkerchief round some substantial hunches of solid fare. Off went the youngster, well loaded: two men's breakfasts make a fair burden for a small boy, whose hands are itching to be free for the first adventure which may present itself on the way.

A red bundle in one hand and a blue in the other might be sufficiently picturesque, but Ted wished them both at Jericho. For the sake of getting rid the sooner of them, he went down the



road at a lively trot, leaving Joe to gossip with his girl. The young keeper was never in any particular hurry, and Lizzie would stay beside the hedge till such time as Mrs Marsh's impatience should find vent in shrill calls for assistance in the house.

Just as Ted reached the gate of the field Markham Castle rode up to it, and he got a good-natured nod from the young fellow as he held it open for him with his foot. As he was going to devote the day to cricket, Markham was putting in an hour or two somewhat earlier than usual. Ted ventured to address him, encouraged by the recognition he had received the previous evening.

"Is Muster Luard a-comin' down to-day, sir?"

"Mr Philip, do you mean?" asked Castle, with a smile. Getting a nod of acquiescence from the boy, he continued: "No, I don't think so; why should he be?"

"Ain't he agoin' to take any of them pictures?"

"Oh, he got those yesterday; he doesn't want any more. You go and look him up; he'll take you just as you are, I daresay."

Markham was quizzing his comical appearance; the brown, flushed face under the remarkable hat, and the little hands and wrists weighed down by the provisions. The sleeves of his jacket were as much too short as the legs of his trousers. Ted didn't like being bantered about his costume, even, as we have seen, by his mates; and now, his sensitive little spirit wounded, he turned away, muttering:

"Don't want he should!"

Markham touched his cob with his heel, and rose along the footpath smiling. Ted stood a minute, kicking the lowest bar of the gate with a sort of pout on his lips; then he gave it a vicious push that sent the hasp over the staple with a jar, and, having thus relieved his injured feelings, passed on to where the machine was going up and down the long meadow. His mission accomplished, he left the men to the discussion of their breakfast on the bank under the hedge, while he made off to the cricket-field.



## CHAPTER V

### THE CRICKET-MATCH

When he arrived he found no signs of activity, but after he had lain half-an-hour on the turf, meditatively chewing stalks of grass as he drummed the ground with his toes, Bolton put in an appearance with two understudies, whom he directed in the operation of pitching the tents.

One was a small dressing-tent; the other a large marquee wherein the ladies would presently assemble to watch the cricket-match and drink afternoon tea. There was no luncheon-tent today; that was only erected when the visitors were some neighbouring club, such as Ancaster or Shendon.

Thus Bolton, who had to see about the harnessing of the horses and the drive to the station, did not stay long to assist in the erection of the tents, and Ted made himself generally useful to the two men - holding the ropes, fetching the pegs, and unrolling the canvas. He enjoyed this immensely; having done it on previous occasions, he knew all the nice points of the job, and when there was a breezy morning it was no joke to get the refractory canvas into position. But to-day it was easy: the air was ominously still, and the oppressive heat was the only pretext for grumbling on the part of the three labourers.

“That dew make me fair sweat!” exclaimed one, as he stopped, after some powerful blows with the mallet, to wipe his beady brow with his bare arm.

One or two village boys prowled round, and every few minutes would swell their number. A Saturday match was a godsend to them and their mothers, and Mr Luard liked to see the urchins on the ground as long as they kept to the far side, where they were in nobody’s way, and couldn’t possibly get behind the bowler’s arm. Presently a question arose as to whether or no the nets were to be put up. Bolton had not mentioned it, and the men wanted to save themselves the labour. But Ted had a word to say, and was urging the necessity of it, when Philip appeared, not yet in his flannels, and carrying his bag. Ted would have liked to run forward with an offer to

relieve him of his load, but didn't dare. Philip decided against the nets going up, but Ted was not at all mortified by this: he had merely wished to continue working for the good of the cause.

And now Saul Quicke turned up, and he and Philip selected the pitch; Ted knew where to get the pail and the brush, the whitening and the water, and a rare good time he had, along with other companions of his, while the old professional marked out the wicket and set the sticks in position.

Before the wicket was ready, the waggonette returned from Shendon, and the visiting eleven walked on to the ground, giving the pitch a careful inspection ere they made their way to the dressing-tent. Bolton and Saul Quicke drove away the horde of youngsters that surrounded the tent open-eyed, open-mouthed, and open-eared, and they had to depart to their own place, consoled by a liberal dower of coppers. But when, a few minutes later, the first couple of players ready turned out to have a knock on the edge of the ground, the excuse of fielding ("scouting", they called it) sufficed to bring most of them again into evidence. Ted didn't run after any long-ball hits; he stood as near as possible, fielding two or three smart cuts with his hardy little shins in preference to putting down his hands.

He was on the look-out for Philip. But Philip, after greeting his guests, had gone into the house again; he had a number of things to see to, and when he appeared was in a hurry to change.

"My boots, Bolton!" he said, impatiently, to the coachman, who was sending down one or two to Markham Castle.

"In the coach-house, sir!" and Bolton was looking for somebody to receive the ball he was obliged to abandon, when Philip's eye fell on Ted.

"You, boy - go and fetch them for me, will you?" said he.

The style of address was not so curt as it may read; it was accompanied by a pleasant look, and Ted ran off in half a moment on the welcome errand. He crossed the bridge over the stream, and was going through the gate of the stable-yard when who should confront him but the surly milkman who had already put him to flight once that morning.

“*Now* what are you arter?” he enquired, recognising in Ted the abashed runaway of the previous encounter.

But this time the boy was within his rights, and he spoke up proudly:

“I’m a-goin’ to the coach-house arter Muster Philip’s cricket-boots!”

He proceeded thither, while his adversary shuffled after him, mumbling ungracious remarks about “a pack of young varmint”. The boots stood on a window-sill just inside the door, spotless, as Bolton alone knew how to make them. Ted thought he had never seen such beautiful whiteness in all his born days, and he handled them most carefully as he ran back to the field. The old labourer took most unnecessary precautions in the way of dogging his steps, and watching his progress across the fields again.

“Here they be, sir!” cried he, rather breathlessly, at the tent-opening.

“Oh, bring them along!” called Philip, from the inner compartment, where he and two other belated members of his team were getting into their flannels; and very diffidently the boy bore them to their owner.

Philip was carefully hanging his starched shirt on a hook in the canvas; Ted stared in wonder at the vest of open net which the young fellow wore next his skin, and then Philip turned away, with an “Ah, thanks, awfully!” to repay him for his run.

The Long Vacation captain had won the toss, and he and a confrère walked to the wickets in company with Philip, who was to start the bowling. Philip bowled slow, often breaking considerably both ways; Arthur Castle at the other end slung in fast bumpy stuff, coming up to the crease with a sidelong slip.

Philip was not feeling up to the mark; his head was giving him the familiar premonitory warnings that it was going to ache badly before the day was over, and he knew that bowling wasn’t the best thing for him just now. Besides, he was tired already; some mornings he seemed to get up tired, and never freshened up till he’d had an afternoon nap - sometimes not even then. Ted had not been observant enough to notice how pale and listless his hero was looking; but, from far away under the hedge where he sat watching the game, he saw Philip pass his hand

wearily over his forehead when his first over was finished and he went to his place in the slips. The air was oppressively close; there was no breeze to temper the heat, and on the horizon, away over the flat pastures, there was an ominous tinge of copper in the heavy sky. It corresponded precisely with Philip's state of health and temper; he felt nervous and fretful, and several trifles had irritated him already. He had put some printing-frames in his bedroom window before coming down to breakfast, and then had forgotten in his anxieties about the team to look at them till too late. The negatives were a bit thin, and by ten o'clock the prints had become hopelessly overdone. After that the non-arrival of a pair of trousers had annoyed him; he would have to play in those which he had, and they were not so spotless as they might have been. To finish up with, two of his eleven, the Grays of Shilford, had wired to say they couldn't arrive till twelve through missing a train, so a couple of the farm-lads had to be pressed into the service as substitutes when Philip lost the toss. Later in the season he would have no difficulty, but just now it was not much of a team to put into the field.

Now Philip was a gentleman, and never anything but courteous to his equals and affable to his inferiors; but it cost him a great deal often to be so. It did to-day, and the repression of his vexation made him bowl badly; so he put Bolton on for himself, and went to field at mid-off. When the board showed sixty for one wicket the storm burst, and there was a general rush for shelter. The thunder had been muttering all round, and now some sharp flashes and heavy peals accompanied the deluge which descended. The only shelter was to be found in the tents, or under the great oaktree which overshadowed them; so while the players sat under canvas, not caring to risk a drenching by a rush for the house, the men and boys from the village ran round to the same quarter to stand under the tree.

The scorers' table was in the exterior part of the dressing-tent, and round it were clustered the more democratic members of the home eleven; the Luards and their associates found themselves congregated, by the same natural instinct, in the dressing portion at the back; while the 'Varsity men were in possession of the marquee - up till now innocent of lady-spectators.

There was nothing to be done but kill the time of waiting. Soon tobacco was largely in evidence, and the odours of strong shag and Turkish cigarettes mingled with the fresh keen scent of the thirsty earth, now liberally deluged with the summer rain.

“Cigarette, Phil?” asked Markham, proffering his case.

“No, thanks, old man,”

“You look seedy.”

“Yes, I’ve got a bad head; it’s so confoundedly close.”

“Soon be better after this; you want a brandy-and-soda, Phil!”

Philip smiled, then turned to the “Sportsman” for a few minutes. But he could not settle to cricket reports, and soon went out to the exterior group.

The rain was ceasing; the tail of the storm-cloud was visible, and in its rear a piece of blue sky. Everything was soaking, and little rills were pouring down the top of the tent. Philip went up to his father, who was looking rather moody.

“Bad for that hay, father,” said he.

“Yes, but it won’t take much harm. Bad for your cricket!”

“Oh, I don’t care much; I’m a bit out of sorts. I suppose we shall have to wait a little?”

They decided to give the wicket an hour’s rest; it was now only twelve, and there would be an hour’s cricket before lunch. It was too early to take the meal then, chiefly because it couldn’t be ready, but most of them went into the house for a biscuit and a drink.

The village boys were pretty wet, despite the sheltering tree; some of them went off as soon as the rains stopped, but Ted remained. Turning up the forms which had been inverted during the storm, he sat down on one of them just outside the tent, and contentedly listened to the conversation which still proceeded round the scoring-table. It was much cooler now; there was a little breeze, and the air was fresh and soft. Ted took off his head-gear, and found its floral decoration rather less fragrant than it had been six hours earlier, so he threw it away. After that, the drops falling from the corner of the tent amused him for a time, and before he tired of watching them Philip came back to the ground, and strolled round, arm-in-arm with Markham

Castle. Markham wore a light-coloured Norfolk jacket, and looked the personification of big, broad, boyish good-nature. He was half a head taller than Philip, and probably weighed two or three stone more than his companion; Philip appeared very slight and delicate beside him, in his back and white blazer, and yet he was a trifle Markham's elder. But one small boy, watching them pace leisurely from end to end of the field, had eyes and thought for Philip only.

Ted was beginning to want his dinner, but he did not intend to go home for it till two o'clock; it was not so important as to take him away just then, and very soon he was able to forget his hunger in the delights of "scouting" for some players who took a bit of practice up against the bowling-screen. The ball came along very wet, and Bolton was off in quest of a plentiful supply of sawdust.

About one o'clock another start was made, and Philip felt very much fitter by this time. His head was better, and his temper had cleared with the sky. He had been in to take out his prints, which, placed in a more judicious position this time, had just been ready for his attention. His new trousers had come, but he had not donned them; he had almost changed his white boots for his brown ones, but it was hardly wet enough to warrant such precaution, especially at home where, instead of messing about with blanco himself, he had Bolton to do them over with some secret preparation for him! He resumed bowling now, and found his length at once; despite the disadvantages of a wet ball and an easy wicket, he sent down some puzzling deliveries, and by lunch-time seven wickets were down for 105.

Ted ran home merrily to his dinner; he had to eat it alone, but he didn't mind that. The rest of the family had already partaken of the frugal fare - a "mess of taters" and bread and cheese, with water to wash it down. Philip did not enjoy his cold duck and custard-pudding nearly so much as his young protégé enjoyed his homelier viands. Ted was splendidly well always, and ready for his "victuals" as a matter of course: in all probability he had never heard of indigestion, and he put away potatoes with most alarming dispatch.

While he was eating, Mrs Faircloth was busy in the kitchen, and Ted carried on a conversation with her through the open door. All the doors, in fact, were open, and two or three



times Ted tilted his chair on its back legs to get a peep out into the road. This was whenever a footstep sounded on the pathway. It was not of much use to look through the window: the panes were small, diamond-shaped, and of dull greenish glass; besides, the pot-flowers on the broad sill made an effectual screen.

The boy rose to go; he'd only spent fifteen minutes in the house, but he was already anxious to be back at the cricket-field, lest he might miss any of the sport. As he passed his mother, in going out to the back of the house, she put out a hand to feel if his clothes were wet; he had already declared they were not, but mothers like to verify small boys' statements on such points. He passed muster; Mrs Faircloth contenting herself with:

“Don't yew go a-sittin' on that there wet grass, mind!”

He had half-expected to meet with reproof for his late arrival, as his absence at mid-day meant that Lizzie had to take two dinners to the field, or that the men had to send home for them. But to-day the storm had suspended work in the hay, and Harry and Marsh had both come home for their meal. Ted was having a real holiday, and felt very happy as he left the house once more.

Of course, when he got back to the field cricket had not yet recommenced. Keen as the Luards were, forty-five minutes had to be taken out for lunch, and the boy sat for five of these before the first batch of players strolled over the bridge. The sun was now hot again; above the wood some great clouds were slowly moving across the blue sky, their upper edges shining brilliantly. Like mountains tipped with snow, Ted thought they were; but he'd never seen the real thing, to be sure, and the mountains in the air are, like the castles there, a great deal more imposing than their earthly counterparts.

Philip, too, was struck by the fine clouds as he returned from the luncheon, but he looked at them with the photographic eye, and felt tempted to go for a camera; he was always meaning to get some cloud negatives, but so far his landscapes - to be sure, he hadn't a great many - suffered from a total absence of the effects which are to be easily printed in.

The next thing Philip saw was our little friend, sitting patiently on the fence at the far side of the field: a picturesque figure against the green background, with the overshadowing hat hiding

most of his pleasant, sunburnt face, and the corduroy trousers half-way up his swinging legs, which were ludicrously terminated by the great clumsy boots. Philip wondered whether the boy had sat there all through the interval, and a Quixotic desire formed itself in his mind to send him into the house for a good blow-out. But that wasn't practicable at all; Philip despised convention in his heart of hearts, but nobody was more punctilious than he in its outward observance. He realised that if he was going violeting in a hedge-side like this he must mind the nettles. He spoke to the boy, however, as he walked past him in making a circuit of the field; one of the visiting team was an old Charterhouse boy of Philip's time, and they were strolling round together, smoking.

"I suppose you're wet through, Faircloth?" Philip asked, halting before the youngster for a moment.

Ted lifted up his face, and merely shook his head negatively; he was delighted at being addressed, but afraid to speak before Philip's companion.

"Been home to dinner?" he next asked; and again a movement of Ted's head was the only answer.

"Had a good appetite, I hope?"

"I most allus do, sir."

Ted was encouraged to speak by the look Philip gave him. The tone of the questions was one of the lightest banter, much the same as that in which Markham Castle had spoken to the boy earlier in the day. But Ted had looked into the young cricketer's eyes, and had realised that there was no maliciousness underlying the smile on Philip's face and the pleasant words on his lips. So he had smiled in return, and his reply amused Philip, who passed on with a nod and a friendly, "Ah, that's right!"

"You're very gracious to your retainers, Phil," remarked young Copestake, as they strolled on.

"Oh, he's not my retainer," said Luard, fiddling with his cigarette, "but I sent him for my boots not long ago."

“Well, let’s say ‘your valet’, then,” continued his friend, laughing. “Why don’t you put him in livery? That’s a queer costume he’s wearing.”

Philip was on the point of telling how he’d got a snapshot at the boy on the previous day, unencumbered by any disadvantages of apparel; but he held his peace, for Copestake had already passed on to some reminiscences of their days together at school.

When play was resumed, Philip and Walter Bingham had a good time; going in together, they were not separated till the board showed sixty-five, and then Bingham retired with thirty-eight of them to his credit. He was a slashing bat, who scored very quickly from the outset, and was run out on this occasion through his eagerness to make runs. Philip at first played a more careful game, but as he began to prove the poverty of his opponents’ bowling, he batted more freely, and was soon making some very good late cuts. Ted was delighted to see Philip batting well, but he did not applaud the boundary hits loudly as did some of the older spectators: there was a soupçon of sycophancy about it which the honest young fellow despised.

He joined heartily in the hand-clapping when, at last, Philip had to retire - caught at mid-off for a capital seventy-three. That was the fall of the fourth wicket, and the total was then nearly equal to the visitors’ score. But after Philip left, there was a bit of a collapse. Soon, heedless of his mother’s injunction, Ted had descended to the grass, and resumed his favourite attitude, sprawling at full-length, and with his feet waving aimlessly in the air, or drumming vigorously on the turf. He got up when the innings was over, and joined three other boys who were sitting not far from him. But their conversation didn’t satisfy Ted, and when Chalk End turned out again into the field he went back to solitude once more. It was nearly five o’clock, and the sight of the tea-drinking which had been going on in one of the tents had reminded him that there were duties to be done towards his neighbours. So in a few minutes he went off home. Cricket is tiring to watch, be the spectator ever so enthusiastic and young, and Ted was not very strongly tempted to remain. He had seen Philip’s innings, and he had not as yet put himself on to bowl; Ted was quite content as he strolled leisurely along the road, no longer dusty.



## CHAPTER VI

### WONDER-LAND

It was still brilliantly fine, and nature was looking ten times more lovely for her welcome bath; Ted whistled loudly as he went, in rivalry with the birds that warbled from every tree and hedgerow. He walked for a time on the strip of green beside the road, till his boots were adorned with a choice embroidery of grass-seeds sticking to the wet leather, and their toes grew rustier than ever. Every dozen yards or so a little canal crossed his path, connecting the gutter on the roadside with the ditch under the hedge, and Ted was so deeply engrossed in counting his strides from one gully to the next that he was startled on receiving a clap on the back as the first intimation that his big keeper-brother had overtaken him.

“What, ‘a’ yew done wuk a’ready?” asked the boy, in surprise, as he tramped on beside Joe.

“Aye, I hev so!” replied he; ‘I’m a-goin’ into town along o’ mother arter tea. Are yew a-comin’?”

“No, I reckon I’m a-goin’ down to Luard’s agen to see the rest o’ the cricket.”

“Ain’t yew most had enough o’ that yet? Why, yew’ve bin there all day, I reckon!”

“Sew that ain’t finished yet,” said Ted; and he added, proudly: “and I’m a-goin’ to help put the tent down. I wuk’ed a good piece this mornin’ a-puttin’ of ‘em up.”

“Arned some pence, I reckon?”

“No, I didn’t want nothin; I like it!”

“Well, I like ‘arnin’ money, I dew; that ‘on’t dew to wuk for nothin’. I don’t ‘old with it, no-ow!”

By this time they had reached home, and found Mrs Faircloth already dressed for marketing, though the tea was not yet made. She often went in to Croxton on the Saturday afternoon, but on this occasion she had waited for Joe’s company. The young man was going to buy himself a new waistcoat, and his mother’s assistance was indispensable.

“I’ve bin askin’ Ted to come along of us, mother,” he said, as they sat down to tea, “but he’s fair crazed ’bout cricket!”

“Won’t you come, Ted?” asked his mother.

“I’ll see!” quoth Ted, oracularly.

He would have to consider the question seriously, and while he ate his tea he did so.

It was only two miles and a half to Croxton, and the little country town was lively on Saturday nights. It was market-day, and on such days the streets were full of people doing their shopping; the windows were set out with a bewildering variety of desirable articles. Burly farmers were gathering round the Corn Exchange, comparing their little bags of samples, or transferring money from receptacles that differed very slightly from their sample-bags. The cattle-yard was a scene of bustle, where drovers met and disputed, bought and sold, shouted and swore, and poked thick sticks into the ribs and rumps of offending beasts; or unceremoniously lifted unwilling calves, mute sheep and squealing swine into the net-covered carts. Stable-yards were full of vehicles, and in the side-streets long rows of dog-carts rested their shafts on the public thoroughfare - an overflow impossible to accommodate on the premises. Then, as the summer day darkened and the exodus of the country-folk was largely accomplished (six o’clock generally saw the departure of most of them), the street-lamps were lit - never-ceasing wonder to the village yokel - the shop-windows turned on their gas-jets, and the belated vendors of fruit and confectionery continued their traffic at the stalls in the market-square under the brilliant flare of naphtha-lamps. There would certainly be a peripatetic conjurer, a quack with pills and potions and tooth-extractions while you wait; perhaps an organ-grinder; or, at least, a street-singer bawling some doggerel about love or murder, and selling a broadsheet of twenty songs for a penny.

All these scenes flashed before Ted’s mind as he munched his bread-and-dripping with fixed, dreamy eyes. On the one hand, then, were the delights of town - shopping, change, excitement, bustle, novelty, wonderment; on the other was the quiet cricket-field - the finish of the match, the taking-down of the tents, the departure of the visitors in the wagonette, and perhaps the opportunity of rendering personal service once more to Master Philip.

The last inducement decided Ted, and as the hasty meal finished he declared he was not going to Croxton. Taking up his hat, he went towards the door. Yet he went with an air of indecision. Nothing was said to induce him in either direction. As he reached the threshold he turned back and made a proposal.

“Joe, ef yew’ll buy me a new hat, I’ll come along o’ yew.”

“He do want one mortal bad!” exclaimed his mother, parenthetically.

“Let’s look at your’n,” said Joe, turning from the mantel-shelf, where he was looking for a light for his pipe.

The boy twirled it across the room by its edge; Joe caught it and pretended to examine it critically, even placing it on top of his own head; then, flinging it back to his younger brother, he cried:

“That’ll last yew a long time yet, Ted; I reckon I shan’t hev a deal left arter buyin’ my own weskit. Where’s your Sunday cap?”

Ted turned away, the eagerness dying out of his wistful eyes.

“Mother won’t let me wear that o’ week-days,” he said, in a hopeless voice; and was going forth, when Mrs Faircloth’s voice recalled him.

“Ef you ain’t a-comin’ with us you’d better take ’Arry’s victuals,” she cried; and at the same moment Lizzie Marsh, standing in the adjacent door, called to him to know if he could take her father’s can.

“They’re a-comin’ home theirselves,” returned the boy, relieved at that critical moment to see the two men coming along the road.

They were in the habit of returning for meals except in the very busy days of haymaking or harvest; and their appearance now betokened either that they had finished for the day, or that it was a Saturday, or that they were engaged on some unimportant work since the storm had suspended haymaking. Ted did not wait to discover what it was; he was anxious to be off, for he really wanted very much to go to Croxton: Saturday night was the only night he could go, as a rule, and a little more might have persuaded him.

As it was, he was scheming in his mind the combination of both attractions; if he could start for the town at, say, half-past seven, he might manage a scamper through its paradise of streets and return with his friends; his mother was usually glad to employ him on his homeward journey as a beast of burden, but then she seldom could count upon the company of one of his brothers.

The cricket witnessed by Ted that evening was a very poor substitute for the jaunt in the other direction; he saw the tail of the Vacation eleven hitting away merrily at Philip's second-rate bowlers; the innings defeat had been saved, and there was not much interest in the remainder of the game. The boy turned homewards in the still evening with a slight feeling of regret, which arose from the fact that Philip had gone into the house immediately after the departure of his guests, and had not again reappeared.

Ted would have liked to know how long the Castles and the curate were going to stay; perhaps they would remain to supper with the Luards, as they often did.

When the boy reached home he saw at a glance that it possessed no attractions for him; everybody was out, and there wasn't even a dog or cat on the premises to afford him company. So at once he set off at a brisk pace towards Croxton; he might meet his mother and brother as they were returning; or possibly he might run up against them in the town. In spite of the fact that Ted had been on his legs already for something like fourteen hours, he swung up the hill to the cross-roads with a light step; after the turning, he deserted the orthodox footpath to patronise the other side of the broad road, where a high bank, which bordered it for a mile, was faintly lined with a narrow, irregular path which had more fascination for the agile boy. This track on the side of the sloping bank must have owed its origin and perpetuation to boys like himself; no other animal could have designed or continued to use it!

A mile and a half from his own house, Ted arrived at the brow of a long steep hill which formed the approach to the town. At the foot of it nestled the clustering houses, surmounted by the fine old church, whose pointed spire, rising high above the surrounding roofs, gave part of its name to the place.



A great many vehicles and foot-passengers were on the road, but in the matter of direction the boy was solitary. The tide of traffic was, at this time of day, ebbing out of the little market-town. Men, women and children were laden with baskets, bags and bundles - the outcome of the weekly shopping. Descending the hill, Ted walked more demurely on the broad, raised footpath on the right of the road, and so high above it that in places his feet were above the level of the heads of the plodders down below. Above his head spread the leafy boughs of great trees, whose trunks were hidden from view by the high brick wall which bounded the grounds of the Court on the east side. Everything was fresh and cool and sweet, after the drenching storm of the middle day. The evening light fell soft and tender on the red roofs and the tall church steeple at the foot of the hill.

Upon entering the town, Ted turned up the first street to the left; and, passing behind the church, and round the ruins of the eleventh-century castle, of which the keep still remained fairly intact, he came out upon the wide common.

As if he had not had enough cricket already that day, he walked towards a group of boys finishing their game, and stood a few minutes watching its progress. Then he came into the town through the stable-yard of a hotel, which formed a common thoroughfare, and found himself at once among the stalls in the market-place. Ted was too shy to draw very near to any vendor from whom he did not intend to purchase, and, as he had not a halfpenny in his pockets that evening, he contented himself with a somewhat distant examination of the sweets and fruit and toys. He was not so chary when it came to the shop-windows in the streets; there was not the same dread of being accosted by a proprietor with a request to buy or an injunction to take himself off. He stood longest before the shops of clothiers and hatters, and surveyed critically the various sorts of headgear - a quaint little rustic in his nondescript attire gazing forlornly at the prevailing town fashions!

At a street-corner an organ-grinder was turning out, in rather spasmodic style, the intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana". Ted listened delightedly, and when the man moved away to pastures new, he softly whistled the opening bars to himself - not quite correctly, for he had not

heard it before, and this first acquaintance with it left an impression rather than a memory on his musical mind.

In a time to come the air, with its mellifluous sequences of deliberate notes, was destined to recall this Saturday evening of summer and the street-corner of this quiet little country-town. The boy of twelve recorded his impressions automatically; Philip Luard would have gone through the same experience with his consciousness wide-awake, and his heart saying to itself, *“Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit”*.<sup>6</sup>

It was now past eight o'clock, and Ted was often in bed by this hour on ordinary nights. On Saturdays the village folk were later, but still he felt sure his people had started on their homeward walk, even if they had not already arrived at the cottage. So he, too, turned his steps northward, and, keenly enjoying the pungent clean smell of malt that hung about the big brewery, he addressed himself to North Hill and his solitary tramp with a good grace - the strain of up-to-date Italian melody still lingering on his lips.

It came back to him again, after he had eaten his supper, and was undressing in the semi-darkness of the bedroom, and his prayers wandered off into it when he had knelt by the side of his crib. To-morrow would be Sunday, and, lying beside the open window, with the cool breath of the night fluttering the yellow hair on his forehead, Ted heard the voices of his mother and brothers rise and fall, as they discussed Joe's latest purchase - a blue waistcoat with white spots and brass buttons. Later, when his eyes were almost sealed by sleep, the glimmer of the hand-lamp lit the room, as Mrs Faircloth laid out the boys' Sunday clothes on the chairs at their bedsides, quietly humming an old-fashioned Methodist hymn-tune. She came to look at her pretty little boy before she went down, and kissed his rounded cheek without disturbing his somnolent mood.

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<sup>6</sup> Perhaps some day we will delight in this recollection. (Virgil: *Aeneid i*, 203).



## CHAPTER VII

### EARLY CELEBRATION

Philip woke up on Sunday morning to hear the bells ringing for eight o'clock Celebration; he had fifteen minutes for his toilet and the short journey to the Church, but he just did it. He was the only member of the household who communicated early; his mother was not strong enough, and his father went up at the High Celebration. Philip wore a Confraternity badge, and had been soundly convinced on the point of fasting communions by old Vickers, who had prepared him for confirmation four or five years before.

Philip took his seat in the big enclosed pew just as the bell stopped, and formed one of eight persons, six being females, who stood up as the curate came in from the vestry accompanied by his small, rubicund server. Then, as the service took its leisurely course, and the small congregation at length knelt to pray, Philip gradually fell into a reverie in which innumerable sweet mementoes of the past were linked, somehow, and in a way Philip could not have analysed or explained, with a prescience of future gladness and joy. In the almost empty church, as the fresh summer breeze stole in at the wide-open west door, Philip saw, as the desert-traveller sees the mirage over the wastes of sand, a vista of future days blessed and sweetened by an affection and a friendship which should never fail. Thirsty already for love, he had dreamed of a deep inexhaustible well of which he might drink daily. The illusion had seized him three or four times already since he had gone up to Oxford, and once even in his school-days; but it had never taken the shape and form of reality. In some instances the approach had been impossible, and in the one exception to this experience he had proved that it was distance which lent the view its enchantment; something like the scene from Chelsea Embankment on a misty morning. The Italian spires, domes and towers, as the air clears, resolve themselves into granaries, warehouses, soapworks and the like! The illusion had faded; the promising appearance had given place to a most disappointing and undesirable reality, and the effect of the episode on Philip's life was

revealed by a series of about fifty erotic sonnets hitherto unseen by the public eye. In them his muse had run the gamut of dawning love, hope and expectation; doubt and fear merging into a temporary paradise; a moment on the hill-top; then disillusion and regret, and the mortifying descent by another pathway to the old heart-hunger once more. Less than six months had elapsed since all this had happened. He had vowed never to worship idols again, when he had reviewed the wreck of that one, and the damage it had done to him in its fall. And yet, within the last two days, he had spied a new star on the horizon of his sky, and was again experiencing the impulse to a new quest. This time, he told himself, it was all so different; the cases were not parallel; it was now his own fault if, with his past failures to guide him, he did not secure the friendship he coveted, the companion for whom he had been waiting, the someone to love without whom his individuality was only a semi-circle, impotently trying to roll along life's road, and waiting for its other self to round off its existence.

It is not to be supposed that all these thoughts passed through Philip Luard's mind as he knelt in his pew this early Sunday morning; the idea had been formulating since his first appearance on the scene of this history. But the situation certainly gave colour to his mood, and the tinkling of the consecration bell served its proper purpose in bringing him back to the present. As he knelt at the altar-rail to receive, he really concentrated his mind on the Sacrament and Sacrifice, and joined heartily in the Paternoster after priest and server had concluded their operations in the Sanctuary.

After the Blessing Philip got away quickly, and was home by half-past eight; strolling about the flower-garden, and killing time with the roses till he should hear the breakfast-bell. He had not wished to stop and speak to the curate; after a Communion Philip liked to settle down into himself gradually, and conversation was not palatable to him just then. His thoughts soon went off again to little Ted Faircloth, and it amused him to wonder how a service like this would affect a small boy of twelve who, according to Markham Castle's notion, walked in to a Methodist chapel at Croxton on a Sunday. Philip had regretted, on the previous evening, that in the bustle of getting some of his guests off, and making himself agreeable to some of the

remaining ones, he had seen nothing of the responsive little rustic since the close of the day's cricket. But he had a print or two of the boy's photograph to console him, and he had looked at them long and wistfully while preparing for bed. There was not much chance of the two meeting on a Sunday; the Faircloths were never seen at church; if they had been attendants there Philip would have known the boy at least by sight. The idea arose in his head as he took his morning stroll to try and get the little fellow to attend; it seemed as if he was anxious to please Philip, and certainly he could honestly say it *would* please him immensely to see that yellow head and bright round face in one of the church pews, or, better still, in one of the choir-stalls. He would go into school, perhaps, the next day, and talk about it to the schoolmaster.

While Philip was sitting down to the breakfast-table, his young protégé was doing what he could to put something like a polish on his boots to give them a sort of Sunday appearance. He was in his shirt-sleeves in his back-garden, under the shade of an apple-tree, whistling softly to himself. His Sunday cap was on the back of his head, and the golden tuft of soft hair that peeped from under its peak caught now and then the glint of the morning sunbeams as they filtered through the branches. Ted had had a good breakfast that morning, and was at peace with the world. Mrs Faircloth had called in, during the visit to Croxton, to see her former mistress, for whom she still did sewing and other small jobs. She had always been high in this lady's esteem and seldom went into the town after her marriage without a visit to Mrs Ohlson's hospitable kitchen. There she was always welcome to sit for half-an-hour, while her quondam mistress superintended the cooking; and seldom did she leave without a cake or a few buns in her basket. On this last occasion she has brought away the latter end of a ham; and though to the Ohlson children it might appear to be merely a ham-bone, the Faircloth boys had found an admirable Sunday breakfast on it.

Since the discussion of it, the two elder lads had gone out, and Ted and his mother were now getting ready for morning service. They did not now walk into Croxton, though they had done so on many a Sunday morning in times past; a small chapel had been recently opened at Little Ancaster, and it was to this conventicle that the Faircloth family was bound today; towards ten

o'clock Harry and Joe had returned to the cottage, pocketed their hymn-books, and set out in company with the other two for half-past-ten service. They had about a mile and a half to walk, and very pleasant it was, that bright summer's morning. A sabbath hush was over field and farm and road; the landscape seemed invested with a dreamy silence. It rose in gentle undulations up to the distant sky-line; a coppice and a hill cropping up to break the monotony of the flat fields and meadows and the dividing hedges. Agricultural implements stood here and there, vying with the telegraph poles along the railway in an endeavour to recall the mind to the work-a-day world; but horses were in the stable or the paddock, and men were lounging on their doorsteps or strolling in their gardens. Some, like the two elder Faircloths, might be on their way to worship, but very few as yet. The service at most of the surrounding churches began at eleven, and although the bells from several villages might be heard already, it was not time yet to respond to their call to prayer.

The little plain red-brick building to which Ted and his family were going stood on the road-side; around the railings, the gate and the porch, most of the congregation had already gathered when the Faircloth party arrived. But till the preacher appeared it was not their habit to go indoors; at any rate, not on a fine summer's morning. So they hung in groups round the entrance, exchanging greetings and keeping a sharp look-out for the expected arrival. Presently he hove in sight; Mr Jillings, a Croxton grocer, who held some sort of office in the Wesleyan community of his town, and was an acceptable preacher to the country congregations. A few greetings and handshakings, and the preacher passed into the chapel by means of the only door, and his hearers followed him in with much stamping of hob-nailed boots and noisy disposal of themselves on the straight-backed benches inside.

There was no organ or harmonium; if the preacher didn't care to "raise the tune", old Billy Peters was equal to all metres save "peculiars"; and each verse was given out from the pulpit before it was sung. This was probably a survival from the days when village congregations were unable to read, and hymn-books were at a discount; and, even now, there were a few ancient men and women in the Little Ancaster community who were dependent first on the preacher's

“giving out” of each verse, and after that on their limited abilities in the way of holding four or six lines in their memory as they sang them.

Unconscious as he was of his own prowess, little Ted Faircloth was emphatically the mainstay of the singing; though quite untaught, his ear served him intuitively for time, tone and accent; while his clear, sympathetic voice had an extraordinary range. As may be well imagined, the tune might very easily be pitched five or six notes above or below its proper key by virtue of the haphazard fashion of starting it which obtained; but Ted could be trusted to carry it through, soar as high as it might! At prayer-meetings occasionally the tune would be “raised”, in Billy Peters's absence, by “Sister Brooks”; and, not infrequently, its top notes were soon found to be absolutely unattainable by any average voice. In such cases the onus of sustaining the hymn fell on our small hero, and often had he carried it triumphantly through the first verse, and sometimes through subsequent verses also; for the good people were fatally apt to recognise their error, but fail of remedying it at a second or third attempt! All this the boy took as a matter of course, and with no more self-consciousness than the solo-boy of a cathedral, who takes possession of the anthem at the afternoon service in the choir, and subjugates the organist and all his fellow-singers to his own lead, secure in his perfect knowledge of the music, and his unquestionable ability to do it justice.

The morning-service was a pleasant one for Ted on this particular Sunday; one or two of the hymns were favourites with him, and he enjoyed singing them. “Brother Jillings” was a racy and practical preacher to whom even a boy could listen with pleasure, and expounded the story of the taking of Jericho in attractive fashion. But in Ted’s mind, as he walked home to his dinner, was a vague suspicion that, in the service he had just attended, he missed something, indefinite and undefinable, which was his heritage, and into the enjoyment of which he ought to enter. It has been said before that, despite his apparent contentment of mind, this little rustic had a great impulse towards things beyond his rank and surroundings and experience. In his childish soul there was the same yearning that exercised Philip; to get out of himself; to be something - if not everything - to someone else; to meet the kindred soul that exists somewhere for every seeker.



He had not learned to grumble; he scarcely knew he was discontented; but at times he wondered why it was not for him to enjoy things of which he heard and read. Why should he not have nice clothes to wear, good food to eat, a pleasant house to live in? Why had he never any money to spend? He had never travelled by rail, nor visited a town of any size; never seen the sea and the ships. Other people were not so cribbed, cabined and confined; and deep down in his heart was the fixed idea that he, too, would some day emerge from his chrysalis state and spread wings for flight. This little, scarcely-heard murmuring of his spirit, as he trudged along the sunny road this Sunday morning, was perhaps possible of understanding by others better than by himself. One suggestion is that it would, if cultivated, have shaped itself into a series of questions on the same lines as those which he asked himself on week-days. Why should he not worship in a beautiful building, where everything was wonderful and grand; with fine music to the accompaniment of the organ; with people surrounding him whom he respected and admired; under the direction and control of a priest whose beautiful external garb only in a small degree symbolised the superior authority and dignity of his office? Why should he be identified with a small and ignored sect of people, for some unexplained reasons divided from the great mass of good men who must, by all showing, have a better judgement in religious matters than he or his friends? Moses Chapman was no wiser or more agreeable than he was; yet, as his mother was not a dissenter, but only a drunken virago, Moses could enjoy the services of the church, and go to Sunday-school, and sit near the organ in a wonderful violet robe and a white shirt, and worship with people like Philip Luard. And there, if one interprets Ted's feelings aright, we get to the bottom of the matter, and to the little root of bitterness that put forth a tiny shoot into the serenity of the soul's garden that day.



## CHAPTER VIII

### ON THE FENCE

At any rate, his afternoon stroll took him down to the cricket-field behind Philip's home; and there he sat on the fence, as dejected as a cow in the rain, just where he had been perched when Philip had accosted him the previous day; and there Philip found him again.

Sitting in the garden with his cigar, he spied the distant figure on the rail, and at once crossed the garden-bridge and bore down in his straw hat and his blazer upon his young satellite. Until he made this move, Ted had not seen Philip; he had only been gazing at the house where he supposed him to be. But as his patron sauntered over the pitch towards him, the boy's face flushed with delight. He forgot, in his pleasant excitement, to put his hand to his forelock in salutation, as his custom was; an omission which Philip noticed; but he scrambled down to the ground, as if his attitude on the fence was not quite respectful to one of his betters. The young fellow took him by the elbow, pinched him playfully, and said:

"How dare you sit on that rail, sir, eh?"

The boy gave one discriminating look at Philip's face, lifted his round eyes in some surprise, and then resumed his demure demeanour, replying, in a voice that had the same tone of amused banter as the young man's:

"Dew, yew never tu'ned me off yes'd'y!"

"Well, I guess it will bear us both; we're not exactly heavy-weights, either of us!"

Philip seated himself on the top rail, and, at once accepting the situation, Ted clambered up again and sat beside him.

"Good appetite again today, sonny?"

Ted nodded.

"You might lend me yours sometimes; mine isn't very good."

"I dunno how I *could*," objected Ted, with a quick look at his questioner's face.

“Don’t you see how they starve me at Oxford?” continued Philip. Then, as Ted only smiled and found no answer, he pressed him with, “You don’t believe they do, I can see!”

Ted fidgeted with his feet, knocking one heel against the other, and then said, meditatively:

“Happen they might! Yew dew fare mortal thin!”

Philip went off into a burst of laughter. Then he pinched the cheek of the little lad, and said:

“Your mother looks after you well, anyhow.”

The topic of victuallising did not appear likely to loosen Ted’s tongue, and Philip wanted to get him to talk, so he harked back to the cricket-match; and then Ted had plenty to say for himself.

“How is it I didn’t see you down at the matches last summer?” asked Philip, after some cricket chat.

“I dunno. I used to come reg’lar o’ Sa’d’ys. I seen yew often enough. Yer hadn’t used to have no moustache then.”

“Haven’t got any to speak of now!”

“And I seed yer ag’in o’ Christmas in the village a few times. But I never seed yer at Easter-time.”

“I was here for a few days.”

“Yes, I knowed that, but I never seen yer. I don’t come to your chu’ch.”

“Why not?”

“Dunno e’zackly. We allus bin Wesleyans.”

“Well, you might come to church sometimes, if you *are* a Wesleyan. Why don’t you turn up now and then?”

“Don’t suppose I could. Ain’t chu’ch for chu’ch people?”

“No; for all people. It is your right to attend; perhaps your duty, too. The church is built for you to worship in, and the vicar and Mr Cecil are put here on purpose to care for your soul.”

Ted stared at Philip’s face, while he spoke thus, in absolute wonderment. Then his eyes fell to the blue wreath of smoke curling up from the end of the cigar; and he said, meditatively:

“Didn’t know that afore. I allus thought as how yew marn’t go to chu’ch and chapel both.”

“Why, you wouldn’t turn me out of the chapel, would you, if I dropped in for a service?”

“No, I reckon *I’d* let you bide as long as you wanted.”

Philip was charmed by the tone of his little friend’s voice, and the emphasis in his declaration of indulgence.

“I thought so. Now you come to Evensong tonight, and I promise you you shan’t be ejected. Will you?”

Ted smiled happily at the invitation, but after a minute’s pause, he demurred in his deliberate manner:

“I would. On’y I’ve got to go along o’ mother, and she wants to go to chapel, I know.”

“Well, I think I must come to chapel, too, then; just to show you we live in a free country. Shall I?”

The boy nodded his head, and expanded again into a pleased smile. Philip’s heart warmed as he noticed how he could command that smile at will. He felt like the man who has his hand on the gas-tap; one turn of the finger and thumb and the room leaps from gloom into light.

“I doubt you won’t like coming,” Ted objected.

“Oh, yes, I shall; at any rate, it won’t be so awkward for me as your first church-going would be for you. You go to the Wesleyan chapel at Croxton, don’t you?”

“Not now; we’ve had one at Little Ancaster this two year and more. Dew, I was chris’ened at Croxton Chapel”

“Oh, you’ve been baptised, then; I’m glad of that. And what were you christened, eh?”

“I reckon I was chris’ened Edward, but ain’t never called nothing but Ted.”

“Not even Teddy.”

“Sometimes; once in a way.”

“Well, I’ll call you Teddy; I like that name.”

“So do I. Boys at school call me Fairy, ’cos my name’s Faircloth.”

“Well, that’s a pretty name, too; but you’re not much like a fairy, you know.”

“They’ve got wings, ain’t they?”

“I’m not sure; I think some of them have. But they haven’t got your sort of legs, anyhow.”

Ted was conscious of the affectionate badinage in Philip’s tone, and saw Philip looking down at him with a quizzical expression. Puzzled for a moment, his astute mind soon came into line, and he amused Philip by saying, with a little flush of colour to his face:

“Ain’t you got none of them there photographs to show me?”

But Philip hadn’t any in his blazer-pockets, so he could only promise to exhibit them on a future occasion. His cigar was done now, and he got down off the rail to go. He could have stayed there another hour with Ted; it was only four o’clock - the church clock had just struck the hour. But it was like Philip to deny himself any further conversation with his protégé at present; and he took one of the boy’s wrists lightly in his hand, and said:

“Well, I’m glad I found you here: isn’t it a splendid afternoon?”

It was, for both of them. But Ted had his eye on the future.

“You’re a-coming to my chapel tonight, then?” he asked, anxiously.

“You’re sure to be there?” enquired Philip.

“Certain sure!”

“Then perhaps I’ll find my way there.”

“Should I show you?”

“Oh, no; I know where it is: besides, you’ve got to look after your mother. I might walk home with you perhaps.”

He sauntered back to the house; but Ted sat for another half-hour on the fence before he could make up his mind to turn his steps homewards. And while Ted was there, Philip was also “on the fence” - metaphorically speaking. He began to reflect, as he pretended to read a book by the open window of the drawing-room, that he had let himself in for a somewhat unconventional proceeding; and, as we have already remarked, Philip was considerably in awe of Mrs Grundy! To absent himself from the family pew that evening was easy enough, but to put in an appearance at the roadside conventicle at Little Ancaster was quite another thing. In his heart, he

had no scruples about the propriety of it; he only minded what people would think and say. The more he pondered it the less he liked the idea: so he compromised with the situation by postponing a decision until after tea. Then he fell to thinking about the differences which he imagined to exist between the services of the church and the chapel. To what extent the church's ritual would appeal to a boy accustomed to Little Ancaster (or even Croxton) Methodism, Philip could only faintly conjecture; and as soon as his thoughts came back to young "Fairy" a glow of satisfaction pervaded him in the realisation that the boy was extremely interesting. In his Sunday suit, Ted had presented quite a respectable appearance: the grey cloth cap was a great improvement on the hat of ordinary days; and the remainder of his garb was correspondingly in advance. He wore a knickerbocker suit on Sundays, with a tunic, and a broad starched collar. Certainly they were not a perfect fit, nor did the legs of the knickers lack anything in length. And again there were the same boots; the boots remained unchanged, unless the variety in hue is to be counted! But all this was, after all, mere exterior: the quiet, musical little voice, the modest demeanour, the pretty face and form of the boy, struck Philip pleasantly; and his comparative freedom from embarrassment during their afternoon chat was as agreeably welcome as his undeniable sense of humour. Something might be made of Ted; there was no doubt about that now in his patron's mind, where two days ago the doubt would have been very strong.

Philip felt like the wayfarer who, lacking pelf of any sort, spies a glitter in the roadside dust. He turns aside to scrutinise it, and finds it to be a coin of some sort, either gilt or gold. The first glow of discovery is, in nine cases out of ten, dimmed by closer investigation; one does not venture to hope too much. But this time the "find" was proving sterling metal, and critical Philip had no reason to climb down from his exaltation. The second stage, the stage of assay, was safely past. Now, what will he do with it? A guinea makes a neat pendant to a watch-chain; and hangs there for an indefinite period, exciting its owner's daily pride, and the admiration of all beholders. But, so long as it merely serves the purpose of ornament, its possessor may go hungering and thirsting through the world as before. To turn it into creature comfort is the only practical course, but thus to dispose of it is to lose it, to dissipate its value, to ensure the old

penniless condition once more, sooner or later. A sovereign may be changed without scruples: but a guinea - ah, that must give us pause! Guinea-gold is not to be found every day. But, thought Philip, what does it matter to the starving philosopher? What does it profit him to die of starvation with the guinea on his watch-chain? Somebody else gets it, that is the end of the story! And so, after all, it is only “fairy-gold”; no good to the possessor.

A smile came over Philip's face as his fanciful mind conjured up the expression. “Fairy-gold” it was, perhaps; and destined to become withered leaves on no remote date? No, that hypothesis could not be - should not be entertained! Something within him cried out upon the possibility. And then he called himself every kind of opprobrious name for letting his practical commonsense be over-ridden by his poetic parallels. Metaphors are a delusion; similes a snare. A starving tramp with a watch-chain! it was too absurd! why not a watch, forsooth, into the bargain? Economics are delusive enough, in all conscience, when applied to concrete things, let alone a question of sentiment. For instance, what is the use to man of money, influence, position, fame, appetite, if, having them, he should not be able to decide between using them or mounting guard over them all his life?

Philip soon got out of his depth when he ventured into generalities. His was a superficial outlook upon life, and he knew it. The one golden rule, he finished by saying to himself (and again the hark-back to gold amused him), was: Moderation in all things. In twenty-one years he had, at any rate, formulated one sound theory.

But he was “on the fence” as regards to-morrow, and next week, and next year, just as he was as regards his plans for evening worship that Sunday night. Philip Luard would never control circumstances, or with his own hands carve his destiny, till he should become a different man. Providence had shaped his end so far, and was going to do so till he should be capable of it himself.

Who is the all-wise reader who despises this very human specimen of humanity?



## CHAPTER IX

### A REVELATION

“I shan’t go to church this evening, mother,” said Philip, over the tea-cups. “I’ll stay in and play to you till about half-past seven. Then I’m going for a walk.”

“With Markham?” asked Mr Luard.

“No; he’s coming to church.”

Nothing more was said; Philip did pretty much as he pleased. His mother seldom went out except in the mornings and Philip, especially in winter, would often stay at home with her, reading aloud or playing on the piano. He did a little of both things after his father went off to Evensong, which was held at 6.30. A chant by Attwood was running in his head. An old Oxford episode made that chant very reminiscent of love to him. Now he tried to fit a new personality to its haunting melody, as he softly played it again and again, and it seemed to go to the words:

*Sweet fairy-gold,  
So bright and fresh and new,  
Sure, Love can hold  
No better gift than you!*

Then, about 7.30, he went up to his room, changed his blazer for a lounge-jacket, and took the road to Little Ancaster. He had decided at tea-time that the best thing was to arrive at the chapel at the close of the service, which would enable him to see and speak to Teddy, and as to accompanying him home, that decision was shelved for the present. He reached the chapel about a quarter to eight; it was only a mile from his home, and Philip’s long stride soon took him there. The door of the building stood open; he walked past, and his eyes and ears informed him that the preacher was still holding forth, so he sat down on the railings to wait.

Meanwhile, Teddy had been looking out for him during the entire service. The anticipation of seeing his friend in the chapel had excited him to such an extent that he had not done usual justice to the blue mug at the tea-table. He had also selected a wallflower from the front garden, and stuck it in his button-hole. And, finally, he had been unusually anxious to start in good time for service. The elder Faircloth boys did not often go in the evening; if they did, they turned up with their own company; so Ted was his mother's sheet-anchor at such times. The boy rather expected to see Philip on their arrival, but he was not among the knot of villagers who stood outside the gate. Then Ted had at once peeped into the chapel, but the only members of the congregation who had already seated themselves were a few aged members who needed rest more than conversation. The preacher came along, convoyed by the family entertaining him that day: the whole crew went into the chapel: the service commenced: and there was no Philip. Ted expected him every minute, and felt hugely disappointed as the time went on and he did not come. He tried to take part in the worship as usual, but there was not much heart in his singing, because, till the sermon began, he was all eagerness to catch the footstep of a late-comer entering the open door, and, perhaps, taking a seat on the back bench.

At last the hope was extinguished, and, having loyally decided that unforeseen circumstances had frustrated Philip's intentions, the boy gave him up, and listened attentively to the preacher's discourse. Sometimes the sermon did not appeal to Ted at all, and he was obliged to go to sleep, with his yellow head propped up against the whitewashed wall; or, if wakeful, he could watch the leaves and boughs and the sky and clouds so easily visible through the large panes of ordinary glass. On a winter's evening this diversion failed him; and he squinted at the paraffin lamps, swinging on their chains, and tried experiments in light with eyes open, or half-closed, or entirely shut. The unattached boys of the congregation sat round the close stove, about the middle of the building: they whispered and played and fidgeted a good deal. Sometimes Ted felt he should like to be among them; but, sitting near the pulpit as he did, between his mother and the wall, and with his back to his young companions, he had to behave better than they were accustomed to do.

However, the preacher had a capital command of the language; was clear and direct in his reasoning; displayed an intimate knowledge of the Bible and of Christian hymnody; and (what weighed more than all this with Ted, and not him alone in the audience) was remarkably happy in apt illustration and illuminating anecdote from history, ancient and modern. This Sunday evening he had what he himself would have styled “a good time”, and at ten minutes to eight, after forty minutes’ discourse, he concluded without having exhausted either his own theme or the people’s patience.

There was a collection, and one venerable old greybeard made it in a common china dinner-plate. Philip was so near that he could hear the clink of the coppers on the earthenware, and he wondered how it could possibly be produced. Then the last hymn was given out, and the congregation stood up to sing. Mr Jillings had been preaching from the text, “The night cometh when no man can work”, and the hymn was a composition of Bonar’s bearing upon his subject. Philip could hear every word, borne through the open door and windows in the quiet hush of the evening, as the preacher “gave it out” verse by verse. It was unfamiliar to him, but he recognised the force of the imagery and the picturesqueness of the expression. It was a call to work, to self-sacrifice, to the spreading of the light of the truth among dark and unenlightened minds; reminding the workers for God that the day of his coming was near, and the reward great. The tune sung to it was also strange to Philip; it was a plaintive and haunting tune, its long-drawn cadences in a minor key were accentuated by the very slow time of the rendering.<sup>7</sup> The preacher started the first verse, in a full round bass voice, and was followed at once by men, women and children, all singing the air in unison.

Before two lines had been sung Philip’s acute ear distinguished one voice that struck him all of a heap; a boy’s voice, clear and mellifluous as a thrush’s note, accurate and true and telling as the flute-stop of the organ. Untaught as the woodland singing-bird, little Ted’s sympathetic tones added such richness and volume to the quaint melody that Philip was thrilled and enthralled by the revelation. There were four six-line verses, and with each successive quatrain the lovely

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<sup>7</sup> Possibly “Fading away like the stars of the morning” by Horatius Bonar (1080-89), one of the most inspirational of Victorian hymn-writers. Bonar, however, wrote a number of similar hymns.

quality of his little friend's voice became more and more apparent. As a Magdalen man, Philip knew what good singing was, and what good boys' voices were: and here he listened enraptured to a boy possessed of a natural organ second to none he had ever heard in his life. Visions floated through his mind of that glorious, pure soprano soaring and vibrating among the high arches and aisles of some great cathedral; not mingled as now with unmusical and useless companion voices, but blended only with low organ-notes, or resting on a subdued accompaniment of other vocal harmonies as perfect as itself. The last verse was sung. Without any "Amen" the voices hushed to silence. The congregation knelt for the Benediction, and Philip recovered from his state of ecstatic astonishment as the first hob-nailed boy clattered out of the doorway. Getting off the railing, Philip stood waiting, and Ted's eye fell on him the moment he and his mother emerged. Mrs Faircloth stopped to speak to her friends and to the preacher; Teddy made straight for his patron.

"Oh, why'd you never come?" enquired the boy.

"Never come! Well, that's rich. Here I am!"

"Dew, yew ain't bin to chapel!" he remonstrated.

"How do you know I haven't?"

Ted smiled, and pursed up his mouth, with a decided little shake of the head.

"I know!" he said.

"Well, I heard you sing, anyhow. Who taught you to sing like that?"

"Oh, we sing at school o' Wednesday arternoons."

"Sing what?"

"'Merry Mill Wheel', and 'Hark, tis the Bells', and 'Ye Mariners of England', and - oh, I dunno; lots more of 'em!"

"What does Mr Varley say about your singing?"

"Says we don't keep time."

"No, no; I mean *your* singing; you, Teddy!"

"Oh, he as't me once or twice to come to chu'ch choir."

“Why didn’t you?”

“That ain’t no use me goin’; I don’t belong to chu’ch. Mother ’on ’t let me, neither.”

“Ever asked her yet?”

“Noo-o!” said Teddy, reflectively.

“Would you like to come?”

“Don’t know!”

“Would you come if I liked you to?”

Teddy raised his eyes to his questioner’s face. Philip was holding him by the sleeve and looking down, hoping to catch the upturned glance which he had learned to wait for.

“Yes,” said the boy, quietly.

“Let’s go and talk to your mother, then!”

Mrs Faircloth was just ready to start on the homeward walk, and was looking round for her small son, rather surprised to see him talking to “young Muster Luard”. They came up to her together, and Philip took off his cap.

“Good evening, Mrs Faircloth. May I walk a bit of the way home with you? I want to talk to you about Ted’s singing.”

“Ah, he *do* sing, don’t he, sir? He favours his grandfather. He was a mortal fine singer.”

“Is that your father you’re speaking of?”

“Yes, sir. He sang in the choir in our chu’ch at home most of his life.”

“Oh, you were brought up to church-going, then?”

“Sure-ly; we never had no Methodism in the village when I was a gel.”

“But you like chapel best now, eh?”

“Well sir, I’ll tell ’ee how ’t was.”

And so, while they all three walked a mile along the road in the cool of the day and the waning light, Mrs Faircloth explained that she had been “converted” while in Mrs Ohlson’s service at Croxton; had joined the “Society” there; met her husband first at the “class-meeting”; and naturally brought up her children in Methodist ways.

Philip listened deferentially to the somewhat discursive recital; if he hadn't been very much interested he would have done just the same. But it did interest him exceedingly. A very few leading questions, judiciously put, elicited the fact that Mrs Faircloth was not at all bigoted, and would make no strong objection to Ted's enrolment in the church choir. Philip began to see the boy's future and his own taking definite shape.

"I think," he explained, "that if your boy was properly trained he might become a fine singer; perhaps make his living by his voice. At any rate, he ought to get a good education for it."

"Lor, sir," exclaimed the woman, "he keep right on pesterin' o' me to let him leave school as soon as I can find him wuk to do!"

"Ah, that's because he doesn't know what's good for him. You don't think your education's complete yet, sonny, I' sure?"

He put his hand under the pretty rounded chin, and turned up the little boy's face to look at his expression. He only saw there a willingness to be complacent, so he went on propounding his vague schemes.

"There are choir-schools, Mrs Faircloth, attached to many colleges and cathedrals and even churches, where boys with unusually good voices are educated in exchange for singing at the services. Teddy ought to be able to get a choral scholarship after a little tuition."

"Do yew really say so?" asked Mrs Faircloth, a little dubiously.

The boy broke in for the first time, saying:

"Dew, I shouldn't be able to 'arn no money for mother for ever so long."

"I'm not so sure about that, my son," said Philip. "I think I can undertake that you won't cost her anything for some years to come, and in the long run you'd be far better off than if you began on the land next winter at five shillings a week. Why, you're only thirteen or thereabouts, eh?"

"I'm twelve last April. But I've passed fourth standard a'ready!"

Before they reached the turning off the road that formed the shortest cut to Philip's home, he had gained his point. If his judgement was not at fault, and the boy's ability was great enough to

earn him a good education, Mrs Faircloth promised to think favourably of Philip's offer to shape his future.

"I'll send my father or Mrs Luard to see you about it, Mrs Faircloth," said he, as they prepared to proceed on their way.

"Oh, I'd be quite content to leave Teddy in your hands, Muster Philip," was the reply, "Yew a-goin' into the chu'ch, and all!"

So, after this expression of confidence, and after warmly shaking the good woman's hand, Philip acted on the impulse of the moment, and sealed the compact with a kiss on Teddy's upturned cheek - a delightful surprise, that heightened the little boy's colour as they turned their backs on one another in the fading twilight, under the growing shadows of the tall elm trees. And Philip, with a smile of great satisfaction, put a bit of stolen wall-flower blossom into his button-hole.





## **BOOK TWO**

### **THE SINGING SEASON**

## CHAPTER I

### IN ST PAUL'S

“Ready, Luard?”

“Half a minute, old chap. Just see if we can find the service-book; on the table somewhere. Got both the tickets? What’s the weather like?”

“Like rain, I think. Take your umbrella; I’ve got mine. Here’s the book. Wish I could keep my writing-desk as tidy as this. Look sharp, old man; we’ll lose that train.”

“What time is it?”

Philip emerged from his bedroom, buttoning up his short jacket, and went to work to brush his overcoat.

“Six twenty-one, Junction Road. That gives us just six minutes. That is, if you can start now; if you can’t, we’ll never get there by seven.”

“All serene; I’m ready. Turn the gas down, will you? How’s that fire?”

“Oh, don’t stop now; we’ll miss that train, I keep telling you. Jane will see to it. Come on!”

Philip blew out his reading-lamp; felt in his pockets for money and keys; seized his hat and umbrella from the hooks outside the door, and clattered down stairs in the wake of his impatient colleague.

“Back to Aldersgate?” he enquired, as they reached the bridge.

“Yes, two seconds, return. Look alive; she’s signalled. This side, you know; I’ll go on.”

Philip smiled to himself at Gerrard’s impetuosity as he paid for the tickets at the funny little booking-office. As if he didn't know which side for the City trains, after living within sound of them, day and night, for the past two months!

The train came in as he descended the steps, and the two young parsons just had time to find a suitable empty compartment.

Philip looked at his watch.

“Plenty of time, Gerrard! We shall be there long before seven-fifteen.”

“Ah, you don’t know the Midland Suburban as well as I do! Wait till you’ve got hitched up twenty minutes just out of Camden Road! Besides, you said we must be there by seven. Are you going to see your precious boy before the service?”

“No, not till after. But I want to sit where I can see him, at any rate in the procession.”

“Well, you can sit next to the gangway, then, and hand him a throat-lozenge as he passes you! Swindle for you if they come in through the South aisle; these tickets are for the North door.”

“As it happens, they’re coming in from the North side, old chap; Lorey sent me a line the other day, and I wrote to Teddy last night to look out for us. Anyhow, it doesn’t matter where we sit, once we get in.”

“Don’t forget there’ll be a big congregation. You’ve not been there on this occasion before, have you?”

“No, but I went one week-night last Holy Week for the Passion music.”

‘Well, where did you sit then?’

“On my thumb,” rejoined Philip, jocularly. “No, I mean I stood it out at the very back, behind ten rows of other late-comers. I didn’t know about it, and I went in at the West doors when it was half-way through.”

“Hear it right?”

“Yes, first-rate; got an order of service too. A boy going away gave me his; I’d been looking over his shoulder.”

“Ahem! yes: naturally. Where was Teddy, I should like to know?”

“Stupid! It had nothing to do with Teddy; it was the Cathedral choir, wasn’t it?”

“Well, why didn’t you take *him* to hear it, and look over *his* shoulder?”

“Because it was a Tuesday, if you must know, and I only see him on Wednesdays and Saturdays, as you are very well aware.”

“Oh, indeed! what about last Monday?”

“Ah, well, that was an ‘extra’. You know I told you it was one of the practice-nights for the Festival.”

Gerrard loved to tease Philip, but it was all in good part; there was great sympathy between them, and it was largely owing to Gerrard’s initiative that Philip was at All Saints’. Before Philip had completed his theological year at Cowley his old college pal had put the vicar on his track, and living together for the past two months in the Clergy House had vividly brought back the old times when they shared rooms in the High for two terms, just before Gerrard went down.

When they got out at Aldersgate it was nearly seven. Several men and boys, carrying their surplices in bags or bundles, jostled past them on the staircase, anxiously bound for the Cathedral, and rather more hurried than our two friends. They turned up their trousers and jogged along arm-in-arm through the slush. A great many people were going in at the North door; Gerrard gave up the green tickets, and as soon as they entered Philip saw they were none too early. Some persons were pushing along into the nave, but it looked to be very full, and possibly they were getting moved on at the back.

“Better stay just here, eh?” he asked, quietly, of Gerrard, who was following Philip’s lead.

The other man nodded, and they took the two chairs on the right of the North transept, Philip being next the gangway.

Philip looked through the pages of the order of service; he had tried over the special compositions for the evening at home. The Anthem he knew - Sullivan's "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord?"

"Good bit of your friend Lorey about it?" whispered Gerrard, as he glanced at the leaves Philip was turning over.

"Well, what's the good of being honorary conductor if you don't work in some of your own stuff?"

"And give all the fat in the anthem to your own people, eh?"

Philip smiled.

"If there's a quartet that can do it better, let 'em have it, I say," he remarked, quietly.

A moment's stillness; then Lorey lifted his baton. A wave of his arm and the organ sounded out the first chord of the Processional Hymn. The vast congregation rose to its feet. The voices of the choristers came along the North transepts, and the first white-robed couples hove in sight.

"Got the cough-drop ready?" whispered Gerrard, slyly, at the end of the first verse.

The long interminable stream of surpliced singers passed by them; a noble army, men and boys.

"Here's our little lot," murmured Gerrard; and Philip spotted the ten or twelve All Saints' choristers passing them, little Leaf and Shortland coming first, two washed-out specimens; then jolly little Henry, with his pretty round face and dark eyes; Herbert Rhys and Stone the last of the boys - Herbert peeping over his spectacles, Stone with his fine bold eyes taking in everything and singing lustily as he looked. Then Wray and Panyer and the other men. None of them spotted his spiritual pastors and masters except young Henry, who gave them a bright smile and a quick little nod, as one who should say, "Share that between you!"

There were eight long verses in the Processional Hymn, and in the second of them Teddy passed. Philip heard his voice long before he came abreast of his row of seats; then he saw tiny Rummel, the infant prodigy of Lorey's choir; and, walking by himself, at the back of Lorey's nine boys, Teddy spotted his patron at once, and gave him a delighted look of recognition out of the blue eyes which were as merry and cloudless of old. Teddy was now fourteen and a half, and had not grown out of knowledge in two years. In fact, he was not very tall yet, but he was sturdy and broad-shouldered, and the rounded cheeks, if their sunburned hue had faded under London skies, still had the glow of health. The tuft of golden hair crowned, as of yore, a sweet, boyish face.

"Grand little chap. He's pretty enough to eat!" murmured Gerrard, just audibly in his friend's ear, and Philip was pleased. It was such trifles as that which bound him to his fellow-curate. He tried to keep the yellow head in view as the procession turned round the corner, but it was too distant, and to his disgust he could not see if his protégé was on the decani or cantoris side. But he flattered himself he should soon discover where he was in the Psalms: if he couldn't see he could hear.

There were a few more choristers whom Gerrard was anxious to "spot", but Philip now gave his attention to the latter half of the hymn. Before it was ended, all the singers were in the stalls, and the Bishop who was preaching the sermon was waiting for the Amen to give the kneeling signal.

Philip was obsessed by expectation of the anthem. To him it was going to be the coronation of two years' faith and hope and love; the culminating point of the schemes he had laid so long ago; the consummation of, at least, one part of the desire that had supplied him with ambition and

strength and purpose since he had pledged himself, on a certain Sunday evening, to little Ted Faircloth's success.

And in due time the Amen was sung to the Third Collect, and the great choir stood up to sing, "Who is like unto Thee?". Lorey swung the baton; the organ swelled out in the opening bars; and, as the first ringing notes of the Chorus burst forth, the ten thousand worshippers rose to their feet. The mass of voices went, with the guiding sweep of the conductor's arm, up the rich full phrasing, lingering a little inevitably on the sibilant endings:

"Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

Then, out of the succeeding hush, throbbed and beat the exquisitely blended notes of the quartet; welling out from the choir-arches, spreading slowly and widely under the high dome like bars of sunset-cloud over the level fields, and penetrating in clear rhythmic waves of harmony the recesses of the long nave and sibilant aisles.

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance; in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thine hands have established."

As Teddy's superb soprano vibrated over the thousands of breathless hearers, Gerrard stole a look at Philip. His eyes were closed, his lips apart, and he drew in his breath with quick little inspirations; his hands gripped tightly the back of the chair in front of him; his body swayed a little as though he were in a dream. To Gerrard he looked a companion picture to the "Beata Beatrix", before which he had seen Philip stand in the Tate Gallery until he had forcibly dragged him away.

The quartet repeated, as if to show that rapture of the perfect rendering was not impossible of recapture, and Gerrard smiled to hear Teddy's:

“...in the *pleece*, O Lord, which thou hast *meed*.”

It was the only hint of the boy's childhood and origin - this device that had cured him of “plyce” and “myde”; the one possible public indication of what had been achieved in two years by Teddy and Teddy's teachers. Philip heard it as nothing new, and it stirred him more than anything else.

The divine harmonies died away. The Chorus broke out with renewed vigour:

“The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.”

The anthem was over, and Philip knelt down with his head in his hands, and a sense of unearthly happiness in his heart. He could not follow the proper prayers; he was too much engrossed by his own wonderful sensations; but, all the same his mood was one of thanks to God for an unspeakable gift.

The hymn following came to his ears only as a continuation of the exalted feeling; but during the sermon, to which he did not listen very attentively, his analytical mind began to tear away warp from woof to see what various motifs composed the melody of his emotions. He realised, at the outset of the probings of his mind, that it was all really marvellous; not merely wonderful to him, but wonderful to everybody else. From the Wesleyan Chapel at Little Ancaster to St. Paul's Cathedral in the world's metropolis is a far cry, in all conscience! And yet how perfectly the pieces in the puzzle fitted together! Four or five months of training in the Chalk End choir, and of judicious handling in education other than musical by Varley and Cecil Vickers, did so much for Philip's little village rustic that, as far back as two years ago, Teddy had electrified the musical critics of Chalk End and its environs. The plans for the boy's future had then been rather dark; but Mrs Luard's death, early in a new year, had left Philip in less doubt. The sad event had made the bond closer between him and Teddy; and at the same time his mother had left him



sufficient means for providing properly for the boy's welfare. A sister of Teddy's mother, comfortably married to a Sydenham tradesman having no family but one girl, consented to take him into her home on terms which Philip could easily pay; and, that having been settled, there had been no difficulty in getting the boy into Bates's. After six months of this, during which time Teddy had attended a large secondary school at Catford, he obtained a choral scholarship at St Saviour's - and, continuing to live with his aunt at Sydenham, had been in the St Saviour's choir-school for nearly eighteen months before his début in the United Choirs Festival at St Paul's. Philip had only been in town since Michaelmas (it was now the end of November), and already he was scheming to make arrangements for getting the boy away from Sydenham; or, failing that, he intended to seek a curacy in the neighbourhood. After the long years at Oxford, when he had lived for weeks at a time without seeing his protégé; and after the all-too-short weeks when, in vacation times, they had been at Chalk End together; Philip was not quite content to be as far from him as Kentish Town is from Sydenham, and only to be able to see him on Saturdays for any length of time. This year the organist of St Saviour's had accepted the office of conductor at the Choirs Festival, and, as Gerrard put it, had given the fat of the anthem to his own people. Lorey was a young and distinguished musician, rapidly coming to the front as a composer and a conductor. A Magdalen man, like Philip (though possibly ten years before Philip's time), he had soon become known to our friend after his appointment to St Saviour's, which had taken place about a year before the time of which we are writing. Teddy spoke so much about him, that on one of Philip's frequent Saturday visits to Town the two had met by mutual desire, and had formed a close friendship, being of very similar tastes and habits and ideals.

While a hasty résumé of these events was passing through Philip's mind, the sermon concluded, and an army of sidesmen commenced to make the collection. As they rose for the

hymn, Philip felt that it was exactly the right thing in the right place. He had played and sung it with Teddy at his own rooms on the previous Saturday evening, and they had both liked its quiet restful spirit. It was a new composition; an evening hymn with a pleasant rhythm; and the tune was soothing and simple and serene. Now, as they stood to sing it, it impressed Philip still more. The incongruity of the unaffected words and tone with London, and a congregation of thousands of city-dwellers, was remarkable. To him it seemed a “country hymn”, and brought memories of his village church, with the trees tapping the window-panes, and the green grave-yard outside the door. He wondered if Teddy was singing it with similar feelings. It was an old favourite problem of his - what a choir-boy’s sentiments are as he sings some deeply-religious words.

This hymn seemed to still all the mingled feelings which the fine service had evoked in his heart; to pacify longings and regrets; to compose him to a frame of mind in which he could both lie down in peace and sleep.

But the mood was transient, as the service ended with Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus”. The majestic music carried Philip away, as it always did; it was splendid, irresistible. The music shouted itself out in joyous elation, in wild bursts of triumph. It might well have brought a King to his feet!

Philip was feeling himself something more than a monarch. Seldom in his experience had he enjoyed a more supreme moment. The heart’s desire achieved; the senses surfeited with sweetness; the religious emotion; these factors combined with the constant factor of his affection for the little fair-haired chorister, and made a product of unusual importance.

“All over, bar shouting!” said Gerrard, quietly, as he picked up his umbrella and rubbed it with his glove. “Let’s go out by the West door, just to see the people.”

“What about missing Teddy?” objected Philip.

“Oh, you won’t miss him. He can wait three minutes, I suppose, without vanishing into thin air?”

“All very well,” grumbled Philip, as he followed his friend among the chairs into the centre aisle. “I’ve only got a few minutes with him altogether.”

## CHAPTER II

### GOING HOME TO SYDENHAM

It was half-past nine; Teddy would have to get to London Bridge without much delay. Still, one must give him a few minutes to get out of his “choir-suit”, as he used to call it in the early days of sporting his vestments. So they went out leisurely, turning to look into the recesses of the chancel hitherto unseen that evening. The organ was playing still as they got outside.

As soon as they turned the corner of the churchyard, Philip saw Teddy waiting, band and umbrella in hand, on the greasy pavement outside the North gate.

“Well, sir, what are we going to do?” was his first question, after he had capped his convoy and shaken hands.

“Any time for some supper?” asked Philip.

“No fear! I’ll have to catch the 9.50, or Uncle James will have a fit. I said I’d be back by ten. What a time it’s taken!”

“I’ll get back to Aldersgate, Luard; you’ll go and see the child off, I suppose?”

“Won’t you come and see me off, too, sir? Then Mr Luard will have company home.”

But Gerrard had sense enough to decline Teddy’s suggestion. He scarcely expected them to part at the terminus. Besides, to-night of all nights they would require a tête-à-tête. So he said good-bye at the corner of Cheapside, and Philip and Teddy got on a bus.

“How do you feel after it, old boy?” Philip asked, when they got seated, and he had turned up Teddy’s coat-collar and annexed his umbrella.

“All right now, sir. I felt queer once, but I think it was only the people that frightened me. You see, I couldn’t very well go wrong: I’ve done it dozens of times, and I did it there on Monday. Did you like it?”

Philip tried to tell him how much he had “liked it”, but gave it up, waiting for a better opportunity. Besides, the boy was full of talk, and there was nothing Philip loved more than to listen to him.

“Did you see Rummel, sir, smoking cigarettes?”

“What! in the service?”

“No!” and Teddy gave the jester a playful shove with his knee. “Just as we stopped at the corner.”

“Little idiot!” ejaculated Philip.

“Meaning Rummel, I hope?” asked the boy slyly, with the old lifting of the eyes.

“Yes. Mr Lorey would be annoyed.”

“Oh, he wouldn’t let Lorey see it. Rummel’s awfully ’cute. But, all the same, it’s too bad, because Lorey’s going to take him and your fellow Rhys to King’s Cross in a cab.”

“How do you know?”

“Mr Lorey told me in the vestry when I first went in. He said, should he look after me when it was over, and I said, ‘No, I’ve got to meet Mr Luard’. Then he said, ‘I’ll take pity on Rhys, in that case.’ And just then Rummel came up to speak to him, and he said, “Rummy will stand us a cab to King’s Cross, I believe.”

“Well, that’s not very definite.”

“Oh, Rummy knows; he goes back with Mr Lorey every Wednesday night, I believe.”

“On a green bus?”

“No, in a cab. Bless you, Mr Lorey wouldn’t ride in anything but a hansom at night. And he’s always in an awful hurry, too. You know, he never can stop to speak to us hardly, can he?”

“Could if he liked. That’s his politeness!”

“Running away?”

“Yes; he doesn’t want to interrupt.”

“Well, he wouldn’t interrupt our supper, would he?”

“I don’t suppose he would yours! He might interrupt mine and lose his own.”

“But I mean if he came in with us.”

“Oh, I’ve asked him often. He says he will some night.”

“I wonder if he’s going to stand Rummel a feed?” mused Teddy, taking off his cap, and arranging the red tassel to fall over his left eye. Then he looked through the tassel at Philip with a mischievous little grin.

“Why, no, of course not. Rummel goes to Hornsey, doesn’t he?”

“Wood Green or something.”

“Well, they can’t go together, then; Mr Lorey goes from St. Pancras to Hendon. We shall just get that 9.50.”

He looked at the “Pearl” office clock as they crossed the Bridge.

“You won’t bother about seeing me home?”

“No, I won’t. But I’ll see you home, all the same, if you’ll allow me.”

“It will make you rather late back.”

“Never mind; I want to talk to you.”

“Go ahead then, sir!”

“Oh, no; I can’t talk now. I want to look up the River; isn’t it fine!”

Teddy cast his eyes along the black river, outlined by the Embankment lights.

“You’re used to it now, old chap. But do you remember the first night we came over the Bridge together?”

“Yes, rather. I was frightened nearly to death.”

“It was a bit of a change from Chalk End, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, and we’d been to see Aunt, and I didn’t like her then. Besides, I suppose I felt homesick, and I was awfully glad I wasn’t going to be there for good that night.”

“So you thought the hotel was more like home than Sydenham, eh?”

“Well, anyhow, I wasn’t so frightened of you as I was of Uncle James,” said Teddy merrily.

This was not quite what silly Philip had been leading up to, but Ted’s humour often gave the death-blow to nascent romance.

The bus rattled up the filthy station-approach: there was just time for Philip to book: Teddy used a “season”. Then they were lucky enough to find an empty “second”, and till the first stop at New Cross Philip utilised the opportunity to congratulate Teddy and himself on the evening’s success, and to tell his protégé how proud and happy he was feeling. And Teddy, who had heard most if not all of it many times already during the past few months, on every occasion when he had been singing special parts (and on others when he hadn’t!) - Teddy stuck to his incessant formula, saying imperturbably, “It’s all your doing, sir! Don’t praise *me!*”

After that, being joined by two other men, they left personal matters, and Teddy rattled on about his music and how all of his programmes were going to be stored up like Philip’s cricket matches; and Philip took his own service-book out of his pocket, and Teddy found a pencil, and decorated it in his round schoolboy writing - “Rev. P. H. J. Luard, B.A.”, on the top of the cover. The two men in the compartment looked at one another and smiled; then, seeing that Philip was smiling, too, they smiled with him again as Teddy sucked the pencil. But Philip’s smile meant, “How those fellows envy me - Teddy’s friend!” The feeling of proprietorship must be very charming when your protégé is unusually pretty and sweet, but how much more when he is returning from singing as principal treble at St. Paul’s!

As they neared Sydenham, Teddy produced a tiny book of trains, to see when Philip could return.

“Now, you see, sir; I always keep this in my overcoat pocket. If I put it where you told me I should never remember to take it when I change my clothes.”

“You haven’t changed your clothes tonight.”

“No, Mr Lorey said it was super- oh, something - I forget.”

“Superfluous.”

“No, super- never mind. He meant they’d all be covered up. Besides, these are quite good enough for any week-night; they’re not very light.”

Teddy glanced from the time-table to his legs. He was wearing a Norfolk jacket with a belt; his knickers had straps and buckles. Philip chose all his clothes; quite right, too, as he paid the bills.

Philip also glanced at the sturdy legs which looked very nice in brown stockings. "Why so little colour about the boy of to-day?" asked Philip, when Gerrard had cast aspersions on the coloured stockings once. And Gerrard had replied, "Your kid will never be colourless"; and forged another link in the chain of comradeship by so doing.

"You're scheming to lose me at the earliest opportunity!" said Philip.

"No, sir; but you must get back. It's such a frightful way. How late can you be?"

"Oh, I've got a latch-key; don't excite yourself, sonny. Any hour up till midnight."

But Teddy found a returning train which would give Philip only ten minutes at Sydenham Station.

"That's yours!" he said, gleefully, buttoning up his overcoat, and gathering his property, "Ten-thirty-three, don't forget."

"I'm not going to wait on that dark deserted platform!" declared Philip.

"Oh, you'll find a nice fire in the waiting-room; go in there, won't you. The train's sure to be ten minutes late."

"I'm going to walk home with you," said Philip, collaring the bag this time.

"No, sir, you really mustn't; there won't be time; you'll miss the train."

"It's going to be ten minutes late, old chap!"

"No, no; you can't trust to that. I shan't have you with me!"

Philip said, "Ss-sh-sh!" The train came to a stop. The two men were smiling again. This time Teddy saw them, and gave them one of his brilliant arch smiles in return.

"Good-night!" ventured one of them, nodding.

"Good-night!" chirped Teddy, getting out.

"Confounded cheek!" muttered Philip, following.



They compromised matters. Philip was to walk for five minutes by Teddy's watch and then turn back.

"Then you'll almost see me home," exclaimed Teddy; "it's seven minutes walk."

"I wouldn't change places with any man in London tonight, Teddy," said Philip, as he took his little friend's arm.

"I've heard you say that before!"

"I never meant it more than I do now. Would you, Teddy?"

"Would I what?"

"Change places?"

"Don't know; might with you, perhaps. You should have asked me in the train!"

Teddy smiled at his own joke.

"Well, you might change with me perhaps, but you'd make a poor bargain if you changed with anyone else!" said Philip, meaningly.

But Teddy didn't see the inwardness of the remark, or ignored it.

"I'll get my supper before you, anyway!" he said cheerfully. Then added, as an afterthought, "Unless you come in and stay to supper, sir!"

'Just thought of it, eh? No, not now, after you've given me a measly five minutes, and then marching orders; it isn't likely!'

In the gas-lit street Teddy could see nothing in Philip's eyes but love, so he offered no apology, but said:

"Time!"

"No, I'm sure it isn't."

"Yes, I'll look. Five seconds over-time; there you are! Good-bye."

He held out his hand for the bag. Philip shook it; then gave the bag over to him, and stood still. Teddy went about twenty steps; then turned round, and cried warningly, with a wave of his square cap, "All right; good-night; make haste back!"

But Philip watched him out of sight before he could leave the spot.



### CHAPTER III

#### A DISCUSSION WITH GERRARD

The next Tuesday evening Herbert and Godfrey Rhys came in to see Gerrard after choir-practice at All Saints'. The younger brother was a special favourite with Gerrard, and he sent Herbert down to Luard's room. Then when Philip went up for the other two, he found the precious pair playing cricket with a ruler and piece of paper!

"Regular office-boy game!" remarked Philip sarcastically.

"Your turn in, Mr Luard," cried Godfrey, who was notoriously cheeky.

But they went down to Philip's room, and sat round the fire, instead of continuing the pastime, and discussed the musical questions of the hour. Lake, the Church organist, had already put the "Last Judgement" into rehearsal; it was to be given about the middle of Advent on a Wednesday night. Philip was interested to an unusual extent (though he and his colleagues really took great interest in all the ordinary music at their Church), because Teddy was coming to sing the treble solos. There was nobody at All Saints' who could do it; Stone's voice was on its last legs; Herbert Rhys was too nervous to be put to solo work, in spite of his sweet voice; besides he hadn't strength enough for a big thing. So, of course, they were not going to rehearse anything but the choruses. In fact, the boys knew very little of the music. Herbert thought he could do the treble of "Blest are the Departed". They hunted up the score, and tried it; Godfrey shirked the alto, and said he couldn't see. They were all four bending over the one book, and Philip was trying to play it and sing the bass as well. It wasn't a success.

"Wait till you hear it properly done!" said Philip, giving it up as hopeless.

"By Master Edward Faircloth, of St Saviour's, Adelphi," added Gerrard.

"And a tenor from St Andrew's, Spring Street!" responded Philip, as a counter-thrust.

"Well, stop fooling!" laughed Gerrard, and let the boys tell us what they *can* do."

"None of it!" said the younger one; "we're sick of it for tonight."

But Herbert found, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” and Gerrard tried the solo. Of course they could do this up to a point; they often had it in Trinity for an anthem. Herbert was really very good. Gerrard pleased himself, at any rate!

“By George! Wright must look out for his laurels. I’m in great voice tonight. Now I’ll try ‘Forsake me Not’ with Herbert.”

But Philip said he wouldn’t have it mangled, and Herbert declared he’d not heard it even; they had only done Part 1 so far.

So Gerrard and Godfrey played halma, and Philip pumped Herbert about the recent Festival. Solemn old Herbert was not given to raptures, but he praised the quartet sufficiently to please Philip, and stared through his spectacles when he was asked how many cigarettes Lorey had allowed him and Rummel. Rhys had waited for Lorey after the performance in the vestry; then they had found the other diminutive choir-boy outside. Mr Lorey had bought them some chocolate, and they’d gone to King’s Cross in a hansom - Rummel on Herbert’s knee. The boys had been dropped there, and found their trains - one at the Metropolitan Station, the other at the Local.

“I wish you’d taken me with you!” interpolated Gerrard, looking up from his game. “I had to find my way to Aldersgate among a mob of unregenerate choir-boys, making night hideous with yells and cigarette-smoke, and barging into me with their brown paper parcels. There are three degrees of naughtiness in boys; you know what they are?”

“Bad boys, worse boys, and choir-boys! I ought to know; you’ve told me a few times.”

Godfrey put his knickerbockered legs over the arm of the chair as he spoke. Philip went and lifted them down.

“You’re not in Mr Gerrard’s room now, Master G Rhys!” he explained; “and you need not be so anxious to exemplify his theories!”

Then the boys went away to get a tram home: they had to be in about nine. Gerrard stayed in Luard’s room a bit longer. It was such a nice, luxurious abode; the armchairs were so comfortable, the furniture so good, the pictures so tasteful. In his own den there was a clothless

deal table, two or three wooden chairs, no carpet; the bookshelves contained a jumble of miscellaneous property but scarcely any books, and there were two crude religious French pictures nailed to the whitewashed walls! But as it was the recognised playground of all the urchins in the parish it was very “helpful”, Gerrard said, to have no furniture. He called Philip a “sybarite” about three times a day regularly. All the same, he liked to play on Philip’s piano, use his note-paper, smoke his tobacco, and lounge on his armchairs. On this particular occasion, he would have said he was resting *en route* for supper, which was taken in a common-room on the ground floor. Philip lived on the first; Gerrard on the second. The Vicar didn’t live in the Clergy-house; the Vicarage was the other side of the garden.

“I’m rather worried about Teddy,” said Philip.

“What, has he been naughty? How refreshing!”

“No; but I don’t see what the next step is to be.”

“Why not let things alone for the present?”

“Yes, but it can’t be for long. His voice will break, and then I don’t know what to do for him.”

“Rubbish; his voice won’t break for ages to come. He’s only fourteen.”

“Fourteen and a half.”

“Well, that will carry him over another year, won’t it?”

“And then what’s to be done?”

“Well, if you ask me, I should say, make him a countess’s page-boy; he’ll look sweet in buttons.”

“Do be reasonable, old chap! He’ll sing again some day, perhaps, but the job is to fill up the interim.”

“Send him home to his people, then.”

“What could he do there, pray? I’ve dug him out of “the land” once by a huge effort. But if he got planted there again he’d never come up any more for life.”

“Get him a berth in the City, then; it’s easy enough. He’ll have to start as office-boy at eight bob a week, but lots of other decent little fellows do the same.”

“Well, I believe I *will* have to find him a berth in London,” said Philip, despondingly. “It’s bad for him to bring him up to do nothing, and it’s no good his staying at school after his voice breaks; he hates his lessons now.”

“Of course you won’t bring him up to do nothing, my dear fellow. In the first place I don’t suppose you can afford to allow him £100 a year, eh? In the second place, no young growing lad *could* do nothing, if he tried; he could cause you endless worry.”

“Yes, I suppose so.”

“Can’t he assist his Sydenham relatives?”

“I’ve thought of that. They keep a milk-shop, you know. But I don’t fancy my Teddy driving the milk-float around the streets.”

“Why not; he’d have driven the cows around the meadow if you’d left him in his native air.”

“Well, look here!” cried Philip, getting up, and pacing the room restlessly. “I don’t want him all that way from me. I want to devise a plan for having him here. That’s the long and the short of it, Gerrard!”

“Well, get the Vicar to engage him as a bootblack, or lay-reader, or sub-deacon, or anything else suitable.”

“Don’t be silly,” pleaded Philip again. “I really think he might be fitted in, though, somehow; we could dispense with Jane’s services, and put the ménage under Teddy, or something.”

“Don’t ask me to eat his dinners, please! But, I say, Mr Luard, doesn’t it strike you as being rather inconsistent?”

“What’s inconsistent?”

“Why, he mustn’t demean himself by engaging in the milk-business at Sydenham, but he may clean the boots and knives in Kentish Town!”

Philip stopped his prowl, and took up the photo of the boy in his cassock and surplice, which stood on the piano.

“Yes, there’s something in what you say. But I wish I could go into the milk-business too, then, that’s all!”

“Well, you can; “sincere milk of the Word”, you know. *I* see what it is, old chap; I’ve seen it for two months, if you haven’t. You want to have the boy all to yourself.”

“Well, I suppose I do? Isn’t it natural? I made him what he is -”

“Steady, there! Give his natural parents a little of the credit, old man!”

“Yes, I know; I didn’t make him charming and healthy and honest, but I found his sphere for him.”

“If you hadn’t, someone else might have done.”

“I don’t believe it; he’d have been behind the plough at the present moment.”

“Very good place too; only another case of the ‘born to blush unseen’. You mind you don’t undo the good work of nature.”

“What, you think he promises to be dishonest and unhealthy?”

“No, no! I didn’t think so. I don’t mean it for a minute, old chap; you know that!”

Philip looked so wounded that Gerrard got up and put his arm over his shoulder.

“I know that!” cried Philip, “that it’s an awful problem to have to work out. You ought to help me instead of fooling. I’ve been steering my way through life for years, hoping and trusting and meaning to get to the promised haven, and it’s time I got there now. What’s the use of all my plans and work and sacrifices if I can’t be near the person I’ve done it all for? I might as well be a missionary in the South Sea Islands! Teddy and I ought to be together in the future! You don’t seem to remember I’ve worked and waited and worried on simply because of him. Without Teddy I should have come down minus a degree, never taken orders, and been dead before now!”

Gerrard did not smile at this tirade. They had been standing in front of the mantel-glass, and Philip might have seen and misunderstood any sign of amusement.

“Then go on working and succeeding for his sake, as you have done. You’re nearer him by far than you have been all that time you speak of, and you’re not losing him yet.”

“Losing him!” muttered Philip, bitterly. “I haven’t got him yet!”

“My dear fellow, you don’t want to drop anchor like a lotos-eater and lose every ambition in the sense of calm, surely?”

“What’s the use of sailing on for ever, bound for nowhere-in-particular?”

“You’re not bound for Nowhere; you’re bound for the Happy Land; but you’ll find it as you go along. A ship is made for sailing.”

“And cake is made for eating!”

“But if you eat it you can’t keep it, you know!”

“Bother that. Is a cake made for eating or keeping? Tell me that!”

“Teddy isn’t a cake!” and neither Gerrard nor Philip could help smiling at the queer turn of the phrase.

“Didn’t you say, yourself,” argued Philip, with a sudden flash of memory, “that he was good enough to eat?”

“I think I must have said ‘too good’, not ‘good enough’!”

“No, you villain; you’re trying to wriggle out of it; you said, ‘Good enough to eat’.”

“I didn’t, then. I said ‘nice enough’, so now! Besides, that was metaphorically said, my dear sir, quite metaphorically. You’re looking at it metaphysically!”

“Metaphorically, I’ll chuck the fireirons at you in a minute; and, what’s more, I’ll leave the metaphorical part out if you don’t try to be serious!”

The supper-bell rang, and the two descended to the lower regions.

“Is that all there is, Jane?” asked Gerrard, as the girl disappeared with the dish-cover in her hand.

“Yes, sir!”

They crossed themselves and muttered their *Laus Deo*’s; then sat down to fare which Gerrard loudly maligned.

“Cold beef, pickles and bread. Find your own drinks!”

“There’s something behind you.”



“Well, I’ll add butter and cheese,” said the grumbler without turning round.

“And stewed prunes.”

“Stewed prunes!” and Gerrard’s tone was one of ineffable scorn. “And that shark Crawley scoops eighty pounds per annum out of each of our stipends for this sort of grub!”

“Never mind, old chap; you know where to find whisky and tobacco!”

“Yes, you’re very helpful, Philip. I’ve not had a penny in my pocket for weeks. My poor are getting awfully exigent.”

“Well, don’t go and pawn my socks, and I’ll lend you five bob to go on with.”

“No. Won’t borrow. Bad economy. At least, not money! Socks are different!”

Gerrard never had anything; he answered to Hamlet’s description of Horatio in the matter of revenue.<sup>8</sup> He fleeced himself for his district. He wore a most tattered and disreputable cassock in private life, and if his lady-mother, the Hon Geraldine Gerrard, had seen what was hidden beneath this outward vesture, she would have fainted on the spot. Crawley and Luard had both threatened, a dozen times over, to destroy his battered biretta; bereft of stiffening or shape, it needed very little to complete its demolition!

“Can’t have your boy here, Philip; that’s certain!”

“Why not?”

“Your cannibal tendencies and the Vicar’s wretched catering. Fatal to the poor kid. Shall I make a pun about Faircloth on the table? No, I won’t. Smacks of irreverence. Not helpful, eh?”

They went back to Philip’s room for a smoke.

“Don’t forget you’re preaching tomorrow, Philip. Send me off whenever you like.”

“And you’re preaching tonight. And I don’t think you’ve got to ‘In conclusion’ yet.”

“Am I preaching; really? I’ve forgotten the text.”

“I’ll remind you. Altruism: your favourite text.”

“Ah, yes; I’ve not worn it threadbare yet.”

Gerrard filled his pipe from Philip’s jar, looking lovingly at the old college-arms as he did so.

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<sup>8</sup> “...thee, that no revenue hast, but thy good spirits, to feed and clothe thee.” (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Sc. 2).

“Well,” asked Philip, “what’s to be done?”

“Nothing, for another twelve months. Then ask me again.”

“The thing is this,” said Philip, “In the present state of the wicket I am tired of scratching for runs. I’m convinced a forcing game is wanted.”

“Awful mistake. If I see aright Mrs Grundy has just gone in to bowl! You won’t score safe boundaries off her!”

Gerrard made opera-glasses of his hands, as he lounged behind a cloud of tobacco-smoke.

“Yes,” he declared, “the old lady’s going on at the Gasworks end as usual. She’s just trying a few down. My word, but she’s got some work on ’em. Philip, my boy, you’ll have to go on playing the stone-wall game; the wicket just suits her leg-break!”

“It’s all very fine, old chap; I see what you’re driving at. But you’re bent on pacifying me somehow; first persuasion, then threats. Why can’t you help me?”

“Because you’re crying for the moon!”

“The moon - there’s a nice simile; the inconstant moon! Oh, Gerrard!”

“No, not the moon, old boy; I meant to say a star - a bright, particular star; a fixed one.<sup>9</sup> One of your own discovering, too!”

“There you are, you see. I discovered it; you admit that yourself. Then it’s mine, isn’t it?”

“Yes, to admire. But you can’t have it to play with, you know. If you could, by a miracle, you’d be a mere cinder in no time. Better to be content with a bit of stellar photography at your fireside!” and Gerrard nodded his head in the direction of the piano.

“But I *do* have *him* by my fireside, don’t I? Why am I not a mere cinder, ever since Saturday evening?”

Gerrard shook his head gravely.

“I fancy I’ve smelt something scorching several times, Philip!”

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<sup>9</sup> “It were all one  
That I should love a bright particular star,  
And think to wed it, he is so above me:  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.”

(Shakespeare, *All’s Well that Ends Well*, Act 1, Sc. 1)

Philip looked at his mentor with a very penetrating gaze. After a pause, he got up and said, quietly:

“Now, plain truths, old chap; no metaphors or metaphysics.”

“All right, then: all this lot plain, one penny!”

“Do I see enough of Teddy?”

“Almost.”

“Too much?”

“No.”

“If I see more of him shall I care for him less?”

“Yes, presently; not all at once.”

“Will he care for me less?”

“Ah, there you stump me: nobody could answer that. How much does he care for you now?”

“How much do you suppose?”

“No, I asked *you*. How do I know? Now, then - no coloured ones at twopence, Philip!”

“Well - a good bit, I think; in his own way.”

“Don’t want anybody else’s way, do you? He likes you as much as he likes anybody?”

“Yes.”

“More than anybody else?”

“Yes, I think I may flatter myself so far!”

“After two and a half years of friendship! Philip, old man, you don’t recognise your own luck. You never played a better innings in your life; don’t get impatient.”

Philip shook his finger at him reproachfully.

“You’ve gone back to metaphor again, you rascal!” he remonstrated.

“Seems to be the only convincing method with ‘Blues’ nowadays!”

“Well, mind you, I’m not convinced exactly. But I’m awfully obliged to you. I *think* you’re right.”

“I’m sure I’m right,” said Gerrard, rising to go to bed. “Try the altruist school, old man. Do give it a fair trial. You’ve every splendid qualification for a first-class in it. Don’t be selfish. You and I know something better than ourselves. Good-night!”

He unbuttoned his cassock to enable him to leap up four stairs at each stride, and left Philip to make his sermon for next day.

## CHAPTER IV

### A RETROSPECT

He could not settle to it, still thinking about Teddy, whom he would not see till Saturday afternoon, when he was going to a football match with Philip, and coming to tea at the clergy-house afterwards. One Wednesday in every three Philip was free from Evensong duties, and at such times he met Teddy in the Strand at 8.30, after the St Saviour's choir-practice; they generally had some supper at a neighbouring restaurant, and Philip saw him home. Those happy meetings! One thing Philip had not mentioned to Gerrard he was yet very grateful for, viz - that there had been no allusion to the rather lamentable affair with the boy Matthews. This was in Philip's second year at Oxford, and Gerrard had been his great friend and sympathetic adviser in that case. Philip had made some mistakes then, he admitted; against Gerrard's good advice he had, as his pal had put it, "licked all the guilt off the gingerbread in six months". But it wasn't a similar case at all, he declared to himself; Matthews had been charming in appearance only; at bottom he had proved to be a heartless little blackguard. The idea of comparing Matthews to Teddy was too ludicrous; it made him laugh. It was incredible that they should both belong to the same order of beings! Then suddenly he decided to take Lorey completely into his confidence; Lorey was a man who understood: if he hadn't solved problems of his own before now Philip was much mistaken. So he wrote a note at once, and went to post it in the pillar-box at the corner. Then he came back and got on well with his sermon. He had asked Lorey to come in about nine that evening, as he himself was not free to come up to Town, and explained that he wished to discuss the "Last Judgement"; *et alia*.

Teddy was always sorry he couldn't meet Philip from one Saturday to another; he enjoyed the Wednesday nights when they could see one another. It was a change to feed in a restaurant, and to have company to Victoria or London Bridge, and sometimes on the way to Sydenham. Now

and then Philip brought him something; a book, or a packet of sweets. Teddy was not more given to analysis of his sentiments at this period of his boyhood than he had been when the friendship between himself and Philip commenced. He did not like Philip any less, of course, after the kindness and generosity he had shown him for two and a half years. But perhaps he did not like him any more than he had done then. Before Philip had done anything for him he admired him immensely; it was impossible to *admire* him more. The condescension of his patron was the wonderful thing which had made the boy's heart flutter in the first days of their intercourse. He had rather outgrown that feeling of vanity. A great many people were kind and complimentary to him now beside Philip. His world had widened much since the Chalk End days. People made much of him when he went to stay at his mother's cottage in holiday times. Great ladies patted his head, and great singers smiled on him. All this had not spoiled his sweet, simple, modest character, but it made him take Philip's care rather more as a matter of course. He was not now excited at the thought of seeing him, though he took pleasure in doing so. The mystery of the affair was waning a little for Teddy, the romance of it was dying off. In many ways he understood Philip very well now, and his attitude of hero-worship was consequently rather modified.

Philip was a parson; he had secured his cricket-blue (Teddy saw him at Lord's in the 'Varsity match); spent money generously, if not lavishly, on his boy; was good-tempered, affable and witty; above all, understood Teddy very well - perhaps better than anybody else did. But these qualities had the effect of putting Philip at the head of a number of people whom the boy liked and admired, rather than lifting him on a pedestal high above every figure and personality in the world. Perhaps life in London had knocked all the romance out of Teddy's nature. Anyhow, there was not so much of it now as there had been in his connection with Philip. There was a sober, subdued affection; a plant which had thrived on Philip's constant kindness and solicitude, and which repaid them by the fragrance of gratitude and obedience. The only strange thing now about Philip was that, occasionally, a great yearning was apparent in his look or in his voice when he was with Teddy, and he was more given to putting his affection into words than he had

been. This had mystified the boy, and he had adopted the practice of being particularly flippant when Philip was inclined to be particularly sentimental. He found this plan restored things to the *status quo ante*. But had he been asked to account for a change in Philip's attitude he would have been at a loss. What could Teddy know, as yet, about a heart longing for sympathy or hungering for love returned? The only clue to it in the boy's thought would be, and was, a suspicion that Philip was a little jealous; a little afraid of losing his supremacy; a little doubtful whether or no some third person was trespassing on his preserves. He had lately become more interrogative about Teddy's work and play - his home and habits and companions.

He had heard him talk a good bit about Duncan Howson, a boy that lived in Silverdale and went to St. Dunstan's. Up till lately Teddy had never been able to interest him in Duncan, his chief boy-friend of more than a year. But now it was constantly, "How's Howson? Have you seen Howson much lately? Was Howson with you then? Are you going to Howson's on Sunday?" This it was that had first given him the suspicion that Philip was growing jealous. And, the last week or two, when there had been such inquiries as, "How long were you with Mr Lorey?", or, "What has Mr Gerrard been saying to you?", it had seemed to Teddy that the old bantering tone had given place to one of anxiety, if not displeasure. Never once could Teddy remember being reproved seriously by Philip. Dozens of times Philip had had occasion to correct his faults - faults of many kinds; wrong ways of speaking, of singing, of walking, of dressing, of eating, of public behaviour and private behaviour - a hundred different things Teddy had learned to alter under Philip's tuition; but it had always been done without friction. They were entitled fully to the credit of it. Philip was patient and gentle and full of tact. And he had the saving gift of humour. Teddy was tractable and open-minded and quick of perception. And he, too, had the humorous faculty. When the time should come, if it must come, for Philip to insist or for Teddy to hesitate, it would be the dawn of a new era in their friendship.

Naturally, the qualities which endeared the boy to Philip endeared him to other people. His uncle and aunt took him into their hearts as readily as into their home; his cousin, Muriel Evans, a girl rather older than himself, thought him the nicest boy she knew. Life flowed very smoothly

over the milk-shop at Sydenham. Teddy caught a train about half-past eight every morning for the first five days of the week; and returned about five, except on Wednesdays, when he could get home to dinner. The other four days he took his lunch in his satchel, and ate it in school, like all the other boys who came from any distance.

Philip thought this an abominable arrangement, and had taken Lorey to task about it. But Lorey had declared he had nothing to do with it; he deplored, as much as Philip, the necessity for twenty boys to eat their stale grub in a cloak-room, and play about in the churchyard or walk the streets till two o'clock. He had nothing to do with the school or its arrangements; the master would certainly resent any interference from him. Lorey had been choir-master and organist about a year; Harwood, the schoolmaster, had grown grey in his post. However, a change in Teddy's commissariat was one of the things which Philip considered imperative, though Teddy himself was quite content.

To get back to the boy's daily chronicle - three evenings in the week he had home-work; on Wednesdays and Fridays he had choir duties instead, and on Saturdays they all had a free evening. When his lessons were done, Teddy would read or go out for an hour or two. His passion for reading had not grown less; his bookcase in his bedroom contained quite a library. Philip had given him books as presents ever since their intimacy began; Christmas, St. Valentine, his birthday, and many other less notable times and seasons had brought him his story-books.

But, alas for the poet! Teddy "didn't care for poetry". The one volume of verse on his shelves was Philip's own slender "Golden Flame", published anonymously at his own expense by an Oxford printer. Teddy was scarcely expected to read it, though he took it down, now and then, and tried to wade through one or two of the erotic sonnets. It was very inexplicable to him; he liked lines here and there, speaking of fields and gardens and trees, but who Claudio was, and why he should be addressed in nearly every sonnet in varying tones of hope and despair, love and hatred, flattery and scorn - this was a puzzle Teddy had never cared to solve. To do Philip justice, he had not offered the boy the history in verse of his earlier *affaire de cœur*; Teddy had



seized a copy during a recent visit to Philip's room, Philip having owned to the authorship when the boy had found a score of copies packed away on the top of the bookshelves.

On Wednesday afternoons he rode his bicycle, or played cricket or football, according to the season; and, till Philip's recent arrival in London, he had done the same on Saturdays. But lately they had spent most of the Saturdays together, meeting about mid-day, as there was no school on Saturday afternoons, and going to see a football match, or attending a *matinée* at some place of entertainment, or taking an outing into the country.

Philip wasn't quite sure whether or no the occasional visit to the theatre was the right thing for the boy. But he could not see a good play, especially one with a love-interest, without longing to have Teddy there too. Somehow there was an atmosphere about stage romance which even a flippant boy could not ignore; and a great love-tragedy could hardly be scoffed at or pooh-poohed. One night they sat hand-in-hand and saw the girl who loved Gringoire die gladly for him, with her eyes fixed on his pitying face; and Teddy's hand squeezed Philip's very hard as he gulped down the sob in his throat; and Philip felt that the boy *understood*, little as he was.

Saturday evenings generally found the two of them in Philip's room; and sometimes Teddy went up to join Gerrard and his noisy playmates in the room above. Getting back right across London on Saturday nights rather took the shine off those evenings, but Philip had not so far arranged anything better; not because he had not thought of keeping the boy with him till the morning; but because when he once suggested it Gerrard had thought it impracticable on the grounds of accommodation, and Teddy on the grounds of clean linen and Sunday clothes. Sunday was a pretty full day for Teddy, though certainly he had his afternoon to himself, and sometimes gave Philip a call; but Philip himself was very much occupied on Sundays, and took so much out of himself - being as yet new to his vocation - that he was never in a mood for visitors' company, not even Teddy's. Gerrard managed things better; the All Saints' choir-boys were up and down the staircase all day Sunday, on and off!



## CHAPTER V

### A THREE-SIDED DISCUSSION

Lorey turned up as Philip had suggested: his hosts waited supper for him, and Philip took care that there was plenty to eat and drink. Lorey was far more of a Sybarite than even Philip would be; his means warranted good living, and he certainly “did himself well”. On Wednesdays he usually rushed home in frantic haste, after his choir-practice; as he got nothing to eat that day between five and nine-fifteen, and his usual dinner-hour was seven-thirty, he explained that he was always ravenous! Sometimes he supped in Town at half-past eight, as soon as the practice ended; but that, as he told Philip, made him so late home. However, he promised some Wednesday night to join Philip and his boy at their restaurant.

“Teddy sent his love,” he said, during the supper.

“You told him you were coming, then?”

“Yes; he wanted to come, too.”

“Did he say so?”

“Something of the sort. Why didn’t you ask him?”

“It’s so difficult to arrange.”

“Stuff! you must be a poor hand at arrangements. I’ll bring him next time.”

“And take him home again?”

“Oh, I’ll put him up at Hendon if you’re so hard up for room. I suppose it’s just possible to reach the City from the north-west in time for morning-school? What are suburban trains good for, I should like to know?”

“For bringing dividends to shareholders,” suggested Gerrard, “and producing correspondence in the papers!”

“And waking me up in the night with whistles and fog-signals!” added Philip.

“Well, I’ve an impression that choir-boys do sometimes utilise them!” said Lorey, with a smile at Philip. “For example, what do you suggest about December 12th?”

“December 12th? Oh, yes; the ‘Last Judgement’. Well, it won’t be over till ten, I suppose?”

“Of course it won’t. You can’t send the child to Sydenham at that time of night? My goodness! I never imagined such a thing! I’ll take charge of him for the night with pleasure.”

Like the flash of a heliograph Lorey’s offhand remark revealed to Philip a most hostile ambush.

“No, *you* shan’t have him!” he cried, decidedly. “I’ve planned out that night.”

“Well, if not that night, the other nights; why the one and not the thousand? ‘Ye must be shaved, why not tonight?’, as they sing on the street corners.”

“Sh-sh!” said Gerrard.

“Well, that’s what I want to talk to you about,” said Philip, rising from the table. “Let’s go upstairs.”

“Do you know,” said Lorey, as Philip turned up the gas in his room, “I’ve a great mind to come and play for you that night!”

“Oh, do!” exclaimed Gerrard, looking up from mending the fire; “Lake will be so relieved. Of course, he wants to conduct the chorus, and he thought Miss Bell would have to play, unless we could secure somebody else.”

“Good Lord, man! You can’t let Miss Anybody play things like those Symphonies. I’ll come; I’d like to do it. Teddy will sing fifty per cent better for me than for Miss Bell.”

“What about your own choir practice?” asked Philip, dubiously.

“Put Harwood on to it, of course; or, better still, let it slide for once. I’ll bring Box to assist me, and that will leave rather a gap at St. Saviour’s.”

“Well, it’s the very thing,” said Philip, “and Crawley will jump at it. I’ll put your offer before him tomorrow; unless you’d like to see him yourself?”

“No; I’ll write, I think. I’m not over-fond of the Rev. Algeron myself.”

By this time Philip had produced cigars and syphons, and they were all seated round the fire. Then Philip, afraid he would not bring himself to the scratch again unless he got off this time, made haste to say:

“You think, Lorey, Teddy might often come here and stay till next morning?”

“Why not?” asked Lorey, twirling his moustache-ends after a sip of whisky.

“Gerrard was down on me when I suggested it once,” Philip explained.

“How’s that?”

Lorey looked across at Gerrard for enlightenment with a blank look that amused Philip.

“Shall I defend my opinions, Phil?”

“Yes, of course; Lorey will understand.”

“Don’t think I shall understand at all. But come on; let’s have them.”

“Well, then, to begin with, it’s inconvenient for Teddy.”

“Don’t see that, to start with!”

“And for Luard.”

“Equally incredible!”

“And for Teddy’s people at Sydenham.”

“Quite the contrary, I should say!”

“And, to come to the end of it,” said Gerrard, warming to it in the face of Lorey’s opposition, “it will be the worst thing possible for both Philip and the boy!”

“All these conclusions to be categorically refuted!” observed Lorey.

“Are you sure you’ve got the hypothesis right?” asked Gerrard.

“Have I, Luard?”

Philip hesitated a moment. He had not confided so much in Lorey as he had in Gerrard, and yet there came upon him, as there had done several times before, the strongest possible conviction that Lorey *had* got the hypothesis correctly. So he nodded acquiescence.

“Yes, Gerrard; I’m sure he has.”

“Well, then, I say his conclusions are all wrong!” cried Gerrard.

“Shall I back my opinions, Phil?”

Lorey thus smilingly repeated, almost word for word, Gerrard’s request for permission to argue the matter. Philip was amused. He was also gratified; Lorey had not before used his name in that charmingly familiar way.

“Now for it, then!” he continued, as he caught Philip’s eager nod.

He knocked the ash off his cigar and leaned back in his chair.

“The first objection was - let’s see - ah, yes; Teddy’s discomfort. Now, that’s diametrically opposed to common-sense. Boys can sleep anyhow and anywhere; it doesn’t make a scrap of difference to them whether they’re at home or abroad. I’ve seen the same boy equally comfortable with a whole bed, a half bed, and no bed at all! You *must* know that, Gerrard; you were a boy once, I suppose? I was. Then this puts the boot on the other leg. It reduces the going back to Sydenham in the dead of the night to an unmitigated discomfort for Teddy. As to the morning, it’s just the same as if he went to school from Sydenham, except that Luard will give him a better breakfast.”

“I’m not so sure of that!” observed Gerrard. “Try our fourpenny feeds! eh, Philip?”

“Well, we can afford to abandon that point; we’re strong everywhere else, eh, Philip?”

They thought it over for a minute, while Gerrard pressed down his tobacco, and lit another spill. Then he said:

“What about lessons, and distance from Town, and fares?”

“Trifles; trifles light as air! Lighter! How far are you from King’s Cross, eh?”

“Twelve minutes.”

“Penny bus to the bottom of Chancery Lane; thirty minutes altogether from here to the Adelphi. Put that against - here, Luard, you do this bit of mental arithmetic.”

“Twenty-two minutes, plus fifteen minutes; oh, about thirty-five altogether from Sydenham.”

“There you are, then! What is there in it? As to fares, if Luard can’t afford - how much is it?”

“Twopence-halfpenny, plus a penny.”

“ - threepence-halfpenny once or twice a week, I’ll lend him the money, there! As to lessons, the boy can’t do lessons in the morning at home any better than if he’s here. At night, he *can* do them much better here, with two ’Varsity men to coach him. Besides, some nights there are no home-lessons; there you are again!”

“Oh, well,” cried Gerrard, beaten at every point up till now, “Teddy wasn’t keen on staying the one time Philip proposed it!”

“Pooh! nonsense! You sprung it on him injudiciously, I expect!”

“Yes, I did!” exclaimed Philip, delighted at Lorey’s perceptive faculty. “It was nine o’clock one Saturday night; Teddy said his uncle wouldn’t understand and would sit up; and he also said he’d have to go to the Adelphi in his week-day clothes next morning!”

“Oh, these wicked conventionalities!” sighed Lorey, with a look of mock despair.

“The saving restraints of life,” muttered Gerrard.

“Well, then, Teddy’s lack of keenness won’t hold water. In future, you wire to Sydenham in good time; or, better still, have it all fixed up beforehand. Keep some of his things here. Good heavens! the poor child must have thought he’d have to sleep without a nightshirt or in one of Philip’s: no self-respecting boy could quietly contemplate such a calamity, eh, Gerrard?”

“I thought boys could sleep anyhow?”

“Ah, well: yes, but I ought to have made the one exception, I admit. Philip must always have the child’s nightshirt on the spot: and mind you always air it well, old chap!”

“Hints on nursing infants!” said Gerrard, who, though beaten, couldn’t resist Lorey’s fun. And they all laughed heartily.

“Then think what a comfort to you it could always be to go and contemplate this said night-shirt or these Sunday breeches when you feel disconsolate, Philip! You could have a special hook for them in your bedroom cupboard, and Gerrard could send you there to get sweet any time you had a fit of the blues!”

“Wouldn’t work, my friend!” objected Gerrard; “I’m afraid Philip would emerge from that cupboard either to pity himself still more, or else to rush off to the nearest telegraph-office and send Teddy a wire, *“Come at once; condition hopeless’.*”

“Yes, perhaps you’re right. What is it Ada Cerito sings?” - and off went Lorey into a verse of a music-hall ditty, in a high feminine falsetto:

*“And all he left was a pair of trousers  
Hanging on the bedroom door;  
And every time we looked at them they seemed to say,  
“You’ll never see your lodger any more!”  
Poor Sister Julia,  
All day long she cried -  
“What is the use of a pair of trousers  
If they haven’t got a man inside?”*

“Sad case, that, Luard, eh? Yes, I think Gerrard must be keeper of the wardrobe for you, and keep it out of sight. Now, then; you see what it is to consult age and wisdom: *credo experto; experientia docet*<sup>10</sup>; *et cetera*. Any more old arguments that want re-bottoming?”

“That’s only my first outworks carried,” laughed Gerrard; “there are others!”

“Well, then, I resume my attack on the citadel. Next outpost, please!”

“Luard’s inconvenience.”

“Refer to the person named. Valid, Philip?”

“No!”

“There you are! Obstruction vanished *in tenues auras*.<sup>11</sup> Absolutely unsound. Next, please!”

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<sup>10</sup> “I trust him who is experienced; experience teaches.” (Virgil: *Aenid*, xi, 283).

<sup>11</sup> Into thin air.



“No, no!” expostulated Gerrard, “You’ve merely leaped that barrier on a winged steed; you’ve got to negotiate it presently coming back on foot!”

“Coming back! rubbish! We’re not retreating this campaign, old chap, I assure you. Besides, we’re going to bestride the winged horse to the last.”

“No, you’re not. Just think a minute, both of you. Philip pooh-poohs convention for a day, a month, a year; and he’s got to face it. Consider Crawley! Consider Jane!”

“Consider the ravens! We’ll soon stop their croaking. Extra attendance by Jane, squared by an additional half-crown *per mensem*. Extra inroads on the Vicar’s larder: say, five pounds *per mensem*.”

“You’re off the rails, now. I’m talking about the conventional aspect of it.”

“A fig for convention! There’s no convention about it. Unless your vicar has you bound by agreement to entertain no company; in which case I’d better be off before he discovers me here!”

“Philip wouldn’t relish being taken to task by Crawley about it, anyhow!”

“What? Entertaining me?”

“No; the boy’s sleeping here.”

“My dear Gerrard, you astonish me! Are we all back at Magdalen again? Has Crawley given you the inaugural warning? Will you be sent down if you patronise Herbert Rhys?”

“Say, *Godfrey!*” suggested Philip, mischievously.

“You’re getting rather personal, Phil,” said Gerrard quietly, without evincing the smallest perturbation.

“Sorry, old chap! No offence!”

“Of course, it’s all very personal,” said Lorey, “and that’s the very reason Crawley won’t criticise it. If he did, Philip could only ask him to mind his own business. It’s no use talking about this any longer. I’ve given my opinion; take it or leave it. I’m ten years older than you fellows, and I know the world better. Gerrard, with all due deference, has not outgrown Oxford prejudices yet: and, of course, Luard, you’re worse off that way than he is. But as you are more open to reason you’ll win clear first.”

“You mustn’t put Gerrard out of court so summarily,” Philip hastened to say, seeing that his colleague was up in arms. “He can see it more from my standpoint, in some ways, than you can.”

“I don’t know about outgrowing Oxford prejudices,” said Gerrard, who had been anxious to join issue since he caught the phrase, “but Luard and I are learning to live down Oxford mistakes. And, as Philip says, I’m not to be put out of court so summarily. It strikes me forcibly that I’m the counsel for the defence, and it rests with me to save Philip from condemning his own happiness to death!”

“We take it, then,” said Lorey, with a deprecatory wave of his hand, “that you’re now passing on to your strong card; that it will be the worst possible thing for Philip to see a little more of his dearest friend?”

“That’s not how I put it. I explained last night to Philip, and he won’t misunderstand me. He’s anxious to have the boy all to himself, and I say it’s the worst thing possible for both of them. That’s why I oppose the thin end of the wedge.”

“The thin end of the wedge, my dear fellow,” explained Lorey, unruffled by Gerrard’s warmth, “was inserted years ago, when Teddy first put himself under our friend’s protection. But I don’t accept the expression.”

“It suits me, because it means a split between them, sooner or later.”

“I should call a friendship like this a fruit-bud. It blossoms, and is very charming to the eye, but it’s no good if it is only a flower and nothing more. The blossom falls; the bud sets; the fruit ripens and matures. Nothing but blight or disease - I’m not very well-up in the technical terms of the orchard - will stop it. Trust Nature for doing right!”

“Go on, please. You can’t stop there, Lorey! It’s your own chosen simile. See it through!”

“Well, I will. It ripens, I said: after that it is eaten, presumably, and so achieves its end by doing good in the world!”

“*Its end*, you say. Then it must end?”

“Everything must end, I imagine. Of course, you can leave your fruit uneaten, if you are so foolish. Then the wind blows it down and the pig eats it. Or it rots on the tree for want of

picking. Or the wasps may devour it. It certainly is no good under a glass shade! But by *its end* I meant, as you knew, *its object*.”

“I’ll pull all this bit of Ouida-philosophy to pieces in a minute,”<sup>12</sup> cried Gerrard. “But, just for a moment; may it not be picked unripe, and eaten only to your eternal discomfort?”

“Granted, certainly. But the grower should know the right moment, you’ll admit?”

“He always thinks the right time is when he feels hungry, I find.”

“So it is, then!”

“Oh, Lorey, how unphilosophical! That’s the most foolish thing you’ve said. Philip, you won’t be carried away by that, I’m sure. Out of Symond’s mouth even you shall be condemned. Where’s *Animi Figura*, Phil?” and Gerrard knocked his pipe out, and opened the bookcase.

“Second shelf. No; more this way.”

“I’ve got it. Now, Lorey; I’ve heard you quote this authority with conviction, I think.”

“Well, what is it now?” and Lorey took the book; “I expect I know all about it. This sonnet, “*The good thou cravest..? Shall I read it to Philip?*”

“No, thanks,” said Philip, “I know it by heart.”

So Lorey read it to himself, Gerrard standing over him, and watching his expression critically.

*O, Si! O, Si!*

*The good thou cravest might have once been thine,*

*Hadst thou not made thy will the instrument*

*Of forceful folly, on vain rapture bent.*

*Thou from the boughs didst rend that fruit malign,*

*Which, slowly ripening ’neath the touch divine*

*Of hours and days and seasons, should have leant*

*At last to bless thee with the full content*

*Of wedded lives in love’s most holy shrine.*

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<sup>12</sup> Ouida was a female romantic novelist of the day. We might now say “Barbara Cartland” as a paradigm for slushy romance.

*Now with intemperate fingers having torn,  
 Thou findest beauty but a poisonous lure  
 Unto thy soul's destruction, joy a thorn,  
 Love's orient wings smirched with the mire impure  
 Of frustrate lust, friendship no sooner born  
 Than tettered with disease what skill can cure?*

“Yes; very apropos, certainly. Nice prospect for a man who hasn't more *nous* than to eat green pears! But, on the whole, Gerrard, Symonds is on my side here!” and he gave back the book.

Gerrard laid it on the piano, but that wouldn't do for its methodical owner, who got up, put it carefully in its original place, and straightened a few other volumes his friend had disarranged.

Then Gerrard let himself go, and pulled the philosophy to pieces, as he had promised. He had never admitted Symonds was right in his main contention; that was where Lorey and Philip were wrong, in being on the same side as Symonds. Had Lorey understood Symonds point of view? Had he read his biography - you might almost say autobiography? Well, then, as Lorey *had* done all this, and met him, and discussed things with him, would he say that Symonds struck him as a happy man? a contented man? a man who judged rightly of this life, and the life beyond? The whole hypothesis was false; Gerrard had discovered it long ago. The mistake was apparent in Lorey's simile of the fruit-bud. The speciousness consisted just precisely in this - looking upon Love as a concrete, tangible concomitant of Life; likening it to something to eat, forsooth! The idea was quite wrong; gross, physical, sensual. Love was abstract, spiritual, unearthly; the spark of the divine in human life - not something to gobble up! (Yes, Philip might laugh! he was thinking of a cake, of course, as he was last night. But let him rather think of Gerrard's suggestion of last night - a star!). Yes, Love was really a star; guiding, enlightening, uplifting; never fading, though often obscured by clouds; invisible in the garish light of day, but shining

out with steady flame after sunset. Men might come and go; quarrel and fight and shout; be torn and tossed by doubts and difficulties and fears and sins; sink into sloughs of animalism and greed and worldliness. But the star looked down on it all, unchanging, steady, calm, peaceful; beyond the power of the influence of earth; outlasting the generations of men; reproaching from age to age their pygmy passions; teaching them to look up from the mean delights and the transitory joys of the body, and aspire to the higher life of the soul. To be carnally-minded was Death; to be spiritually-minded was Life. To degrade Love into a physical experience was unpardonable - *"Love, the last relay and ultimate outpost of eternity"*! The soul that sinned in this respect was doomed; in the day that it ate the forbidden fruit it should surely die! He had held other theories once about Love; now he had learned wisdom. A revelation had occurred; he knew now that Love was the star which led us up to God. To appreciate, to use properly the greatest of all gifts, it was imperative to look, not upon the things which are seen, but the things which are unseen. There, then, was his opinion; and he was not going to say, "Take it or leave it!" as Lorey had done; to leave it meant to forfeit the wings of your soul!

Long ere he reached this point, Gerrard was on his feet; oblivious of the humour of the thing he emphasised his points with his empty pipe; in his ragged cassock, he somehow reminded Lorey irresistibly of a figure out of "The Cloister and the Hearth". Now, he sat down again; drew up his chair to the fireside; straightened his languishing biretta, which had got pushed over one ear, and refilled his pipe.

For a minute or so nobody spoke. Before Philip's mental eyes a visual memory was taking shape, as the photographic image comes up in the developing-dish. First a landscape of brown, furrowed fields, lying at rest under a quiet evening sky, bounded, far away over the level land, by a shadowy coppice of hazel-bushes; two or three leafless trees marking the course of the winding lane, their delicate tracery of branches sharply outlined against a bank of pearl-grey clouds: overhead, a clearer opalescent sky, where a rose-pink cloudlet, floating low, was fading into nothingness like a wreath of smoke; away, on the western horizon, where the heavy cloud-bank lifted, a long splash of crimson light, momentarily assuming red-golden hues: a pool of still

water here and there on the roadside, reflecting the yellow afterglow of sunset. Next came, close upon this visual reminiscence, the memory of sensation. A sense of dampness in the kiss of the fresh breeze that blew, with cool breath, out of the gates of the sunset: the smell of the moist earth and the rain-soaked turf; the distant bark of a dog from the white-walled red-roofed cottage by the wood; the whirr of a pheasant, as it rose out of the wayside hedge. Last to be developed, but in keen sharp detail, came back into Philip's mind the memory of his mood: Teddy and he had been walking for an hour before tea-time; after a rainy and windy January day: they had just said good-night at the cottage-gate: Philip had bent down to kiss the little boy's lips at parting, and was striding home with a sense of perfect joy and gladness in his soul: he had quoted to himself, "*Wrapt up in measureless content*,"<sup>13</sup> and he found in his untroubled peace of mind the illustration of the phrase: there was nothing lacking - the world contained nothing more to desire! Then - and this it was which, while Gerrard declaimed, had reproduced the moment - Philip remembered how he had turned back to look towards Teddy's home, and saw, burning with wonderful lustre in the clear south-eastern sky, a great glittering planet, sole herald as yet of the twilight, hanging low over the park and the eagle lodge. He had seen in it a symbol of Love - radiant, illuminating Love - steady, constant love - calm, unruffled Love; exalted, unearthly, uplifting, as Gerrard described it. He had stood a minute or two to watch it, saying more than once to himself, "*Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!*"<sup>14</sup> Then he had trudged down the darkening road, towards the lights of home, that twinkled like glow-worms through the garden trees, humming all the way:

*"Love that can all endure,  
Love that is ever new,  
That is the Love that's pure,  
That is the Love that's true!"*

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<sup>13</sup> Accurately: "Shut up in measureless content." (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 2 Sc. 1)

<sup>14</sup> John Keats, Sonnets, *Bright Star*.

He had been pretty close, then, to the unseen things Gerrard was talking about. As it all came back to him, he recognised that there *were* wings to his soul in those days - nearly two years ago, just before his mother's sudden death; and something seemed now to whisper in his ear that the spiritual feathers were dropping, perhaps had already gone! Whether or not that was so, Philip was certain of one thing; he was less happy, less content, less at peace with the world and himself and God.

The worried look went from his face. He stretched out his hand to grasp Gerrard's, and broke the silence by saying impulsively, "Gerrard, old man, you'e a better fellow than I am!"

Lorey envied the look of affectionate admiration with which Philip gazed into his friend's eyes.

"Well, Gerrard," he said, "Luard's right; you're a better fellow than *I* am, at any rate. But, I must say, though your opinions do you credit and you have the courage of them, that to me they are unconvincing. As a priest of the Church you feel convinced yourself; but I object to bringing religion into ethical questions; it's confusing the argument and the issues. Except from the religious standpoint, which is not mine in this case, I should sum up your view of the matter in the well-known remark - '*What's the good of anyfink? Why, nuffink!*' We can't all live in the clouds. I, for my part, put no faith in the future; *carpe diem*,<sup>15</sup> that's my motto, and possibly you may come round to it some day; I'm ten years older than you, you know. Love that is wholly ideal, that asks nothing in return, that needs no physical expression - that is the Love that's beyond me! I don't understand it; I have never met with it in real life; I won't believe in its existence or even in its possibility! This perfectibility of Love is too high for most of us; we cannot attain unto it. Of course, it's quite right for you to have an ideal, and to strive to live up to it. But a life all self-effacement, all self-denial, is beyond the range of ordinary mortals. The régime of the Monastery, with all its rigours and abnegations, has not produced the perfect life; has it, now? And everybody can't be monks!"

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<sup>15</sup> Seize the day, or, grasp the present opportunity (Horace: *Odes*, I, xi, 8).

“We’re talking about human affection, not human life,” said Philip, thinking Lorey was losing sight of the main contention.

“It’s all the same, old chap. What is Life without Love? A shell with no kernel! and the shell will have to crack if the kernel is really there, else how can it expand?”

“Illustration very misleading again!” exclaimed Gerrard. “You know G. F. Watts’s picture at the Tate?”

“Yes, a romantic artist’s conception!”

“None the less true for that! Love is the strong protecting angel that leads Life, the timid helpless maiden, up the steep ascent to heaven.”

“Too ideal; too much in the clouds again! I’m not discussing an angel and a maiden, I’m discussing Philip and a boy - two very different things, I assure you; eh, Philip?”

“Well,” said Philip, smiling, “it’s not easy to see the practical bearing of all Gerrard’s fancies.”

“It’s most ‘helpful’, if you would but come off the low ground a bit; then you can look down on the situation.”

“Still, Gerrard!” cried Lorey, looking at his watch, “you might try to come down to our level - to my level, as I find it impossible to get up to yours before eleven, which is the moment at which I must depart!”

“Well, I will be practical then!” agreed Gerrard, as they all rose. “You say you understand only the Love that allows itself expression. Tell me, now, how should it best express itself?”

“In absolute and complete union with the beloved one; mental, moral, and physical.”

“By giving everything and receiving everything in return?”

“Yes, exactly that; breaking down every possible barrier - withholding nothing.”

“You’re wrong! entirely wrong! Self-abandonment can never be the highest form of Love’s expression. You remember this? -

*“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control -*



*These things alone lead Life to sovereign power."*

For *Life* read *Love*, and there's the right thing!

"Just be a little more explicit, if you don't mind. That's poetry again, and still over my head!"

"It simply means that the highest expression of Love is self-sacrifice. The measure of Love is not *How much will I give?* but *How much will I give up?* The greatest Love is not the Love which asserts itself most, but that which denies itself most. No, no; you can't measure Love by its gifts, only by its sacrifices. To give is the easy thing; to withhold is the hard thing."

"Application of discourse, please; look sharp. You've only left yourself thirty-five seconds!"

Lorey collected his belongings, preparatory to departure.

"Philip should forego the appropriation of Teddy if he really cares so much for him!"

"Back to the old text, again, upon my word!" cried Philip; "this is Gerrard, Lorey, the Apostle of Altruism!."

"Largely for your own sake, old chap; you didn't let me finish!"

"Gospel of Selfishness, then, after all!" said Lorey, triumphantly, as he shook hands with his hosts, and hastened off to catch a tram to Kentish Town Station.

Philip seized a hat, and escorted him to the corner. It was a mild, damp night, but there was no fog; a soft breeze was trying to dry the greasy pavement; clouds went scurrying over the moon's face. The tinkle of the tram came to their ears; the head-lamp gleamed down the deserted road.

"Don't let me influence you against your conscience, Philip! Trust the inward light! Come and see me soon. Good-night!"

The stone on his finger gleamed in the gaslight, as he waved his hand, stepping on the footboard of the car - an imposing fellow, with his more than six feet of height, and his overcoat trimmed with expensive fur.

Philip watched the tram, gliding away into dim distance; then turned back with his thoughts all in a whirl after the hour of vigorous argument. He locked up and put out the gas on the stairs;

then expected to find Gerrard still in his room. But he was gone; only where he'd been sitting was a well-thumbed copy of Gerrard's favourite philosopher, Henry Drummond,<sup>16</sup> lying invitingly open at the chapter on *Mortification*. A scrap of paper bore the words in the customary vile scrawl, "Read the piece marked, *now*; the whole chapter if you've time. Gone to bed!"

Philip settled into his armchair again, and set to work, as requested, to read the whole chapter. Thus he got the parts marked into proper relation to their context, which was just like Philip. The proper markings indicated one passage as being of surpassing importance; it was this:

*"Man's spiritual life consists in the number and fulness of his correspondence with God. In order to develop these he may be constrained to insulate them, to enclose them from the other correspondences, to shut himself in with them. In many ways the limitation of the natural life is the necessary condition of the full enjoyment of the spiritual life.*

*"In this principle lies the true philosophy of self-denial.. Do not spoil your life with unworthy and impoverishing correspondences; and if it is growing truly rich and abundant, be very jealous of ever diluting its high eternal quality with anything of earth. To concentrate upon a few great correspondences, to oppose to the death the perpetual petty larceny of our ear by trifles - these are the conditions for the highest and happiest life. It is only limitation which can secure the illimitable."*

Here Philip mentally protested. By a little pretence on the part of his mind, he saw in the paragraph a strong argument for Lorey's theories and his own desires. Certainly his heart revolted at the expressions "unworthy" and "impoverishing" as applied to his love for Teddy. He looked earnestly at the photo. Once more, taking it up, and holding it, now near, now at arm's length. It was a very pretty picture; the boy's charming frank face lit by the illuminating smile; the crown of fair hair about the forehead; the rounded cheek and chin and demure little mouth;

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<sup>16</sup> Henry Drummond (1851-97) was a highly influential Scottish preacher and writer, best remembered for *The Greatest Thing in the World* (c.1887) and *The Ascent of Man* (1894). Something of an exponent of "muscular Christianity", he took a deep interest in The Boys' Brigade and, like Philip and Gerrard, was fond of speaking about religion in cricketering metaphor, as in *Baxter's Second Innings* (c.1893).

the dainty wrists and hands, from which the sleeves slipped back, as he held the music in front of him; all combined to deserve Philip's rapt gaze. Then he said to himself, "*A correspondence in which there is a little life*", and put the likeness down at his elbow, *he retired*, feeling much perplexed. In his heart of hearts he sided with Gerrard and Drummond; but the human nature in him refused to see that Symonds and Lorey were absolutely wrong. It seemed to him that it must be possible to preserve the balance between immoderate self-denial on the one hand, and immoderate self-indulgence on the other. There were heights and depths on both sides of him, he told himself, but there was no need to attempt to traverse them. A middle path was safest and best always. And so Philip fell back upon his trump card, compromise; it had never hopelessly failed him so far; why should it not still be played in the crisis of the game?

By now Philip was quite ready for bed; so, locking up the spirits and cigars, he retired. As he turned out the light his eyes rested for a moment on Teddy's face, smiling from the wall: and his thoughts gladly reverted from the abstract problem of the little boy's friendship to the boy himself, as he said aloud, "Good-night, Teddy dear!"

## CHAPTER VI

### A SATURDAY OUTING

The Saturday following, Philip met his young friend at 12.30 in the front of the Law-Courts - the usual rendezvous. First they had dinner in town, and then took train at the Temple for West Kensington. Teddy was keen on football, and Philip, though himself a “socket” man, took him to see any good match under either code. They had been together this season already to Queen’s Club, to the Rectory Field, to the Old Deer Park, and to Tuffnell Park. The last-named was the most favoured by their presence; it was so conveniently near All Saints’; and gave them a good long evening in Philip’s rooms afterwards. Moreover, that ground was endeared to them by the fact that Teddy had several times met Philip there during the boy’s first year in London. That had been when Philip had come up from Oxford to play for the Old Carthusians or the Casuals. He never attained to his footer blue, and was not quite class enough for the Corinthians. But Teddy had seen him play some sterling games at centre-half against some very good Old Boy forwards. Nowadays, Philip turned out no more; he could get no practice between Saturdays, and had begun to let footer slide even before he was ordained. Not that he thought it at all derogatory to the Cloth to play in public; but he found the Saturday journeys inconvenient, and was well-pleased to play the rôle of spectator already, before he had reached the age of twenty-four!

It was a mild, breezy afternoon, and in the suffocating atmosphere of the Underground Railway, Philip wished at first that they had taken a bus, even at the risk of arriving late at the ground. But presently, when they reached Victoria, he forgot his inconvenience in the delight of having Teddy seated on his knees. The second-class compartment was invaded by a small army of females, and with the most natural grace in the world the boy rose quietly to make room for one of them, and sat down spontaneously on Philip’s knee. His patron had the pleasure of providing him thus with a seat till they reached Gloucester Road, and as Teddy chattered on

about the relative prospects of the Corinthians and Derby County, Philip felt that it was very charming to have his lap thus regarded as the natural resting-place of his little friend. He doubted whether Rummel would thus uninvited ensconce himself on Lorey's knee; he knew no self-conscious boy of Teddy's age would do such a thing in this unembarrassed manner. He could imagine Gerrard's saying of it, *After two and a half years of friendship! Philip, you never played a better innings in your life!* The only little thorn in his peace of mind was a vague idea that Teddy might have behaved exactly thus, and with equal *sang-froid*, had his companion been Lorey instead of himself; but on second thoughts such a notion did not tally in the least with Teddy's original demeanour towards his friends, so he dismissed the ungenerous suspicion.

They made the return-journey by bus to Piccadilly, and had tea in a tea-shop there. Despite his excellent dinner, and the demolition of half a pound of chocolate during the match, Teddy had an appetite; and Philip looked on with amusement as additional items had to be appended to a "ticket" which at first Teddy had declared to contain "too much to eat". They sat at opposite sides of a small corner table, and Teddy caught once or twice in Philip's eyes the wistful searching look that he neither understood nor desired. And therefore he rattled off all the biggest nonsense he could think of saying; and dragged Philip, as he always could so, into the vortex of flippancy and badinage and puns. He had to exert himself again in the same way as they were going up Tottenham Court Road on a red omnibus, for it was dark and chilly, and Philip put his arm round Teddy's shoulders, and once or twice touched the round flushed cheek with his gloved hand. Why *would* Philip do this sort of thing so much of late? The youngster rather disliked it, for there was no attitude quite corresponding to it in his relation with Philip. It was on the road to kissing again; and kissing had been tabu, at Teddy's request, since an incident on a certain night about three months before this. Philip had not alluded to the incident since, nor attempted a repetition of it. Teddy felt sorry to have to take up this stand; he believed he had said "Sorry!" as Philip turned away that very time. And he said "Sorry!" now, while disengaging his arm from Philip's caressing touch as they sat together on the jolting omnibus. He made believe that it was necessary to straighten the cap on the back of his head, but he knew that

Philip divined his real intention. To him it *was* silly; he was sorry for Philip, but at the same time he meant to protest. And he discoursed volubly about people and things, all the more because he felt his friend growing reticent and *distract*, and saw in the fitful light that he was not looking happy. Then, to his relief, Philip made an effort; pulled himself together; smiled and joked and chatted like his old jocular self. So, to repay him somewhat, Teddy took his arm as they stood a minute waiting for the tram at the Euston Road crossing.

Gerrard was out when Philip and Teddy arrived at the clergy-house about seven o'clock; they saw him at supper, though, an hour later. He and Philip were interested in their old college chum, Truman, who had played for the amateurs in that afternoon's match. Philip had left the stand at half-time for a minute's conversation with Truman, leaving Teddy there, and finding him looking very important on his return to his seat. Teddy liked being with somebody who *was* somebody; Philip had long ago discovered that!

At supper they discussed "The Last Judgement" and December 10th. It was a week from the next Wednesday, and Teddy was going to sing it at a West End Church on the 3rd, but Philip would not be able to hear that. The boy made no opposition whatever to Philip's suggestion of his staying the night in the clergy-house.

"All right," he had said, "I'll tell Aunt and I'll bring my pyjamas in the bag; there'll be no lesson-books that night."

Philip could not leave it there, but must needs expatiate on the impossibility of Teddy's returning to Sydenham after the service. The boy put the argument aside, saying:

"Oh, well, it'll be nicer to stay with you; but I *could* go home just as well. I've got home at midnight before now; you know that. After I've sung at St. Cuthbert's I shall have to go home late; I daresay it will be eleven o'clock."

"But you'll be just as happy staying with us - with me?" Philip asked nervously.

"Of course! I shall like stopping here. I've never stayed a night here yet, have I?"

Philip wished Gerrard had heard the ready assent, but the question was brought up and settled before they went down to supper.

“Are you going to the station only, Luard?” Gerrard asked, as Philip put on his wide-awake and top-coat at nine o’clock.

“Why?”

“Well, I want to talk to you, and I’ll wait till you come back. You see?”

“Oh, I see. Well, I think I’ll only go to see Teddy off; I’m rather tired of knocking about”; and Philip eyed his capacious easy-chair.

“I won’t let him come any further than that, Mr Gerrard,” said Teddy, with his hand on the door-knob; “he’ll be back in ten minutes.”

“Who are you, I should like to know?” said Gerrard, pinching the boy’s ear: “I’m afraid Mr Luard will please himself about it!”

And when they got to Junction Road Philip took two tickets to Moorgate Street. He really was tired, but he didn’t want to say farewell.

“It is such a dickens of a journey,” he said, by way of explanation, as they saw the blue light on the approaching engine, and jumped down the stairs; “I will go to Moorgate, and then perhaps I’ll just do the bus-ride with you.”

“Oh, no, sir!” expostulated Teddy, standing back for Philip to enter the train; “you’re tired; you’re not to come a step beyond Moorgate.”

“I’ll come to the door of your house, little boy, if you try to boss me!”

There was nobody in the compartment, and Teddy was slapping Philip’s knee with the window-strap to emphasise his restriction.

“You mustn’t, you mustn’t. Whatever time would you get back?”

“Oh, get back in no time,” said Philip, smiling, for he foresaw Teddy’s quick reply:

“It is such a dickens of a journey!”

It was nearly a quarter to ten when their train reached Moorgate, and they waited a few minutes in the street without seeing Teddy’s omnibus, so Philip said they must walk down to the Bank to save time. Arrived there, they both mounted a bus, Philip going up first and Teddy following, catching at his coat-tail and remonstrating, “Oh, I say; you’re not to come any

farther!” But it ended in Philip’s seeing the boy off from London Bridge, and even there he had half a mind to go to Sydenham with him, but as he hesitated a moment by the ticket-office Teddy shot ahead, crying that he could just catch a train, and so Philip ran after him, just to overtake him at the barrier, and to get a hand-shake and a good-night all in a great hurry. Then, when he was lost to sight, Philip mooned out of the station and down the dirty and vehicle-crowded approach, still holding on to his vision the last look of the merry dancing eyes, and feeling the pressure of the warm little palm. It was all very well, no doubt, but the curious sensation of dissatisfaction came working its way up to the surface as he picked his path among the motley throng of night-birds at the corner of the bridge. Until lately he had been content with little or nothing tangible to repay him for his services; he had never expected expressions of affection similar to his own. But now, somewhat bitterly, he counted the cost of his patronage; particularly with reference to the returns on his outlay. He had spent the whole of his Saturday, from 11 a.m. till 11 p.m., trying to make Teddy happy; time, trouble, thought, inconvenience, expense - here was a lavish outlay! and he would not add neglect of duty to the list, because he was not quite sure about that as yet. To say nothing of the afternoon and evening - which, to be strictly honest with himself, had offered him unqualified pleasure - what was the use of this last journey? Any other visitor to him could have been dismissed at the door of the clergy-house, and he himself could have lounged by the fireside in his easy-chair for a couple of hours, smoking and chatting with his chum.

Yet for Teddy’s sake, because it was Teddy and in spite of Teddy’s remonstrances, he had come all this “dickens of a journey”, tired as he was; and at parting with his little guest he had been repaid by the conventional good-night, the conventional hand-shake, and nothing more; and without his own promptitude he would have certainly have left without even these; the sight of the boy’s train steaming off, or at most a wave of the hand as he disappeared in the end-carriage, would have been his sole consolation. It was like throwing the driest of dog biscuits to the thirsty dog which has toiled at your heels, or run behind your wheels, all during the tiring dusty heated journey!



Philip found himself gazing moodily up the black river, where the reflections of lamp-light broke and scattered on the ebb-tide. Then suddenly he pulled himself together; shook his mind free of discontent, and - it was getting to be habitual with him - argued like a lawyer on the other side, as he quickened into a brisk pace over the bridge. He told himself not to be an ass. The boy's attitude was boyish, natural, unaffected; what more could anyone ask? His memory reverted to his own boyhood, and he knew that he, at Teddy's age, would have done no more and no less than his little friend. Yes, it was natural; and if he, who had been even at fourteen dreamy, romantic, sentimental - if he could not then have found spoken expression of feeling possible, how much less could this boy - healthy, robust, wide-awake and prosaic as he was? He ought to be ashamed of himself - reckoning profit and loss, whining for an interest on his outlay which would beggar his partner in the concern. Of course, he had done much for Teddy, but in a sense the boy had done as much, and more, for him. Teddy had left home and friends and environment; worked hard and honestly in his new sphere; carried out, unquestioning and willing, all Philip's plans and commands. It was absurd to suppose that all this had cost nothing to the little unsophisticated country lad. And now who could call Teddy ungrateful? On occasion he had even put into plain speech the sense of his indebtedness to his patron; but it was too patent, if one would but think, without any need of spoken words. Was not the boy always happy and contented to come where Philip took him; to make long journeys, to stay out late at night, to give up any other amusement and occupation just to be in Philip's company? Oh, yes! if anyone was running off the rails, and going in a way to spoil this charming intimacy and understanding, it was not Teddy; that was certain. It was not Teddy who bade fair to spoil everything; it was Philip. He always had made and marred his own happiness all his life; he knew that so well, yet had not even now, at twenty-three, learned to know when he was well-off and to leave well alone.

And now he fell to taking a more impersonal view of the day and its events. Here is a man in a most trying and responsible position; surrounded by poverty, misery and ugliness; harassed by worry and work. And this man can forget it all on a Saturday while the hour-hand makes the full

circle of the dial! He can turn for twelve hours, more or less, to youth, and enthusiasm, and innocence, and gladness, and beauty. He secures for companion the sweetest and prettiest and merriest boy in London or the country; and they two go through the day together without a dispute, a breeze, an unkind word. The world looks on and says with envy, "Lucky fellow!"

They meet in the street, and the boy's face lights up as he runs to greet his friend - lucky fellow! They sit at dinner in the restaurant, and the boy's legs are stretched out between the man's feet as he waits for the food ordered - lucky fellow!

They ride on the Underground, and the boy comes to sit on the man's knee for lack of room - lucky fellow! They watch the football-match, and the boy, all animation and excitement, comments momentarily to the man - lucky fellow! They sit at tea on opposite sides of a little table in a corner and the boy takes off the man's wideawake hat for him, and puts it behind his back in company with his own cap - lucky fellow! They ride on the bus and the tram, side by side, and in the darkness the man puts a protecting arm round the boy - lucky fellow! They arrive at the man's house; they make their toilet together; the boy cries out, with both hands covered with soap, for the man to pull the slipping shirt-cuffs up above the dimpled elbows - lucky fellow! They sit at the fireside, and while the boy nestles in the roomy recesses of a big armchair, the man lifts up the pendent shapely ankles, and puts them over his knee, where they stay - lucky fellow! Then they have supper together, and while the boy laughs and chaffs with another admiring friend, the man can sit and listen without a shade of jealousy or constraint - lucky fellow! They travel together again - on foot, on train, on omnibus; the boy shows repeated solicitude for the man's comfort and convenience, but the man has the direction of affairs, and chooses to spend his time in seeing the boy safe into his last train - lucky fellow! They will meet again soon; there used to be absences of two or three months, when a letter was the great event and expectation; but now in a few days the man will spend another day in much the same way, with the same sweet little comrade at his beck and call - lucky fellow!

By this time Philip had persuaded himself effectually that he was what the world called him: consequently he was able to read a football paper and smoke a pipe, and enjoy them both, on his

home journey from Moorgate. He could just as easily reason himself into listlessness and despair - specious philosopher! Philip was like the church steeple on the far-distant hill, that shows white or black as the sunlight or the passing cloud alternately dominates the landscape. Had he chosen to take the line of what Lorey would say, it would have been a longer and tougher argument: to make a case for his own contentment he must have dragged in other days and other events; the experiences of two years ago, when he and Teddy had first begun to understand one another; of an Easter-week spent together in a boarding-house at Hastings; of a cycling-expedition round the Norfolk and Suffolk coasts one summer holiday; of the yachting-cruise where so much had happened, only a month or so ago. And even then, with all these tender memories laid bare and presented for review, Lorey would never have said, "Lucky fellow!" Lorey would laugh his little fleering, cynical laugh, and allude to the wax fruit under a glass shade; or perhaps would quote a line of some erotic poet, which, if its philosophy would wash, proved in six words that Philip was a fool.

But it was not this direction that Philip's fancy had taken; he was going to talk to Gerrard not Lorey, and so it is quite likely that he unconsciously chose Gerrard as the person of his own impersonal view.

So much the better for his peace of mind!

It was getting towards eleven o'clock when Philip re-entered his room. Gerrard was snoozing by the fire, which was nearly extinct, but he roused himself upon Philip's arrival, and they put their heads together over two debatable points in Gerrard's Sunday evening sermon. Not till this business was settled, and Gerrard rose to go, did the question come:

"How far did you go with your boy?"

"Only to London Bridge," Philip answered.

"That was too far; he didn't want you to escort him all that way."

"Depends on the meaning of '*want*'. He didn't *need* me, if you're using it in that sense."

"Well, he certainly didn't *wish* you to go, if I'm using it in that sense!"

“No, I don’t think he did. That’s his sweet little consideration for me, though. There’s no harm in my giving myself the pleasure of seeing him home, if I like.”

“Only that it cheapens your attentions, probably, in his eyes.”

“Does it? How do you know? I should have thought he would appreciate them all the higher.”

“Oh, no, Philip; that’s nonsense. Teddy is human, and it’s human nature, all the world over, to assume a right to what is constantly and lavishly bestowed. Isn’t it now, eh?”

“What if it is, then? I just want Teddy to assume a right to my company and protection and help, don’t I?”

“Yes, when and where they are needed, and perhaps when they are expressly desired. But to let little boys have too much of a good thing is most assuredly to make them depreciate it. Or, as we say, it ‘spoils’ them.”

“Oh, Gerrard! and you said I didn’t spoil the boy!”

“No, but you soon will if you don’t take more care.”

“Teddy’s got too much sense, and too little vanity to be easily spoiled.”

“All the better for you and him, Phil. But you really must remember that he is only a boy; that is to say, a being acting by instinct not by reason, and liable to be unconsciously influenced by circumstances. Now you, on the contrary, are a man; that is to say, a being guided by reason not instinct, and seeing the results and the issues of present conduct.”

“If the possession of reason makes a man do that, Gerrard, I must plead guilty to having lost mine! Because it is just what I cannot do at the present moment - see the issues.”

“Well, not having myself become insane, I will instruct you where you feel yourself deficient! That will be helpful!”

“Yes, my dear chap; it’s very good of you; you do help me sometimes. But I like to see for myself, not to see through your opera-glasses.”

“You will see, some day; you would see the issues now if you’d use a telescope. But you prefer the hazy impressionistic view. Love, being notoriously blind, laughs at the spy-glass!”

“It needs to be a sort of Sam Weller spy-glass to make a blind man see!”<sup>17</sup>

“It *is* one of that sort,” said Gerrard, gravely. Then he smiled at a thought which crossed his mind. We’re having a conversation à la Alice and the Gnat, aren’t we?” he asked.<sup>18</sup>

Then he went to bed.

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<sup>17</sup> “Have you a pair of eyes, Mr Weller?”

“Yes, I have a pair of eyes,” replied Sam, “and that’s just it. If they wos a pair o’ patent double million magnifyin’ gas microscopes of hextra power, p’raps I might be able to see through a flight o’stairs and a deal door; but bein’ only eyes, you see, my wision’s limited.” (Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*).

<sup>18</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. A slightly obscure reference. The gnat tried to persuade Alice how convenient it would be if nothing had a name. Perhaps Gerrard meant that the conversation was avoiding the main issues.

## CHAPTER VII

### A SUNDAY EVENSONG

Philip's temporary satisfaction lasted well over the next few days; he was very bright and fit on the Sunday, and he hadn't to preach, which made him all the livelier. To preach was still a great effort to him; Gerrard was different, for he could stand up with few notes or none and deliver an excellent extempore discourse; but Philip, in his precise, methodical way, had to make his sermon on paper - a two or three days' business - and read it from the pulpit. The one of them who was off preaching was expected to assist at early Celebration, and this duty was a thorn in the flesh of sleepy Gerrard; he would have exchanged with Philip sometimes, but for the presiding genius of Crawley, who tolerated no such evasions of prescribed duties. The Vicar himself almost invariably took eight o'clock Celebration and preached at mid-day; probably because he could not sing the Office anything like as well as either of his assistants could do it. At Evensong there was always an anthem, and Lake had reason to be proud of his high standard. Of course, they had not at All Saints' such boys as Faircloth and Rummel; nor such men as Lorey could boast at the Adelphi. But they were distinctly above the average of the parish choirs of London - London, where the solo boys and men are gobbled up and enticed away by the cathedrals and the musical churches directly they begin to make a reputation in their own districts. After Friday Evensong Lake held a full choir-practice, and Philip and Gerrard seldom missed staying.

On the present Sunday evening Stone and Wright sang the "Love Divine" duet, from Stainer's "Daughter of Jairus", and as Philip had heard Teddy sing the soprano part more than once he was not disposed to be enraptured with Billy Stone's rendering. Stone's voice was on its last legs; he was a big fellow now, over fifteen; and he never at his best was anything very extraordinary. But still it was very fairly done, and Philip enjoyed the music: after all, the music speaks for itself, he thought, as the two well-blended voices began together, and the

congregation stood up under the lowered gaslights. The first few bars carried Philip away, as good music invariably did; his senses swam in a mellow haze of ecstasy as the boy's voice, helped and enhanced by the tenor part, hung, clear and sweet, on the notes of the melody. He listened with closed eyes, and hands fast-clenched on the stalls. As the last notes died away, and he knelt to resume the prayers, it was only with an effort that he could bring his mind back to the words he began mechanically to intone. He looked across, at the first Amen, to where Stone knelt facing him; the excitement of the singing had left its traces in the boy's heightened colour and general appearance of warmth and glow; but he was cooling down steadily, resting his cheek on his surpliced arm - his round, fresh cheek on which shone the "beauty-spot" which had brought him many a teasing joke from his admirers.

During Gerrard's sermon, Philip fell into the old train of thought. What did all this mean to a boy like Stone - the larkiest, naughtiest, jolliest of choir-boys imaginable? There he sat, a merry young Pagan, with no more notion of the Love Divine than a cat! And yet he could sing about it like a seraph, and make the hearts of his hearers melt in a glow of tenderness and rapture. Of course, it must be explained by the "instrumental" theory; it was not the singer personally who appealed to his audience; it was something that lay behind and outside the performer, and which touched another something which was within the hearer. The voices were but the medium, putting these two sympathies into communication with one another. It was the invisible and unexplained forces that, being put for a brief moment into contact, created the exalted mood; the singer through which the current had passed might easily be perfectly unconscious of it all and insensible to the electric thrill.

Then, of course, in his analytical way Philip tried to apply the theory to other mediums of Sensation. In the flower itself there is really no colour; in the flame of light; in the violin no sound; in the body no life; what then of immaterial things? Should he carry on the analogy? If so, we are compelled to believe that in the Church there is essentially no salvation; in its Eucharist no Real Presence. That was rather a perturbing thought to a man who had accepted and preached both dogmas. But before his mind could grasp and grapple with this new subtlety, so subversive

of his blind belief, it was borne away in a new direction. Important as were these religious questions, another doubt at the moment assailed him, and - alas for the priest in him - demanded imperiously his first and most strenuous resistance - *In Teddy no love!*

This appalling conclusion of the whole matter felled him to earth - a metaphorical pole-axe! But, paralysed as he was by the stunning force of the sudden doubt, he was not going to surrender without a struggle. His heart was up in arms against his reason now, and he tried to smile at himself and his sickly theories, saying over and over again, "What rot! What rot!" The temporary barrier against the insidious enemy would not long serve him. He was obliged to look for a better defence. That he loved Teddy he was quite sure; nothing shook in that foundation, so he proceeded to build on it. Love begets love; therefore he should yet win the boy's love and be happy. This left his dearest hope still standing for a moment; but the next instant it began to totter. If it was so certain that love begets love, why didn't Teddy already love him as he loved the boy? For two years and a half he had lavished love upon him, waking and sleeping, wisely and foolishly, by thought, word and deed; and had he not so far impoverished himself for nothing? Was it then because there was nothing, never would be anything, in Teddy to correspond with his own consuming desire? Was the love that he felt, and saw in visions, and sought so diligently - was it something outside and beyond the boy's personality? Was it a warm, pulsating, quickening spiritual force which, coming to meet its affinity in his own soul, chose indeed as its medium of communication the personality of Ted Faircloth, but left that medium cold and irresponsive and dead to its influence and effect? To admit this was to support all the cynical theories of Love which he had always fought against, tooth and nail. He never would believe that, while Love was lasting and constant, the Beloved might be found now here, now there, in the style of Thomas Hardy's story. That was not really Love. Vergil's line occurred to him, "*Invenies alium, si to his fastidet, Alexim*";<sup>19</sup> it had been quoted to him more than once in his Oxford days in that exact connection. But that was not really Love. No; Philip propped up his shaky citadel with unfulfilled hopes. Love was universal; it was a common experience; it missed

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<sup>19</sup> "You will find another Alexis, if this one scorns you." (Virgil, *Eclogues*, ii, 73)



no heart sooner or later. But it is not to be expected all at once; it must have an infancy, a youth, and a coming of age. He should be foolish to look for a love just like his own in the heart of Teddy, aged fourteen and a half! That kind of thing would grow unseen till at last it became apparent. And when it was ready it would be his; and till it was ready he would go on waiting and working and hoping. In his own boyhood he had been so different from his little friend and protégé; it was not fair to argue from what he was at the same age - *that* was what he did not wish Teddy to be, that was very certain! The passion of love, the expression of it, the heights and depths of it, need not come - should not come - with the first transition from childhood to adolescence. At any rate, let everybody and everything assail it, he would still cherish his darling hope - to be loved as he himself had loved. He had set his heart on it; and, spurning the doubts and fears, the warnings and the philosophies that beset his path, he was going to pursue his quest undaunted. Supposing just for argument's sake, supposing it to be a vain quest - even then it was worth pursuing for its own intrinsic sake. He wasn't going to have the dream taken out of his life just because he might never realise it. He chose to hug it just for what it was worth.

Naturally, Philip was not paying any attention all this time of mental anxiety and stress to Gerrard's sermon: and so a most "helpful" discourse, in which were *obiter dicta*<sup>20</sup> designed specially for his help and comfort, was completely wasted on him. But he had to come back to his surroundings when his colleague's voice ceased; and whereas he had seen nothing with his outer vision for nearly twenty minutes past, he now encountered Stone's bright eyes as they stood up to sing "The Day Thou Gavest". Then Philip could no longer regard this bouncing energetic human boy as a medium of abstract forces; his radiant personality demanded recognition. Philip liked all boys, and especially nice ones; unlike the Vicar, who hated all boys and especially nasty ones, if his own epigram was to be believed. Stone was charming in appearance, and to Philip as yet he had been sufficiently deferential, if to Gerrard and even to Crawley his cheek was sometimes intolerable. Philip knew he was a naughty boy, but he liked him: in his premier place in the choir-stalls, or bringing up the rear of the procession, the boy

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<sup>20</sup> Words by the way, asides.

was attractive, and his conduct in church was always good. So as the last hymn was sung, and the boys let go at it with a will, Philip could not help admiring him, and gave him a quiet smile of encouragement as they knelt for the Blessing, to which Stone responded with a smile that was half a wink. Somewhat ruefully Philip reflected that it is always the wrong people who are so mighty responsive, and for a moment he wished Teddy would wink at him sometimes in that arch way.

But the next moment he repented of his disloyalty; he would not have Teddy otherwise than he was, he told himself; at any rate, he would not have him like Billy Stone, who was, he suspected shrewdly, much too free in his favours. And Philip was right there, for Master Billy had a somewhat shady past; and Crawley, who knew more of the boy than the two younger parsons - perhaps because he had known him longer, perhaps because he'd prepared him for Confirmation the previous Easter - invariably quoted him as a young demon incarnate, absolutely lost to all restraints of decency and propriety.

Gerrard maintained that the Vicar's opinion was based on two things: a vestry-door tied up from outside one winter's evening during a meeting, and a squib exploded on the window-sill of the Vicarage dining-room one Fifth of November night. Gerrard apologised for Stone often; he maintained that all his wickedness merely proceeded from animal spirits; wherever there was a spree, a piece of fun, a mischievous exploit, a practical joke - there was Stone in the thick of it; couldn't help being! And the Vicar let it go at that when Gerrard held forth thus; but to Philip he certainly spoke once of poor Billy in a most prejudicial and serious way.



## CHAPTER VIII

### REMINISCENCES OF OXFORD

After Evensong Philip and Gerrard went out into their by-street, arm-in-arm, just as they were, in their cassocks and birettas, and walked down Tuffnell Park Road, where there was nobody about. It was very mild for late November, and the soft night-air was most refreshing.

“I thought of something curious while you were preaching, old chap,” said Philip.

“What?”

“Oh, nothing connected with your sermon; I’m afraid I wasn’t listening to you at all. I wondered if love might go through a person without touching him.”

“As lightning goes through the conductor?”

“No; as music goes through Bill Stone.”

“Oh, I see. But, stay - no! I don’t quite see.”

“I’ll put it quite plainly, then. Can love come to me through my Teddy and he feels nothing of the effect it has on me?”

“Oh, you mean, then, abstract Love; the very essence of the thing itself?”

“Yes, that’s it.”

“Well, I can’t quite grasp it. How am I to think about abstract Love apart from the thing loved?”

“Why, you can *imagine* it to exist independently, can’t you? What about all the other things we name abstract?”

“No; it seems different, somehow. I can’t answer your question right away. But by analogy I should say it is possible. Mind you, I say *possible*. By analogy it would be easy to think there was love where there wasn’t, as you might suppose Stone to have music in him. But who can tell? Stone may or may not have it in him; after to-night’s anthem I’m inclined to think he *has*.”

“After to-night’s anthem he winked at me across the choir!”

“Ah, that’s bad for my supposition! Are you sure you didn’t wink at him first?”

“Gerrard!”

“Sorry, old chap!”

“Well, then, I *did* smile at him, so there! Mind you, it was a smile in keeping with the occasion!”

“Oh, Philip! as if Stone could sort out the different kinds of smile! I’m surprised at you!”

“Well, but, Gerrard; what about my notion?”

“No, I really *cannot*, old fellow; I’m too fagged to think it out. You’re too metaphysical for me just now. All I can tell you is, that I’ve heard a certain philosopher and aesthete say this: ‘*We first imagine there is Beauty in a thing, and then proceed to worship it as Beautiful*’.”

“Well, if I said that -”

“Excuse me a minute; as certain also of your own poets have said -”

“Yes; I know: *For we are also his offspring*.””

“Shut up, Philip! Have said:

“‘*Tis not because hes beautiful to me*

*I love him; but because I love him he*

*Is beautiful. How foolish! And how wise!*”

You are now succeeding again in another direction in being very foolish and very wise! I won’t be bothered with it, so there!”

Philip fell silent for a moment or two, then said, “There was that hymn tonight - “O Light, Whose Beams illumine all”; you know?”

“Yes; what about it?”

“Well, I heard that hymn for the first time at Queen’s, one Sunday evening in June, near the end of my first year. I’d been to look up Marchmont in the afternoon, and there was a swarm of men there; I couldn’t get a word with him. They began to clear out after tea, and I was

determined to have a tête-à-tête, so I was waiting till they all went. When he spotted it, Marchmont soon said they must excuse him as he and I had an engagement. I can remember it so well.”

Philip went on, dreamily re-awakening the old memories, half-oblivious of his hearer; recalling how he and his friend had strolled out in the gardens of New College in the lovely summer evening, and how soothing was the silence and the calm after Marchmont’s room, full of loud laughter and flippant conversation and cigarette-smoke. They had sat down on the turf under a tree, and Philip had propounded a scheme for part of the Long in which Marchmont might perhaps participate; Matthews was in it, and Marchmont would know how things were to be managed.

“That was before Teddy’s time, of course,” he said to Gerrard or to himself, screwing up his mouth as if there was a nasty taste about the reminiscence. And they had talked so long that Marchmont found he’d only just time to get in to Chapel, yet they hadn’t half-finished. So Philip had agreed to go to Chapel and Hall with him, and they would continue their confidences later in the evening.

“Marchmont was in the choir at Queen’s, you know; I sat just up beyond the choir. I’d never been to Chapel there before. Marchmont has to read one of the lessons. They had that hymn I was thinking about for the end. I’d never heard it sung before; I don’t think I’d ever read it, and I didn’t know the tune. Their solo-boy sang it *con amore* - a little dark fellow, a new importation of whom I’d heard Marchmont and Balsham talking. Of course, it was a pretty rotten choir after ours, and I’d already picked the anthem to pieces; then this simple hymn, and that kid’s clear sweet voice attacking verse after verse of it, knocked me out completely; he made it so much his own - you know how these boys do collar everything - and it seemed to fit into my mood. Since then I never sing or read it without the impression coming back again.”

Pacing up the deserted lamp-lit road, with his eyes fixed on the cloudy moon, he sang a verse quietly in his soft falsetto:

*“O Light, whose beams illumine all  
 From twilight dawn to perfect day,  
 Shine Thou before the shadows fall  
 That lead our wandering feet astray;  
 At morn and eve thy radiance pour,  
 That youth may love, and age adore.”*

“There!” said Philip, squeezing his friend’s arm and lounging on with shut eyes, “I can see and hear and feel it all over again! The warm summer evening, the dim light, the calm over everything; the one or two men I knew, and all the boys I didn’t know; almost facing me this energetic child, keeping time with his foot up on the kneeling-board, and never lifting his eyes from the book, marking the accents with his penetrating treble. Ah-ha-ha!”

He heaved a long sigh, half content and half regret.

“Come and have a pipe, and tell me more some of your memories, old chap,” said Philip.

Gerrard would come and smoke for half-an-hour in his colleague’s room, but he let Philip talk - he was in a talking vein.

“That’s reminded me of another time,” he said, as they sat down on opposite sides of the fire.

“But I’m boring you, eh? I’m always telling you these things, I know. Well, then, I’ll tell you about ‘Glory be to Jesus’. One Sunday evening at Magdalen we had that sweet little hymn, I was wondering how much of it Matthews understood, when suddenly a dear little fair-haired fellow - something like Teddy at twelve - gave me such a searching look from the opposite side of the stalls. It seemed to make me turn sick; it gave me a sense of doom and judgement.”

“Well, now! Just as if that boy hadn’t stared across at you scores of times before!”

“Yes, I daresay; but as he looked at me that time we were both singing,

*Oft as it is sprinkled  
 On our guilty hearts.*

“And I felt sin at that moment to be so repulsive. It seemed to strip it of the aesthetic glamour we wrap it in. I suppose it was the sharp contrast between the words and the innocent face of that boy.”

“Yes, innocent face, Philip. But you were not singing about guilty *faces*, you know!”

“No; I know. That’s at the bottom of it all, I expect. There’s always the possibility of a pretty boy’s being thoroughly vicious, especially at Oxford.”

“Or anywhere else,” began Gerrard. Then seeing a shadow cross his friend’s face he hastened to say,

“But ungenerous suspicions are to be avoided. Think the best, when you don’t know. At any rate *you* know a pretty choir-boy who’s ‘not guilty’.”

“Ah, that’s helpful of you, old man!”

It was; for Philip’s worried look vanished, and he held up his head again like a conqueror.

He went straight to the piano, and very softly played a quaint, plaintive four-lined tune; played it six times, his fingers lingering lovingly over its harmonies. He stopped, with no concluding Amen, and shut the piano gently. This took the taste of Oxford out of his mouth, and with it came the better things that he had since learned. He could almost hear again a strong clear boyish voice floating out of the open door of the wayside chapel at Little Ancaster; the old flood of delight and anticipation welled up in his soul; he re-lived the rapture of Love’s bubbling spring that had grown into so full and deep a river in the two-and-a-half years since he first heard Teddy’s singing-voice. The smell of wallflower was associated in his memory with this tune; he had a little withered sprig of it in his pocket-book even now - *the* very little sprig of that bygone Sunday evening when he had first kissed Teddy. Then he kissed the photo, on the piano; and went to bed rejoicing at the thought of the coming Wednesday when he and Teddy would share that big bed for the night.





## CHAPTER IX

### A BREEZE

All the afternoon of that Wednesday Philip was distracted. He could settle to nothing, his mind being so full of the evening's plans, the "Last Judgement", and the first ordeal. After dinner Gerrard went out visiting, and Philip almost decided to do the same, feeling that he was losing his balance. He went so far as to bank up his fire, and put on his boots. But as he was getting into his overcoat in the passage he wavered; stopped, in his weak-minded way, to question his policy, and ended by going back to his armchair and lighting a pipe. He would have a quiet half-hour to reflect and digest; then perhaps he'd make another attempt.

Things were going smoothly; everything had been carefully planned and prepared to make the evening's music a success. Lorey was coming to play, thus giving Lake his coveted opportunity of appearing in full view of the congregation, albeit with his back to them. The choir-practice at the Adelphi had been shunted to the next evening, and Teddy was due in Philip's room at five o'clock at the latest. Why it was necessary to deprive the little fellow of his ordinary half-holiday pursuits only Philip knew; Teddy would have sung his music quite composedly had he arrived in the vestry at the last moment; and an afternoon's cycling or football would have been no worse a preparation for him than putting on a clear collar at three o'clock, and mooning about till half-past seven, "doing nothing", as he explained it to his cousin. Philip couldn't see this himself, he could never act on the spur of the moment, or approach anything without sighting it in the distance. He brooded over coming events just as many men brood over the past: and he wasn't guiltless of retrospect as well - not by any means! By an effort, he had refrained from boring Gerrard at dinner by his anticipations; but he could not save himself from himself as he sat alone pulling at his pipe.

It was so stupid! Every little detail was complete in his arrangements, every difficulty overcome; why could he not now rest content and leave the next step to be taken when it was

due? But, no! He told himself that the game was not yet begun. The wickets were pitched, the umpires had come out, the spectators were in their places, and Philip having won the toss, was coming out to take the first over. How often he had walked quietly from the pavilion to the wicket, leisurely buttoning the left-hand glove, or lightly tapping his pad with the swinging bat! If he had been in such a blue funk at the 'Varsity trials as he was now, he would never have appeared at Lord's in the blue cap! But, then, he hadn't been called on to go in first or captain his side in those greensward battles; now he felt himself to be so direly responsible, and it was going to make him bat badly. Mrs Grundy was going on to bowl - oh, no doubt Gerrard was right in that; and the wicket appeared to suit her. But was it not rather unfriendly of Gerrard to give him such an elaborate warning? Yes, on consideration he told himself it was too bad of his colleague. Being mortally afraid himself of the old woman's swerve in the air, he must needs unnerve Philip just when he was going in to face it. Philip, who had to bat, too; while Gerrard himself wasn't picked for the eleven, and only had to sit in the members' enclosure, and say *I told you so!* if Philip got caught and bowled in the first over. Certainly Gerrard had done things more practical - more "helpful" than this. For example, he had first mooted to Crawley the question of Teddy's staying with Philip till the morning; and he had suggested and helped to purchase the specialties on the bill of fare for supper and for breakfast. But that was precisely like the assistance your chum gives you when he buckles your pad for you, or buttons your right glove; it can't be said to amount to moral support. No, on the whole, Lorey had been more truly "helpful" than Gerrard. Lorey had made light of the bowling; he had pooh-poohed the notion of Philip's failure to score heavily; not so much by words as by implication he had taken up the position of the batsman for whom the bowling had no terrors; who has scored not-out centuries off it again and again; who prefers it, because it's hot stuff, to the piffling donkey-drops of the brainless bowler who makes you get yourself out through over-confidence.

To drop the metaphor - and Philip remembered, with a sardonic smile, that he could himself pick holes in every part of it - Lorey took it as the simplest thing in the world that Teddy should be Philip's guest for the night, and go off to school next morning just as if were leaving the

Sydenham milk-shop. And Gerrard did not take it thus. Why, Lorey had suggested himself as Teddy's host for the night at Hendon; and, jocular as the suggestion doubtless had been, yet Philip knew perfectly well that Lorey was quite equal to a simple little arrangement like that, and would go through it without turning a hair. But - and when the *but* came along Philip's smile was accompanied by a queer little shake of the head - he would take jolly good care no such arrangement ever *did* come to pass. And this little *arrière pensée*<sup>21</sup> upset poor Philip's argument sadly, just as he had made himself believe it! He knew, to be just to both (and Philip had a habit of being just to people), that Gerrard and Lorey looked at many things in general, and love in particular, from totally different standpoints. And his better self told him which of his two friends was, so to speak, on the side of the angels!

Well, anyhow, it all depended in himself, and on himself only. Unless it depended at all upon Teddy, and somehow Philip scarcely took his little protégé into the consideration; he was the bone of contention, that's all he was. Of course, one might argue that, in past experiences, Teddy had, to a certain extent, shaped the course of events; but he had done it unconsciously. Philip fell now into retrospect, and across his mind there came the memory of Teddy's first night in London. On that great occasion Philip's attitude to the child had been simply paternal, or fraternal, or avuncular, or something of that sort. The little lad of less than thirteen, fresh from rusticity, full of wonderment, ignorance and excitement, took everything that came along in the most perfect good faith, and with the utmost serenity of temper. He had put himself completely at Philip's disposal; looking upon him as his guide, philosopher and friend, he had left everything to his patron's discretion. And Philip had done everything with discretion. All along he had striven to put Teddy at his ease; with most credible tact he had approached the one or two awkward passages in the episode. He had been jocular and Teddy had been amused. He foresaw the little novelties of the room at the hotel just as unerringly as he took the tickets for the train-journey. He made provision for possible embarrassments of their first night together, exactly in the same way that he unrolled the serviette in the coffee-room and tucked its corner into the

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<sup>21</sup> Afterthought.

boy's jacket. He forgot nothing; he engineered everything. He was equal to every emergency; prepared for every contingency. And doing it all humorously, with a constant joke on his tongue and a bantering tone in his precautions and counsels and explanations, he found Teddy as natural in the London hotel as he found him in the Chalk End meadow. Scrupulously attentive to instruction, implicitly and unquestioningly obedient to command, the boy answered smile for smile and fun for fun; showing at every turn an extraordinary perception of the situation, and adaptability to circumstances. When Philip had laid down the law on the first point of bedroom etiquette, Teddy asked in the simplest way for advice on the second. If Philip suggested that knickerbockers should be folded and placed on a chair rather than thrown across the foot of the bed, Teddy asked for instruction as to which side of the bed it was customary for a boy to sleep. If Philip volunteered the information that hands, soiled by the dust of the London divans, might advantageously be washed before they turned down the sheets, Teddy was not above asking if he ought to have said his prayers before putting on his night-shirt, and whether he ought to kneel by the bedside or the chair.

Philip could see him now, kneeling beside the bed, with bare legs and feet lying along the carpet, and the sheen of the electric light glinting on his short yellow hair; his head tucked right into the bend of his left arm, as his manner was. And when he sprang into bed Philip had quietly got up from his chair at the dressing-table, and tucked him up securely, with a witticism on the subject of falling on the floor in a night-mare, at which Teddy laughed. Then Philip said "Good-night, sonny!" and kissed his cheek, and went back to his diary and the day's accounts till Teddy's lashes drooped over his rounded cheek, and his breath came and went in the regular rhythm of a contented child's untroubled slumber. Then he had knelt a long time at the little boy's feet, and thanked God most sincerely for loading his life with benefits.

That night was a fair sample of many they had since spent together; at other hotels in Town and in the provinces; at wayside inns in country districts, when they were both so tired-out with the day's fifty or sixty miles in the cycle-saddles, that they scarcely had energy enough to blow out the candles; in the cabin of a tiny yacht that curtsied all night to the waves and the winds.

These nights were never clouded by thoughts of to-morrow morning; not even the wakeful nights that Philip spent in his berth, when he courted sleep in vain, and listened till morning to Teddy's regular breathing on the other side of the cabin. Teddy was a grand sleeper, and during that yachting-cruise he never lost an hour's sleep, despite the fact that on his bad days of sea-sickness (and the majority of his days *were* of that sort) he would doze for hours, lying on the deck wrapped in Philip's big coat, with his poor little aching head pillowed in Philip's lap. Oh, no: those nights were good nights; all his nights with Teddy had been good nights, even if he had to go without sleep and get up very shaky next morning.

Then why, Philip asked himself, as he knocked out his tobacco-ashes, and went to the window, why begin now to worry about to-morrow morning? And he replied to himself, gazing out on the gray spire of the church, seen through the gaunt branches of the trees to which a few withered leaves still clung, swinging fitfully in the chill December gusts, and under the dull, darkening sky. He told himself that things were altered; he was altered; Teddy was altered. Two years ago it was all very well for Philip to be avuncular; but that rôle was now far from being a satisfying one. Two years ago Teddy was a child, a mere baby; he clung to his lover because he had nobody else to cling to; and his lover, recognising the child's helplessness and dependence, had been content with the rôle of paternal affection. But things were altered; Philip was, certainly, greatly altered; and Teddy was, almost certainly, greatly altered, too. Other people now loved Teddy; cared for him, caressed him, advised him, flattered him, corrected him. And where did he, Philip, come among them all? By right, by mere justice, he demanded more than they; and he meant to have more, too! He needed love, himself; he needed comfort and caresses, and definite proofs of affection; he needed a great deal more than he was getting, or was ever likely to get if he waited till it was offered to him. Teddy must "understand" by this time; he was nearly fifteen years old, and if he had never said in so many words, "*I love you, Philip*", was it not more than probable that he was only waiting for the question, "*Do you love me, Teddy?*" If there was any truth in the theory of love begetting love, then Teddy must love him. But Teddy had not done all that he might have done in order to make him positive, certain, sure of this.

Altruism was all very well; self-denial was fine enough in its way; but why shouldn't Teddy be permitted to show a little altruism? It was not good for the boy to be always receiving, never giving; it did not tend to build up a fine character in him. Philip had a vague suspicion that his love was too quixotic; that he held back from what he might have for the asking, restrained by stupid scruples. What was the use of the guinea still dangling on his watch-chain? After two years one forgets to rejoice in a mere ornamental coin which has never bought or brought one anything tangible.

Every day that he lived he was becoming more and more angry with these scruples, and for himself for having so often listened to them. Something in point rose up now to upbraid him, and he reviewed it, pacing the shadowy room in the flickerings of the firelight. It was the last kiss he was thinking of; the last kiss Teddy had received from him, and it dated back to the first week in August; more than four months ago! The little fellow had fallen sick the very first day of their cruise; after a good night's rest (they had only joined the yacht late one evening at Southampton), and a memorable dip with Philip and some other boys over the side in the morning, and a hearty breakfast to follow, the kid collapsed about noon of the first day's sailing; Philip had attended to his wants all day, and at night put him into his bunk at dusk. Then he kissed him, and Teddy turned away petulantly, saying, "That's nasty of you; taking a mean advantage of my being ill!" Philip was astounded, and tried to joke it off; but Teddy seemed really to resent it, and refused to turn his face round again, or to say good-night. Philip had to leave him; and when he went down later on, he could still get no response. Nor when he turned in himself for the night would Teddy speak a syllable, or open his eyes. It worried Philip; he lay awake till morning (but that was his usual performance aboard ship) and pondered events. Since their Easter holiday his protégé had taken a step out of childhood into adolescence, but surely it wouldn't account for this new barrier to caresses! He expected Teddy to apologise next morning, but the boy was far from doing that. He remained glum, and wouldn't smile, and seemed offended with his friend. So Philip had it out with him, going forward on the deck to gain privacy. He had cut it very short. He merely asked if Teddy was angry with him, and the boy said

“Yes”; then if a kiss was going to be the cause of all this trouble, and again he said “Yes”. Then Philip had said, “All right; I’ve not brought you here to bully you”, and Teddy had dropped it there. Philip had been quixotic enough to leave it there, too. If Teddy had been strong and well and happy perhaps things would have been different, but he continued sick nearly every day. Some days he was an absolute wreck; he couldn’t even get out of his bunk. On these days Philip stayed below all day long; fed him when he couldn’t eat; held him up in his arms when the poor boy’s sickness was on him; carried him up the companion-way in his pyjamas for a breath of fresh air when he felt a trifle better. And he was content with the sweetness of the little arms clinging about his neck, the weary little head on his shoulder, the listless little form resting on his breast for support. Nothing was too menial for Philip to do; nothing too repulsive; and the feeble “Thank you!” was all the reward he asked or received. Once or twice he made up his mind to be paid for all this at his own dictation when Teddy got better; but Teddy didn’t get well till Philip took him off after ten days of sickness. Teddy’s weakness and dependence had been his strong defence. Philip might perhaps have kissed him with impunity during that long spell of dog-like devotion and paternal - almost maternal - nursing. But he never attempted it, so one can only conjecture. Since then the subject of osculation was tabu. Teddy had never removed the restriction, and Philip was too proud to beg, too loving to demand, anything not willingly given. When he had told Gerrard all about it one evening, Gerrard had referred to a passage in “The Rubicon”, and Philip had taken an early opportunity of borrowing the book from his Vicar. What Gerrard meant was this: *‘It is notorious that certain emotions of the mind cannot exist under certain conditions of the body... No one has spirit enough to feel resentful after an hour or two of sea-sickness.’* Well, either Teddy had not been sick enough when he *was* resentful, or else he was an exception to E F Benson’s sweeping rule.

But it is scarcely necessary to say that Gerrard gave Philip unqualified praise for his altruism; more than once he had put it forward as the reason for some particularly charming action of Teddy’s. When Philip dwelt on the idyllic relations between them during the weeks they spent in the country after leaving the yacht, Gerrard exclaimed with the utmost conviction, “Due to the



sea-sick episode.” When Philip reported one Saturday evening the gist of a physiological tête-à-tête, in which Teddy had been splendidly frank and sensible, Gerrard raked it up again.

“Can you imagine Teddy’s saying that to any other person in the wide world?” Philip had asked.

“Can you name any other person in the wide world who has been his sick-nurse?” Gerrard had replied.

And really, there was something in it. Philip meant to appeal to the boy one day by the memory of those days; days when he had the kid completely at his mercy, and had let him off. Once or twice indeed he had alluded jocularly to their intimacies. For example, when Teddy refused to sit on his knee or share the arm-chair with him, Philip would say, “Ah, you didn’t keep me at arm’s-length on the *Elfrida*!” And Teddy would smile, and reply as he took a seat of his own choosing, “Not feeling sick now, thank you!” And there seemed a very remote probability of his requiring any medical attendance again; never was a boy stronger, healthier, more absolutely free from ailment than Edward Faircloth. Lorey said it was precisely this sort of boy who always is sea-sick. Teddy wouldn’t go yachting again in a hurry after his one experience of *mal-de-mer*!

The light had died out of the wintry sky; it was quite dark in the recesses of Philip’s room. He had ruminated the afternoon away; his timepiece was chiming four. He lit the gas, poked the fire in the blaze, and listened for Teddy’s arrival. It was no use watching for it, because Philip’s window did not command a view of the house-door. In about ten minutes the said door banged, and Teddy, having calmly walked in, came up the stairs; gave a great thump on Philip’s door, and entered laden with an umbrella and a big hand-bag.

“I let myself in!” he exclaimed, half triumphantly, half apologetically, flinging down his impediments.

“Well, you know *what* you’re letting yourself in for!” rejoined Philip.

His mood changed suddenly at the sight of Teddy, as the landscape changes when the passing rain-cloud drifts away, and the sun shines out again. He took the boy’s hand, helped him off with

his overcoat, and stroked the flushed cheek gently, looking into the dancing eyes. Then he hung up the coat and wedged up the mortar-board on the pegs outside his door, while Teddy went to draw down the blind.

“Why don’t you pull your own blind down?” he cried, as Philip came and shut the door.

“Why don’t you hang your own coat up?” said Philip by way of reply.

“Well, at any rate, I’ll shove my own bag under the piano!”

And he hustled the unwieldy bag along the carpet with first one, then the other, sturdy brown-stockinged leg.

“You had a cab from the station, I presume?” enquired Philip, with a twinkle in his eye.

“Wasn’t one there, unfortunately! I don’t know what Mr Lorey would have done!”

“Chartered a tram, perhaps,” Philip suggested; “or a porter.”

“Porters! You can’t find porters at Junction Road Station, I can tell you! Well, I lugged it up myself, of course. Twopence, please!”

Philip gravely produced that amount from his trouser-pocket; Teddy as gravely accepted it, and put it in his.

“Two packets of ‘Woodbines’, I foresee!” observed Philip.

“Of course!” said the boy, nodding his head two or three times in a decided manner.

“What else do I owe you, please? I’d like to square up now we’re about it.”

“Oh, I think if there’s something good for tea, we’ll cry quits. But, really, my arm *is* tired. That bag’s heavy.”

“It’s so huge.”

“None too huge, though. There’s my cassock and surplice in it, and my ’jamas as well, besides all the music.”

“All the music! One would think you carried forty-two band parts about with you, instead of a paper-back ‘Last Judgement’!”

“Oh, yes; we know yours is in red cloth, of course. There’s more luggage besides, though.”

“Coming on by next train, old chap?”

“No, all lugged up for one twopence! Slippers, tooth-brush, sponge-bag, clean collar, Thursday tie - oh, ever so many things.”

“Can’t be much more, I should think. Are you going to stay the rest of the week with me?”

“No fears! Haven’t got a bag big enough for it. This is for one night, you observe.”

“Positively for one night only?”

Philip bent over and laid his hand on Teddy’s knee as he uttered this quotation. They were sitting over the fire; Philip in the arm-chair; Teddy on a chair he had drawn up on the hearth-rug.

“Last appearance this season!” ejaculated Teddy, looking into the fire. But, feeling Philip’s fingers tighten round his knee, and perceiving after a moment’s silence that there was trouble in the air, he glanced at Philip’s face, and was both distressed and surprised by what he saw there. The clouds had hidden the sunshine again; and how soon!

“What’s the *matter?*” he ejaculated, in a little sharp, impatient tone, putting a volume of meaning into his emphasis. But next moment he laid his hand on Philip’s.

“O, Teddy, if I were to lose you!”

Philip’s tone, scarcely raised above a whisper, had a tremor in it, and in his dark eyes there was a very dark look.

“Well!” interjected Teddy; and it is impossible to describe all that he put into that petulant, remonstrative, expostulatory monosyllable, accompanying it with contracted brow and a quick little muscular jerk which brought his knees together and nipped his friend’s fingers. “Don’t be stupid! Here I am!”

Philip couldn’t speak just then. Like a lightning flash there had appeared to him, all of a sudden, the vanity of it all, the futility of it all. Oh, the pity of it! Oh, the pity of it! It petrified him for the moment. Perhaps his heart stopped beating and his blood flowing. Certainly he experienced a sharp physical distress. Something like a cold wave seemed to go through him, passing up from his body in to his throat, and choking utterance of his voice. Teddy waited for a word from him, watching the dull, fixed, hopeless look on his face, and trying to comfort him first by squeezing his hand, and then by stroking it with his own. But still Philip made no sign.

Something irresistible, inevitable, fatal, seemed to be imminent; as sure, as pitiless, as the cold gray tide creeping up the shore. At last, by an effort he raised his face, and their eyes met. The merry loving eyes that said: "What can I do to help you?" looked into the sad, piercing eyes that were dumb. A few seconds of this was too much for the eloquent eyes; they filled with tears, and Teddy's lip trembled as he pleaded,

"Oh, please, *don't* go and spoil everything."

Then Philip's eyes also grew moist, and instead of the cold stony stare there beamed out of them the love-light that Teddy knew so well. The tension was in a second relaxed; Philip's cold listless hand gripped the warm little fingers that were moving over it, and he cried,

"Sorry, dear! Never mind; never mind; awfully sorry!"

Teddy smiled forgiveness, but there was still a little quiver in his voice as he continued to remonstrate.

"You shouldn't *talk* about such things. You *know* I shan't be lost; I never *am* lost!"

"I didn't think of you're being lost," urged Philip; "I thought I might lose you. That's quite a different thing, old chap!"

"No, they're both the same thing; they're both *stupid!* And you go and make yourself miserable about stupid things; and me too!"

There was a minute's silence, and then a piano-organ in the street below began to play. They both listened for a while, then Teddy spoke, very softly.

"That's the Intermezzo of Mascagni, isn't it? I know now, but I wondered what it was for years after I heard it first. A hurdy-gurdy played it one Saturday evening when I was in Croxton, and I kept humming it to myself all the way back to Chalk End. It was the day when you were so good to me, and I began to like you so much. I shall always think of you whenever I hear it. What a wretched little clodhopper I was then! and how kind you were to me! I ought to do all I can, I know, to make you happy. I do try, sir, really! I don't know what makes you so sad sometimes. You make yourself think I don't care for you, but I do, really! I will do anything I can to please you!"

There were tears in Teddy's voice then.

The front-door banged, and Gerrard's ponderous foot was on the stair. When Teddy went at his bidding to open the door and intercept the new-comer, Philip had a moment of reflection. He wasn't sure whether his friend had come a minute too soon, or at the 'psychological minute', or a minute too late.

Then it was,

"Hullo! Mr Gerrard!"

"Hullo! my Sydenham nightingale!"

And they came into the room together, the man leading the boy by his tuft of forelock.

"Now, then, Brother Philip, how long are you going to keep us two tramps famishing for tea?" he enquired playfully.

"How much longer shall we have to wait for you, you mean?" asked Teddy, extricating his hair from Gerrard's fingers.

In another two minutes they were seated at the tea-table, Philip having the boy on his left and his colleague on his right, as he sat at the end and engineered the tea-pot. It was worth twopence, as Thackeray, would have said, to see Teddy eat! He sampled everything on the table, and there was a fair variety.

They had been in two minds about asking Lorey to tea; but as he was bringing Box to turn over and pull out stops, they decided not to. Besides, Lorey didn't appreciate tea as a meal; he dined late. So those two were not expected till just before eight.



## CHAPTER X

### THE LAST JUDGEMENT

It was very near eight, too, when Lorey arrived in the vestry, and most of the choir were in their surplices. In fact Crawley had begun to fuss impatiently; he had been busy apportioning stalls to the two strangers - Teddy was to sit next to Herbert Rhys on the decani side, and the imported tenor from St. Paul's just behind him. Crawley explained himself to Philip, saying, "It will be better for Faircloth to have Herbert between him and the congregation; he won't get stared at so much."

But Philip knew that Teddy was not easily disconcerted by observation. He had many a time spent most of the service-hour in regarding his unruffled protégé's face. There were two presentations of it very familiar to Philip. One was a side-view from a seat where he could meet the boy's eyes, and then the outline familiar to Philip was one lovely continuous back-curve from temple to chin, with a sweet little ear two-thirds of the way down it. The other outline was the outcome of a side-view from a point where Teddy could not see him without turning his head; a front-curve, or rather two curves; under a tuft of silky hair a short, almost straight line of forehead; a break and a set-back at the eyebrow; then a full sweep of rounded cheek.

They began with shortened Evensong. But Philip was a little impatient; he wanted to get on to "Forsake me not", where Teddy would have his first show.

And when it came, as it did in due course, he was not disappointed. Brushing his hair off his forehead, Teddy stood up smartly at Lorey's lifted hand, Lake leaving the whole of the Second Part to the organist till the first chorus should come in. With eyes on his music, except for an occasional rapid glance at the organ opposite him, the little chap threw himself into the spirit of the duet; plaintive, deprecatory, beseeching. He put more soul into it than the tenor, strange as that may appear; his "O God, most merciful!" was thrilling. When he came to "O spare Thy servant", it seemed to one hearer at least as if his singing-voice was for a moment suspended; as

if it were the boy's speaking-voice that put up the terrified petition. But immediately he came back to a pure production of the notes in "and cast him not away!" Afterwards there was the delightful blend of the two voices; "No friend is nigh" just gave the culminating effect; an exquisite delicate ecstasy overcame Philip in the wake of the penetrating modulated tones; the sharp enjoyment of a subtle sensuous sensation that was half torture, half delight. He abandoned himself completely to its spell, sitting rigid like a saint in a trance, seeing nothing, not even his little friend's face.

He would himself have said that he was completely obsessed by the music, and oblivious of everything else. But it was not really so. The music dominated his mood, certainly; yet the "setting" of it played its part, even though only in his sub-consciousness. He could have proved this to himself had his analytical sense not been dormant just then. This was not the first time nor the second that he had heard the duet, and heard it sung well. But tonight it was environed by new adjuncts, every one of them which contributed its quatum to the general effect. Lorey was in it; the masterful undaunted individual who pressed men and things (and boys) into his service just as he controlled the manuals and pedals; who asked for what he wanted and saw that he got it; who had unbounded confidence in his own undoubted capabilities and in his own tact and resourcefulness. Gerrard was in it; self-effacing, courting hardship, making a fetish of duty, relegating pleasure to a back-seat; seeking no happiness, but glad and cheery in the most depressing circumstances; taking joy as it came to him; deriving his strength of character and purpose from his singleness of eye. Philip's unfound sense was in it; vaguely suspected, as yet undiscovered, but giving already signs of its hidden fire by the quakings and rents in the veneer of convention and orthodoxy which overlaid his real nature; a nature as sensuous and aesthetic as that of Lorey, as just and impartial as Gerrard's. And, of course, Teddy was in it; healthy, merry, insensible; untouched as yet by sin or sorrow; ignorant of the deep meanings, the dread issues of Life, and almost equally ignorant of Love. And this unspoiled boy, scarcely more than a child, was pleading with an Invisible Power, in the ears of all these people, *Forsake me not; Thou art*



*my hope; O spare Thy servant; if Thou forsake me, whither shall I flee? No friend is nigh, no arm to save, but only Thou. In Thee alone I trust!*

What is it all? Is it indeed The Last Judgement? Have the winds of heaven proclaimed its coming, and is every secret thought now unveiled before the Judge? Is the reaper's song silent in the field and the shepherd's voice on the mountain? Has the awful morning dawned? Is the earth shrivelling as a scroll? Has the supreme mysterious Power that made and ruled the world come at last to reckon with the souls of men? And what are we all trusting to for escape? Is Philip trusting to his creeds, Gerrard to his deeds, Lorey to himself, and only Teddy - little Teddy, who knows nothing of creeds or deeds or himself - trusting to the God Who is Spirit?

No; it is nothing of the kind. That is mere illusion. The music has ceased and the momentary illumination in the soul goes out with it; the lime-light has been turned off again. Lake bustles into the centre of the chancel; the choir rises at his nod; and off they go into the Chorus, while seven hundred other people draw deep breaths, shift into easier postures, and whisper "Lovely, wasn't it?" into their neighbours' ears.

Philip opened his eyes, and looked at Teddy. He was turning his head for that look, and when he caught Philip's eye he raised his brows interrogatively. Philip inclined his head with a grave smile, as one who should say, *Wait for your commendation*, and Teddy smiled back - or was it a smile of the left eyelid only? - and turned round satisfied.

Ten minutes later he was slipping out of his surplice in the vestry, and the Vicar was saying,

"Never trouble to bring a cassock and surplice again; we can always fit you up; I wonder Mr Luard didn't let you know. Good-night!"

Then Teddy waited outside the porch two minutes in his cassock, with the surplice over his arm, till Lorey and Box and the two curates were ready to join him. Then they went together across the dark yard, lit only by the miserable flickering gas-lamp on the outer wall. Teddy walked beside Philip.

"How did you like it, sir?" he asked.

"Very much. You did your part splendidly, old chap."

“Yes, I felt in form tonight,” laughed the boy as they entered the door of the house.

“What’s that?” asked Gerrard; “Teddy in form for a feed again already?”

“Rather! I’ve been singing for my supper!” quoth Teddy.

“Well, you deserve a pretty good feed. What was the Vicar saying to you?” asked Lorey rather anxiously.

“Nothing about the singing, sir. He only said they had spare cassocks and surplices here.”

“And night-shirts: surely he mentioned that?”

“No!” ejaculated Teddy, pettishly, half-suspecting Lorey was teasing him. Then, looking back over his shoulder as he preceded his interrogator up the staircase, he added mischievously, “I don’t wear them, as it happens!”

“Go on with your nonsense!” said Lorey, pinching a brown leg.

“It’s a fact: I wear pyjamas!”<sup>22</sup>

“Pyjamas! Heaven defend us! I’d as soon sleep with an iron-clad,” muttered the organist *sotto voce*, turning on Philip a look of almost comical despair.

They went into Philip’s room to give Lorey and Box a drink before they left. They were both going to Hendon for the night, and Lorey had refused to sup with the Vicar on account of having the boy with him. He went with Philip into his bedroom to wash his hands, and beamed upon the two pillows as he replaced his ring.

“All serene so far, old chap!” he observed.

“All serene!” responded Philip, turning down the gas.

Then they rejoined the others; Lorey finished off his whisky-and-soda and Box his lemonade, and they all went downstairs again to see the visitors off, the house-party leaving the vestments adorning the piano; they wanted their supper without more delay; it was nearly half-past ten and Teddy ought to go to bed soon.

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<sup>22</sup> The frontispiece of Nicholson’s *Rydal Mount Plays* shows six schoolboys of the day in nightshirts; the photograph is dated 1890. Nicholson wrote in 1922, “No self-respecting schoolboy would be seen today in a white linen robe (or was it calico?) such as my 1890 pupils wore. At the date of the plays only 2% of our pupils wore pyjamas.”

But, though Philip's timepiece chimed eleven as they re-entered his room, Teddy pleaded for a few minutes' grace.

"He wants a cigarette, just to be as big a man as Box," teased Gerrard, filling his pipe from his colleague's jar, and flopping down into the best chair.

"Of course!" rejoined Teddy, promptly. He extricated his arm from Gerrard's playful grip, and went over to Philip, striking a match from his own little box that his patron had given him on his last birthday. Philip was just ready for the delicate little attention, and after disposing of the match, Teddy dragged out the bag, unearthed his slippers, and unlaced his boots at the back of the room. Then he came and sat on the hearth-rug at Philip's feet, stretching out his legs parallel with the fender.

"How long now, umpire?" he asked, leaning backwards to look at Philip.

"Ten minutes," decided his friend, stroking his cheek.

"Very well, then; I've got to go to bed at eleven-fourteen sharp tonight"; and he settled down, facing Gerrard, and propping his back with Philip's knees.

Watching the clock, as they discussed the evening's service, he sprang up punctual to the moment, and offered his hand first to Gerrard and then to Philip.

"You needn't come with me," he said to the latter, giving his hand a little supplementary squeeze.

Philip meant to go, however, and while the boy picked up the bag he walked across into the bedroom to turn up the gas. Then he stayed there, lolling in the luxurious armchair, while Teddy undressed. He was pleased with the youngster's generous approbation of things in general, for Teddy's operations were punctuated by a running fire of remarks, chiefly laudatory of his friend's possessions; such as, "Jolly decent soap! Decent picture that! Carpet ain't half soft!" The last remark was made as he knelt down, in his striped flannelette jacket and breeches, to say his prayers within a foot of Philip's swinging slipper. He spared a moment, as he dropped on his knees, to feel the pile of the carpet; then he laid his left arm along the bed-quilt, and nestled his

nose into the bend of it, while Philip repressed an insane impulse to kiss the little bare feet and ankles.

“Inside berth, of course?” he enquired archly, as he sprang up.

Philip nodded, smiling. They had fought the question out for several minutes the first time they shared a bed which stood against a wall. Philip objected to the “inside berth” because it necessitated his scrambling over Teddy when he got to bed. And Teddy objected to it because he didn’t want to clamber over Philip when he got out of bed. Philip finally prevailed, on the grounds of his carrying more weight, and Teddy had gone “inside” there, and in several other places. Philip was thinking of the argument as Teddy burrowed between the sheets; it was at a Hastings boarding-house nearly two years ago, where the guests would insist on speaking to Philip about “his little brother”.

Then Teddy turned himself to the wall, drew the bed-clothes under his chin, and said “Good-night”. And Philip was in a strait betwixt two. Teddy might be willing to be kissed; in which case Philip would be a double-dyed idiot to go away without doing it. Or he might be unwilling; in which case Philip would “spoil everything” by attempting it. He stood, irresolute; he durst not put it to the touch.

“Go away and finish your pipe. Good-night,” said Teddy, turning his face round in mock surprise.

“Haven’t kissed you yet,” said Philip, trying to speak in a light, careless tone.

But Teddy watched his face, and quickly put up both his hands, covering his own face with them as completely as it was possible to do.

“No, I can’t, so there! You want too much. It’s too soft. I don’t like it.”

He jerked out these expostulations, one after another, watching Philip through his fingers.

“Such a little thing to ask!” pleaded Philip.

“No; it makes me cross.”

“And me happy!”

Philip sprawled over the bed, and tentatively pulled at the outspread hands. But they didn't yield.

"No! You must wait till I'll asleep. Please!" and he threw so much into that last word, coming muffled from behind his hands, that Philip suddenly ceased to touch him, and got back on his feet.

"And even then I shall be cross!" added Teddy naïvely, removing his hands in the full assurance that he was safe now, and looking to see how his lover took it.

"You won't know," said he, struggling to put the whole thing on a jocular basis, and so avert disaster.

"Yes, I shall! I shall kick!"

"Thanks for telling me. I'll keep away from your legs!"

"I shall punch you in the eye; like this!" and Teddy shot out a doubled fist.

"Well, mind you don't knock my wall down, that's all!" He reached over and took the little fist in his. It opened, and the small fingers curled round his own with a tight little squeeze.

"Good-night!" said Teddy for the third time.

"You see; I won't stoop to bullying," said Philip, speaking pleasantly. Then he lowered the gas to a bead of light, went out, and quietly shut the door which had been half-open since they came into the room. He resumed his chair opposite Gerrard, who was reading the newspaper. Neither of the two men spoke for twenty minutes; Gerrard looked at his friend once or twice, but perceived that silence was golden. Then when Philip rose with a sigh and, unlocking the secretaire, sat down to his diary, the other got up and stood in front of the fire-place watching him. When the book was locked up again he moved towards the door.

"Good-night, Philip, old man."

"Good-night, Jerry. Teddy's all right. He's happy enough!" Philip spoke rather bitterly.

"Keep him so! Thus shall you have much joy!"

They never shook hands, living so much together. Their eyes met, and behind the amusement which his quaint benediction had caused, Gerrard saw Philip's better self in the ascendant.

Twelve o'clock struck. Philip liked to go at the first stroke; he generally shut his bedroom door before the last. This he did very quietly tonight, and very quietly he walked over to the gas-bracket, turning up the flame merely enough to find his way about. His little chum was apparently asleep, his face towards the wall. Very quietly he bent over him, and very quietly he kissed his parted lips. Teddy made a little impatient inarticulate noise in his nose, and contracted his muscles in a petulant way. Philip felt the bedclothes move as the boy's knees knocked indignantly together, but nothing more dangerous befell, and the regular breathing continued, nor did the closed eyes open. Then Philip very quietly undressed, and got very quietly into bed, and lay very quietly till the morning.

But how much sleep he had I should not like to say. He did more listening than anything else; listening to the two voices within, as well as to every movement of the boy who slept beside him. He was quite used to it! In a queer half-asleep, half-awake condition, he lay imagining queer things. He was speeding along in a railway-carriage, watching the telegraph-wires out of the window. They were ever trying to ascend out of sight, but ever as they rose a post flashed past and brought them down again. As a boy this had been for years an unsolved problem to Philip. And he was battling with such problems still! Teddy was incorrigible as a bed-fellow, and Philip had often playfully expostulated as to his bad manners. It was vain for Teddy to get into bed properly, and straighten himself out well in his own domain; as soon as he lost consciousness he was all over the shop. If his knees were not well drawn up and planted occasionally in Philip's back or stomach, he might be found stretched diagonally across the bed, pushing his friend's legs with his feet: and a turn-over every hour or so seemed necessary to his slumbers. On a hot night Philip had sometimes found him outside all the bedclothes, and had got out, lifted the boy back to his place, and reduced the bed-covering over him. Teddy could stand all this without waking, or more than half-waking. And he would fling his fists about over the pillows in a most indiscriminate manner; he could give some telling facers in his sleep. But if Philip, finding a hot little arm round his neck or over his breast, should imprison it, the same unconsciousness that smacked him in the eye allowed him to stroke or kiss the smooth arm without repulse, or

encircle the little wrist with his fingers, and feel the beating pulse beneath, till Teddy's next turn-over took it far away to the remote side of the bed. Teddy had tried, when the bed lent itself to such engineering, "making a mountain" between them; but even then a wandering leg, with its loose night-cover gone up to the knee, would cross the barrier, and Philip would lightly imprison the slender ankle till it returned to its own quarters. But he wasn't addicted to feather-beds, and he had taught Teddy to dislike them; so he had as a rule to defend himself from assault by his own arms and knees. After a week or two of these experiences he could sleep through most of them, but it was a mystery to him how the boy could. Philip was always cool in his sleep, and could find himself in the morning precisely in the position in which he'd gone to sleep, and a touch would waken him at any moment of the night. Teddy was quite unlike this. And Philip dreamed constantly, while Teddy never dreamed - at least he stoutly asserted that he never did. Only once had Philip heard him talk in his sleep; then Teddy had cried out in a distressed voice, saying, "Sir, I didn't; I really didn't. Oh, you might believe me; I really didn't." But the next morning, when Philip reported this speech Teddy scouted such impossibility.

"What nonsense, sir! You made it up in your sleep! You must have been dreaming yourself!"

On this night, after he had sung so well and eaten so well, Teddy slept as soundly as was his wont; but he was very restless and very hot, and Philip had to hold his own strenuously lest, big as the bed was, he should find himself out of it altogether. When he was dressing in the morning he entered the usual complaint, rather magnifying his disasters.

"I'm awfully sorry!" lying back with both hands under his head. "It's all your own fault, you know!"

"Yes, you look very sorry!" exclaimed Philip, chucking the sponge at his fair-haired aggressor: "and *my* fault, too!"

"Yes, of course. You know what a little demon I am, and yet you have me to sleep with you."

Philip came to look for the dry sponge, which had bounced off the boy's head on to the coverlet. Teddy let his eyes rest a moment on Philip's left arm. On the inside of it, just below the bend, were the letters "EF" in faint black tattoo. Philip had put them in himself long ago, with a

needle and some Indian ink, and the boy had seen them many a time since. "Yes, that's my sweetheart's name," he said. Thinking his victim was off his guard, he suddenly attempted to scrub his flushed cheeks with his missile. But Teddy was too wide-awake now, and made a shield of his hands just in time, as he had done the night before.

"You'd better stop larking with me," he exclaimed, peeping between his fingers, "or you'll make me late for school."

"Lazy young hound!" replied Philip affectionately; "hasn't offered to stir yet, and blames me if he's late!"

Then Teddy did stir; for he bounded out of bed like a cannon-ball, and was pulling on his stockings and stripping off his sleeping-jacket in one second more, crying, "All right; I bag first wash then."

But before he was allowed to wash, Philip caught him in his arms, and sat down on the edge of the bed with the boy on his knee, pretending to be in despair about Teddy's arms, which certainly needed a great deal of muscular development before they could match his calves.

"Poor thin little beggar!" he said soothingly; "did he have arms like match-sticks then!"

Teddy wriggled away, but while he was bending over the basin Philip caught him from behind; put an arm round his waist, and laying his cheek on the boy's velvety-skinned blue-veined shoulder, said teasingly, "Now, what shall I do to you?"

Teddy's hands were wet and soapy, and Philip might have got an unpleasant rebuff. But his little friend merely drew himself up with dignity, and looked into his patron's eyes with an air of grave reproach, saying, "Let me alone. And go and shave, please!" Then, when Philip released him, he made a comical effort to view his own shoulder; and pretending to perceive some injury there, he pursed up his lips, nodded his head with determination, and said,

"All right! Shan't come and see you again in a hurry."

"Oh, yes, you will," pleaded Philip; "we're quits now. You scratched me in your sleep."

"That I didn't!" cried Teddy, "I've got no finger-nails"; and he showed triumphantly that he certainly had very little.



"I mean with your toe-nails."

"All right. I'll wear socks in bed next time."

"Oh, you *are* coming again, then?"

"Well, I suppose you'll be miserable if I don't."

"Not at all; I was thinking of sending you to scratch Mr Lorey next time we have you here till eleven o'clock."

"Did he offer to have me?"

"Yes; it's like his confounded cheek!"

"Don't alarm yourself, sir; I'm not going home with *him*. He's a bit of a bully."

"Is he?"

"Yes; like you!"

And then, to explain his attitude, Teddy came gently up to his friend's side, and watched him strop his razor.

"I shaved you once, sir!" he said.

"You did; would you like to be a barber's-boy?"

"No; I'll be a cook-boy. I can smell bacon and eggs."

"Great Scott! I hope the eggs aren't as bad as that, Teddy, dear! They come from Chalk End if they are there at all. But I think they only exist this morning in your imagination. "You're thinking of breakfast in the country, aren't you? This is life in town, my young friend. There's a difference."

"Oh, I don't see much difference. Your bedroom at home is rather like this one, isn't it?"

"You think so, because of the furniture, I expect. And that *is* mostly the very identical furniture you've seen at Chalk End. How many times have you slept in my bedroom at home?"

"No times. You know well enough."

"Ah yes, to be sure. You prefer your own rooms."

"Well!"

It was surprising what Teddy could put into that favourite ejaculation of his. This time it was composed of remonstrance, apology, and contradiction; explanation predominating.

“As if I really preferred that crib to sleep in!” he continued. “Why, I shan’t be able to get into it at Christmas at all! But you know what I’ve told you about going home.”

And what he had told Philip was very dictatorial; that he wouldn’t go down to Chalk End except to stay at his mother’s cottage. And Philip had been obliged to submit to that arrangement at least six times. Teddy had a great respect for the village Mrs Grundy; and Philip knew the boy was right in foreseeing all sorts of obstacles to his living at Mr Luard’s as a guest.

“Well, you see then, Teddy, there’s a very great difference.” Philip had finished making faces at the shaving-glass now. He could only use his right hand, and his left cheek, full already of hollows and hills, required much attention and a much-twisted mouth. But now he could watch the effects of his remarks. “In the country you can have bacon and eggs for breakfast, but you can’t sleep with your dearest friend.”

When Philip said “you” he meant “I”. But to his intense delight Teddy took him literally, and said, as he parted his hair carefully, “In the country I can’t do either. We don’t go in for high feeding at Mother’s. I reckon to lose a bit of weight always at Chalk End.”

“Not you!” exclaimed his patron; who was careful never to cast the slightest reflection on his little boy’s home, relatives, or early days. “You were always as fat as butter on the good plain fare at your Mother’s. It’s good for boys to live plainly.”

“Why do you spoil me, then? You make me eat rich things!”

“I make you! Well, there’s a good ’un! All the world knows I let you do just whatever you like. You can have dry bread for breakfast and a cup of milk and water if you fancy it.”

“No; I fancy some dripping with my bread, please. Can I have that? And I want my old blue mug with the crack in it, to drink the milk and water out of. Can I have that?”

Philip put on a look of aggrieved annoyance. “I’m so sorry. I thought I’d arranged everything properly. You’ll excuse omissions this once, old boy, won’t you?”

He was drying his hands on the towel as he spoke; and Teddy, who had now donned his jacket, came and took a loose end of it, and gently helped him to wipe his arms and wrists, looking into his eyes with the dearest little look, and saying,

“You’re not cross with your boy, are you, sir?”

He did not wait for a reply, because he knew how to read Philip’s eyes; but went off, after passing a critical palm over his cheek, to kneel by his bedside, and put his face into his bended arm.

Jane rang the breakfast-bell before Philip was ready, and Teddy went across to get his boots on and pack his bag. Then they went down together, with a shout of warning to Gerrard up above. And Gerrard was not more than ten minutes late. He came in saying triumphantly, “Aha! punctual this morning, as there’s company!”

Then he made a courtly bow to Teddy, his hand on his heart. And Teddy, not to be outdone, got out of his chair, and flourishing his serviette, put his heels together and gave a military salute.

All too soon it was time for the boy to make preparations for departure, and Philip allowed him five minutes leave of absence - he declared he only needed two; when he came in again, well within his limit, Philip sent him upstairs.

“Get my shoes, Teddy, please; and look all round both rooms carefully for fear you should forget something,” he said.

So when he came back Teddy had his bag in his hand, his cap and coat on, and mischief in his eyes.

“I’m not to leave anything of mine behind?” he queried.

“Rather not, or you’ll have to pay the postage!”

“Well, I’ve got my own photo in the bag, then!”

“Scoundrel! Out with it, then!”

And while Teddy declared in delight that there wasn't time, that he wouldn't have his bag opened again, that he should be late for school, that is was *his* photograph, etc., etc., Philip unearthed the frame from the capacious bag, and handed it to his colleague, saying severely,

"I think I can trust Mr Gerrard not to steal a fellow's treasures!"

"Teddy, you're a very naughty boy; you'll come to a bad end!" remarked Gerrard, as he held the photo out of the boy's reach.

Teddy gave him a wink and abandoned the contest.

"You don't think I want a rubbishy old photo, do you, sir? I'd collar something worth having!"

He proceeded to re-fasten his bag, saying provokingly,

"You don't know now what I've got at the bottom. Perhaps it's his cash-box!"

"Perhaps it's his heart?" suggested Gerrard, smiling at Philip.

Sh..sh..sh!" ejaculated Teddy with an air of shocked astonishment. "You mustn't mention such things!"

"May one mention the 8.16 train?"

"Yes, certainly; but I can't catch it with Mr Luard hindering me like this!"

However, he did catch it. Philip, of course, went to carry the bag and see the boy off. Just as the train started, after they had shaken hands and said good-bye, Teddy leaped to the window, and with his cap in his hand said, "Thanks awfully, sir!"

And Philip, who knew that in this expression was summed up his young friend's appreciation and recognition of many things, waved his own hat and echoed, "Thanks awfully, Teddy!"

Then, when the crowded train had disappeared under the arch, and borne with it what he held most precious in all the world, the young curate went briskly up the steps, and made his way back, feeling very contented and happy. It was a dull, chilly morning, gray and inclined to be foggy, but the sun was shining in his heart.

He found Gerrard still at the breakfast-table, drinking his last cup of tea and scanning the morning's news. But the paper was at once laid aside as Philip resumed his former seat, and the

reader prepared to become the listener. Philip often thought of his chum as a living exemplification of

*“A heart at leisure from itself  
To soothe and sympathise.”*

But this time Gerrard perceived at once that there was not much soothing required.

“Well played, Luard!” was his greeting.

“O, Jerry! My Teddy is a *grand* boy!” was Philip’s acknowledgement of the applause. And Gerrard did not think the remark incongruous.

“Yes; he’s a star of the first magnitude, Phil; and you’re a lucky fellow.”

“May I tell you what he said this morning?”

“Of course. And also what you said. Hide not anything from me, I pray thee!”

So Philip, for the next twenty minutes, reviewed the situation, and his friend listened attentively to all things, and approvingly to nearly all. But now and then he felt compelled to say, “Ah, bad stroke that, Philip!”

At the conclusion of the narration, he summed it up in a sentence.

“The boy will be only too glad to come again.”

“Yes,” said Philip, “I think I kept him fairly happy.”

“I could see that without being told, old chap.”

And Philip, himself, was fairly happy that day, and for a few subsequent days.



## CHAPTER XI

### AN IMPROVISATION

But it was not a very deep content; or, if it was, its surface became ruffled very easily. He arranged a meeting with Teddy for the Saturday, taking tickets for the afternoon performance at the Hippodrome. But on Saturday morning a postcard from the boy arrived, merely saying that he found he couldn't come, and was very sorry. And Philip was miserable all that day.

"I hate to have my plans disarranged!" he said petulantly to Gerrard.

"Well, we all do: but it's the common lot."

"Teddy should have let me know sooner; I am very angry about it. And I want to know why he can't come, and what else he has to do. At any rate, he might say if I'm to see him in the evening. I shall go out, and if he comes he'll just have to go back again!"

"Boys don't think," said Gerrard; "it didn't occur to your boy to put it all on the postcard."

"Well, why couldn't he write me a letter, then?"

"Perhaps he was in a hurry."

"I'm in a hurry, often; but I find time to make things clear to him."

"Yes; you're a man; he's only a boy. You must recognise a boy's limitations, my dear fellow."

"To make me uncomfortable is well within his limits, I perceive."

"No; you're making yourself uncomfortable. He must surely tell you if he can't keep an appointment! Would you prefer to go to the Hippodrome at two o'clock, and find nobody there? Now you can take another fellow; and I've no doubt Teddy will turn up here to tea, or afterwards. He thinks you'll take that for granted."

"No, he doesn't. How can I be here at five o'clock if I go to the Hippodrome with anybody? Besides, I flatly refuse to go with anybody but my own boy. I should be miserable there."

“Well, then, don’t go. Give me your tickets, and I’ll take Godfrey. Then you *will* be at home in case Teddy turns up at five.”

“And what do you think I can do in the afternoon?”

“Good heavens, Philip! The world is pretty wide. So is London. So even is our parish. You won’t lack occupation because you can’t go to a *matinée*!”

“No, *you* wouldn’t! But I’m not you! I can’t do parish-work on Saturday afternoons. I shall stop indoors and mope and get ill. I’m not well today as it is; I’ve got a headache already.”

“All the more reason you should have a quiet day and get it better by the evening. Why, Teddy must have foreseen you weren’t fit for sight-seeing!”

“Not he!” said Philip sardonically, refusing to be comforted. “He foresaw something he’d rather do than go out with me!”

“You know you don’t really believe that,” said his friend quietly. “But even if that is the case, moping won’t mend it. You ought to be glad for your boy to do the thing that makes him happiest. Haven’t I heard you say, ‘*I prize his happiness above my own*’?”

“Ah, it’s all very fine; but why can’t *I* make him happiest? This is some treat of Lorey’s, or some girls’-party of Muriel’s, or going to tea with Douglas Howson!”

“Bah! you’re jealous! Do you want him all to yourself? Can’t the poor little chap have a few friends of his own age, or accept any but your invitations? Come, man, be a philosopher, do!”

“I’ve more claim on him than these other people!” urged Philip, sullenly.

“Well, you’ve *got* more of him than they. But you don’t possess his soul and body, do you? Think of Wednesday night. Your rivals don’t come within miles of you. And Christmas will be here in a fortnight, and you’ll go down into the country together.”

“Yes,” grumbled Philip, “and then he’ll make me feel more than ever how little he cares for me. He won’t come and stay with me there, you know!”

“Go somewhere else then, where he will. The boy’s right enough. He never says ‘No’ to any reasonable suggestion. Philip, old man, don’t be a fool. Don’t go and say all this to your little pal!”



Philip smiled bitterly.

“He wouldn’t worry about it if I did. It would go in at one ear and out at the other. Teddy can’t understand my feelings.”

“Thank God for it, then! To understand you, as you’re talking now, would cast a shadow on his sunny little existence. Then you would torture him; as it is, you only worry yourself.”

“And you, poor old chap!” said Philip affectionately. He suddenly realised what a bore and a bore he was making himself, and felt ashamed of it.

“Well, it doesn’t matter about me. I’m tough enough to look into soul-diseases and hear confessions. But a boy shouldn’t do it. To pull along together you *must* try to think as Teddy does; if you try to make him think as you do - well, you simply spoil everything!”

“Yes; you’re right; he’s right. I *am* jealous and selfish and exigent. If I could see him now for two minutes I’d be all right.”

“Well, you can’t. You lovers always want ‘the little more’, and pity yourselves because you can’t have it. You’ve got no grievance, old man, except in your own imagination; and yet you’re letting this spoil your peace of mind. Now I’ll be Teddy for two minutes. Listen... I can’t come with you this afternoon, sir, because I’m going to a birthday-party at my school-chum’s house. But you go somewhere to refresh and amuse yourself, and take some other boy to liven you up, and don’t be vexed with me, but be happy, because you know that I am your own boy, and you must learn to be content without me sometimes... How’s that, Phil?”

“Pretty close imitation, Jerry. But do you think Teddy would come and put his cheek against mine while he said all this?”

“You know best about that, Philip.”

“Well, then, he wouldn’t. He might squeeze my hand, if I looked very grumpy, and made my eyes water. But he’s got no little caresses for me as a rule.”

“Well, that’s his nature. You don’t want to make him un-natural. You were content to take him for what he is; now be content to keep him for what he is.”

It ended in Philip's giving the two tickets to Gerrard, who took them round during the morning to the Rhys boys, for Herbert and Godfrey to use. He couldn't go himself. The boys were at school, and Gerrard left a message that Godfrey was to bring them round to the clergy-house, if he couldn't use them, as soon as he got home. Thus he hoped to accomplish two things; a refreshing "rag" with his young friend, and a companion for forlorn Philip were in prospect. But Herbert and Godfrey went to the Hippodrome, and thanked Philip in the vestry on Sunday morning for the treat, much to his surprise.

And Philip was not lonely, as it happened, that Saturday afternoon, for Lorey called at three o'clock and stayed till after six. He found Philip reading and smoking by the fireside in his room; and after a few casual remarks Philip was compelled to enquire for Teddy.

"He was at the practice on Thursday evening;" said Lorey, smiling; "not such a terrible wreck as I expected."

"What do you mean?" anxiously enquired Philip. "He was all right, wasn't he?"

"Rather! Fresh as paint! Always is"; and Lorey was highly amused to see how easily he could arouse needless alarms. "I know why he isn't here today; Hamlyn has got a juvenile footer-match in his back-yard, and gives the combatants tea afterwards - what's left of them. I was invited."

"I wasn't!" said Philip bitterly.

"Well, you must cultivate Hamlin's acquaintance before the return fixture. I'll give you all the opportunities I can. Why do we never bring off an evening together after the Wednesday practice? Come to my Charity Concert at Hendon on the twenty-second; I'm transporting half my Adelphi choir over there. We're going to do 'The Daisy Chain'. How many tickets will you take?"

"Yes, I'll come; if you keep the women well in the background, and put Teddy well in front. Do you know *'Mari Magno'?*"

"Who's she? We can't have any music-hall artistes, I'm afraid."

Philip laughed, as he put into his friend's hand the volume of verse he had laid downwards on the arm of his chair.

“Oh, dash it all; I’m sorry! Fancy your talking Latin, and introducing me to a sonnet, when I’m trying to sell you a dozen tickets in the cause of Hendon Charities! What’s this now? Symonds again? O, Philip, keep this for tomorrow!”

But he cast his eye over the page to which Philip pointed, and shrugged his shoulders as he absorbed its pessimism and tragedy:

*MARI MAGNO*

*I met Love on the waters, and I said:*

*“Lord, tell thy servant if the fault be mine*

*Or his alone, that we who once were thine*

*Now daily further from thy face are led!”*

*“I blame you both,” Love answered; “you who read*

*The book of self-deception line by line,*

*Loving yourself, and fearing not to twine*

*Poisonous passion-flowers around his head.*

*“Him, too, I blame, because he was too weak*

*To shun your evil and to choose your good,*

*Too soft to serve you in the hour of need.*

*Thus, then, I pass the sentence which you seek:*

*Love’s higher law you still misunderstood;*

*And Love, for him, was but a wayside weed.”*

“Great Scott, man! It hasn’t come to this yet, has it? Whatever can you be doing? *I* never had such experiences!”

“I had once,” said Philip slowly; “and I don’t want it over again.”

“Well, don’t have it then. I expect you only fancied it before. Your castles in the air are all prisons or fortresses, man. My aery erections are Joyous Gardes.<sup>23</sup> I suppose you *did* have a bad time the other night then?”

“No; I had a good time. I’m steering clear of this sort of thing, but I’m still afraid of the other”; and Philip put his finger on the second quatrain, and afterwards on the first.

“Rubbish, man! There’s nothing to trouble yourself about; it’s all plain sailing for a very long time to come. Perhaps you’re giving the rocks such a very wide berth that you’re getting into the shallows; that’s all. I’m a good observer, and can see at least as well as this mysterious critic in the poem, who damns everyone indiscriminately. If Love hadn’t been so blind he’d have summed it up much better by saying to the poet, ‘What you want is a liver-pill, and what your friend wants is a jolly good spanking!’ You know they were all very much at sea; that’s how I translate the title myself!”

“Then you don’t think Teddy’s breaking loose from me?” asked Philip, taking back the book with a sigh.

“I’m sure he isn’t. And for a devilish good reason, too; you haven’t attached him yet, as far as I can see. You let him fancy himself an independent craft; he can’t see the tow-line because it’s below the surface. When you give it a smart pull you’ll haul him in like fun. The only thing you’ve got to watch out for is, lest some privateer should attach him, not seeing or ignoring your attachment. Is that what you’re worrying over?”

“No; nothing like that; nothing from the outside. The trouble will come from himself or myself.”

“Entirely from yourself, I should say. For if it comes from him it is largely your fault. Now I begin to understand a little better. This idiotic sonnet put me off the scent. Why, it has no more to do with the case than the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la! This is about *The Man that Did*; you are *The Man that Didn’t*. Or perhaps I should say *The Man that Doesn’t*. Does this

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<sup>23</sup> The reference is Arthurian. “Joyous Garde” was the Northumbrian castle to which the body of Sir Lancelot was conveyed after his death. A holy hermit had, in a vision, beheld Sir Lancelot carried heavenwards from Joyous Garde by angels. Hearing which, his followers conveyed him thence in a great procession, with a hundred flaming torches.

precious piece of verse (which is very charming as literature, of course) express your present mood? Now does it? Or doesn't it?"

"Well, then, it doesn't," said Philip.

"Why read it then?" cried Lorey with an airy wave of his hand; "and above all, why show it to your innocent friends? Take Bogey away! I don't read much poetry, or I could undertake to find you something in this stack of verse" - he indicated the open book-case - "which would give you my ideas on the subject."

"If I knew what the subject was, and what the ideas were, I daresay I could supply you with the verse," said Philip, alluding to his acquaintance with the poets.

But Lorey mistook his meaning, and said, "Yes; do. Make me a poem that says this: Love comes and goes and can't wait long; seize it while it offers itself to you; and when it flies away, be thankful you've had it, and look out for its first cousin to come along soon after."

Philip smiled quietly, as he rose from his chair.

"All right, old fellow; it's ready for you now!"

"Great Scott, Luard! Can you make verses while you wait? You're a prodigy, man!"

But Philip was looking at the shelves; and, after one little growl at the index of the volume he took down, he handed to Lorey a love-sonnet of Proteus, which was certainly not very wide of the mark.

#### *AN EXHORTATION*

*Why do we fret at the inconstancy*

*Of our frail hearts, which cannot always love?*

*Time rushes onward, and we mortals move*

*Like waifs upon a river, neither free*

*To halt nor hurry. Sweet, if destiny*

*Throws us together for an hour, a day,*

*Let us rejoice. Before us lies the sea*

*Where we must all be lost in spite of love.*

*We dare not stop to question. Happiness*

*Lies in our hand unsought, a treasure trove.*

*Time has short patience of man's vain distress;*

*And fate grows angry at too long delay,*

*And floods rise fast, and we are swept away.*

Lorey read it, while Philip looked over his shoulder. Then he said,

"That's the sort of stuff for me!"

To which Philip replied, as he replaced the book,

"It won't go down with me! So you see, men are different, and can't see out of one another's eyes. That sonnet strikes me as shallow."

"And it strikes me as uncommon deep!"

"It seems to be worse than:

*"It's oh, for the love of a week or a day,*

*But also for the love that loves alway!"*

because it's got no *alas* in it.

"I don't want *alas* in my philosophy!" said Lorey mischievously.

"Funny dog!" said Philip, seeing his visitor's witticism.

"Well, you want something to cheer you up, you know," said Lorey, apologetically.

"Go and play to me a bit," suggested Philip persuasively.

"All right. What'll you have? A fantasia on the theme of : '*If no one ever marries me*'?"

"I think I'd prefer '*Thank you very much indeed*,'" said Philip, settling himself in his chair, while Lorey twisted first the stool and then the ends of his moustache. The organist could do this

sort of thing splendidly, even down to an improvisation on the theme of *Three Blind Mice*, and it would have edified Liza Lehmann to hear what he made out of Philip's suggestion.

While the music rippled on, the curate's thoughts were roaming. First he set his mind on the words of the song, of which he had a vague impression from having lately heard the cycle sung at Queen's Hall. The atmosphere of them - childish content with the beauties of Nature - had touched him closely at the time; and now it touched him still more closely. Lorey had brought Teddy into it, and Philip felt the ecstatic gladness of the song bubbling up in his own breast. To his little friend the world seemed very bright, as it did to the other children "born in palace, lane, or square"; and if Teddy would never dream of putting it all into words like these, yet Philip knew well enough that they expressed his boy's attitude. One of his favourite hymns was Mrs Alexander's pretty little nature-poem: "*All things bright and beautiful*"; he had sung it to Philip's accompaniment on Sunday evenings, and it always took them back to Chalk End. There was an affinity between it and Norman Gale's verse; and, while Philip had only an impression of the latter's hollyhocks, pansies and wood-anemones, he could now mentally repeat,

*"The cold wind in the winter,  
The pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden,  
He made them, every one;  
The tall trees in the greenwood,  
The meadow where we play,  
The rushes by the water,  
We gather every day."*

Everything that came along was joy to the happy little fellow, and in his nature - hidden deep, deep down - there was the trustful, reverential, religious spirit, which could acquiesce readily in the conclusion of the whole matter. The river and the trees, the birds and fruit and flowers, and

the changing seasons - for all these joys of the country, which the country-lad knew so well, there was praise and thanks in his untroubled heart. And though these joys might have been somewhat keener three years ago, when they were practically the only side of life his rustic innocence knew, yet even now Philip felt Teddy's nature was unchanged. Among all his town pleasures, his constant amusements, his ever-growing experience of the delights of life, Teddy was as ready and as fit as ever to sing:

*"But, blest Father, high above,  
All these joys are from Thy love."*

He said the same little prayer over his dainty fare that he had learned to say over the bread-and-dripping, and the un-covered deal table. Philip smiled to himself, as there rose up before his eyes the picture of Teddy as he had so often seen him; with his hands together on the edge of the table-cloth, and his face puckered up with the unnecessarily strenuous closing of the eyes.

Lorey observed the smile, and looking over his shoulder hazarded a guess,

"You're taking it for granted that Teddy's singing the treble?"

"Never mind. Go on, please."

And Lorey good-naturedly went on; changing the key; bringing out the theme with the left hand, while the right flew up and down the high notes; getting so far away from the melody at times that one almost lost touch with it; throwing in the suggestion of it with a sequence of a few notes, or an inverted phrase; and finally gathering up all the flying threads in a grand finale; clenching the thing with an unvarnished statement of the theme in slow, firm, full chords. And while this was proceeding, Philip, with his eyes closed, was wandering through the paths of his mother's garden. He saw the cool stream running under the rustic footbridge; looked up to the tall hollyhocks and down to their foxglove cousins; and knelt beside the bed of heartsease, to turn up the dark flower-faces and see their golden eyes. He heard the chaffinches twitter in the boughs of the pear-tree. The blackbird scolded, as it scurried out from the roots of the currant-



bush, alarmed by the fall of an early apple. Many a late summer's afternoon - aye, and morning too - had Philip lounged on the grass on a deck-chair; screened from the hot sun by the leafy boughs overhead, he had read Theocritus or Vergil or (perhaps more frequently than the classics!) the morning paper, undisturbed by any sound save the cry of the bird, the thud of the falling apple, or the more distant cluck of a hen or neigh of a horse from the farm-yard beyond the remote yew-hedge. Sitting on the seat in the rose-garden, when the evening sun sent slanting red rays over the dial, and threw up to his feet the long shadow of its stone pedestal, he had harvested some of his most delicate poetic fancies, and from the neighbouring church-tower, just visible through the enclosing garden-trees, came at intervals the chime of the clock. Those were days of peace in Philip's soul; the fear of the future, the responsibilities of life were still dormant; sorrow and care had not passed their ruthless fingers over the bloom of early youth; and the world was full of poetry and romance. Of course, even then he waded in the shallows of love; he would have to go back to childhood to find the time of his life when passion played no part in his outlook on existence. But it was a very mild sort of passion until he was twenty; it was rather afraid of itself, and easily kept within conventional limits. Love was then just another flower, another bird, another fruit, in Life's garden: it was very sweet and pretty, and it mattered very little whether you did or did not pick it, listen to it or eat it. There was always plenty more. One's food and clothes, and work and play, one's ambitions and designs, were all much more vital than the winged Eros. But things were different now; Philip had done with paddling in the sea; if the next wave should bear him off his feet, he was not altogether sure whether he would sink or swim. For the last two years, and particularly the last three months, he had found very little pleasure in the old pursuits. The Theocritus was seldom opened; the manuscript-book of verse was at a standstill; the cricket-bat and tennis-racket were relegated to the back-ground; the camera was in a cupboard; and at the same time the flowers and the birds, the fields and woods and sky, could not touch him as they once did. Certainly he would never rest content again in a rural solitude; he always seemed to need Teddy's presence, wherever he went. Whatever he saw or heard or did, there was the worrying tinge of incompleteness unless Teddy shared the

experience with him. For Philip, the boy summed up in himself all the beauty and the joy of life. As one of his Oxford friends put it:

*“In thee the whole world’s beauty we behold;  
Lightly remodelled in a lovelier mould  
With heavenly aids and touched from the stars.”*

When he read such verse he interpreted it by Teddy. And as for making verse himself - it seemed so futile to try and express his emotions now. Teddy was the living poem. And what about his religion? (Lorey was now pounding out the finale: *“But, blest Father, high above.”*) Well, God was still very good and worthy to be praised, for had He not given him his heart’s desire? Yes, he really thanked God for Teddy. Though this great over-mastering love might have tarnished the former delights of his heart, yet it was worth all of them put together, and multiplied a thousand-fold. He had said to the boy in tender moments, “Having you, and having nothing else, I can be happy; having everything else, but not you, I should be miserable.” And he meant it, too! Then Teddy would say, “Well, you have me; so be happy!” Teddy was like his own child; in fact, Philip knew that he possessed the boy’s affection, gratitude and confidence far more than many fathers - perhaps more than any father - could have done. Sometimes he wondered if a father could have the same feelings towards a son as he had towards Teddy. He thought it more likely that a mother might have them, and now and then it hurt him to think of Mrs Faircloth, giving up her boy to another man, and losing the joy of his presence for the problematic welfare of the youngster. But somehow it was not for that sort of mother that Philip felt the deepest sympathy. It was rather the mother who sees her boy every day, and hears his voice every hour; who mends his stockings and tucks him up in bed; and yet who feels herself out of touch with him. For all her children she thinks and toils and denies herself; she has borne them, they are part of her very self. In infancy they are indeed hers; and while she shields and instructs them, she knows their very thoughts, and nothing is hidden from her loving gaze. But

when childhood is passed it is different, especially with the boy. The growing girl may continue in close sympathy with her mother, and repay her by absolute frankness for the care and tenderness and anxiety of fourteen or fifteen years. But not so with the boy. He drifts out of his mother's sphere of influence; he denies her the full knowledge of him which is her right. As he develops into youth the old familiarities must cease; he must not tell his mother his secrets, or bring to her his troubles, or load her with caresses, or speak to her of himself without reservation. And she must not expect it of him; he must not be unmanly or immodest of course! The big lad of sixteen or seventeen, who towers in stature over his mother's head, who must have a bedroom to himself, and must lock up his private papers, is not he then the same son whose curls she combed and whose body she bathed ten years before? Are those lips less to be kissed because they have the down of adolescence on them? Or those sturdy limbs less to be rejoiced over, because they are attaining to the measure of a man? And did her mother-love wane at this critical period of her boy's life? Was not Philip right in believing that her heart must yearn over the child she bore far more just then than ever it had done? He could remember so well his own mother's pride and delight in him when he went to Charterhouse; and he thought he could now discern a pathos, which he had not then suspected, in her grateful appreciation of the inadequate affection with which he repaid her love, and the never-failing interest with which she listened to these experiences which he could just as readily have retailed to the mother of his chum. Oh, the dear, sweet, patient mothers! So content with the crumbs from their growing boys, who were old enough and big enough to keep their secrets now to themselves, or to share with the boys in the school-dormitory. Ah, it was enough to break one's heart, only to think of it. There was something radically wrong somewhere in our modern conventional ideas. But he, in his capacity as Teddy's guide, philosopher and friend, had triumphed over them all so far! More mothers than one had cause to regard him with a jealous eye, but Teddy's mother above all might well envy him his great possessions! And, withal, the boy's dear little naturalness was not gone. You had only to see Teddy with a cat or a dog to read how unspoiled he was. If a dog came near him he became absorbed in it at once; Philip loved to hear him talk to it, and to see him pet

it, and to have to wait - however important his communication was - till the animal had received due attention.

Long before Philip had reached this point in his ruminations, "*Thank you very much indeed*" had been wound up; and Lorey was playing another number from the same set. Philip opened his eyes, and again met the musician's quizzical smile.

"That suit you all right, Luard?"

"Ah, sorry, old chap; I was thinking. What's this now; the swing-song, isn't it?"

"Yes, the accompaniment of it; I thought it was your style. First up, then down, you know! Where are you now, may I ask?"

"Oh, fairly elevated, thanks, said Philip, "I think I was recognising my own blessings through meditating on other people's hard luck."

"Not a bad plan, either. But, come now, do you think I shall prevail on your idol to condescend to this little solo?"

"Why not? Is it too simple?"

"Well, the words are a trifle juvenile; there's something about *the pleasantest thing a child can do*. Seems more suitable for a girl, don't you think?"

"Oh, no," said Philip, decidedly: "You'll find Teddy quite equal to that. He's only just emerged from childhood."

"And hasn't put on any manly airs yet?" added Lorey.

"Well, they're not very conspicuous at present," answered Philip; "he would enjoy a good swing even now, and I'm sure he won't mind singing about it. He'd rather have to sing '*The Swing*' than '*If no one ever marries me*' - I can tell you that much!"

"Yes, that is an awful girl's ditty. I suppose we must let your pal off that, eh?"

"Oh, I don't mind, myself. But you can surely put one of your women on to it?"

"No," said Lorey, reflectively; "I shan't do that. I mean to keep the '*Daisy Chain*' for my own people. I can put little Dean on to this solo; he's only a baby-boy."

"Can't you give Rummel a show?" Philip asked.

“Great Scott! Do you think Rummy would sing that rabbit-hutch ditty for five pounds? He’d never speak to me again if I suggested it. I shall have to give him one of the contralto songs if I put him in at all. He won’t sing treble much longer now.”

“He’s very little,” said Philip.

“Yes, but he’s desperately old, all the same. By the way, how old is Master E Faircloth?”

“Fourteen and two-thirds,” answered Philip, smiling; “I’m always telling you his age.”

“Yes, but you tell me different every time! get so interested over the fractions that I go and forget the integer. I expect you do, too.”

“I don’t,” cried Philip hotly. “Besides, you couldn’t make much mistake about Teddy’s years.”

“Oh, yes; these blonds are very deceptive, I find. Teddy might pass for a year older if one didn’t hear his voice.”

“Well, that’s no sure guide, anyhow!”

“Not to your untrained ear, my dear fellow, I daresay. But I can make a good shot by the voice, when I’ve no better clue to a boy’s age.”

“The best clue would be to ask the boy, I should think,” suggested Philip.

“Not for a choir-master, my dear chap; boys tell such thumping lies. I know a trick worth two of it!”

Gerrard came in soon after, and Lorey stayed for a cup of tea. At six o’clock, as he was saying “Good-bye”, he referred again to the concert.

“Well, how many tickets then, Luard, for the 22nd?”

“Oh, about one, I think.”

“One! You’ll have to take at least six. What price this, Gerrard? Your friend ear-marks all the fat of my concert for his wretched little satellite, and then takes one measly ticket!”

They all laughed at this. But Philip pleaded poverty.

“Really, I can’t afford to be charitable; I’m awfully sorry. Times are bad, aren’t they, Gerrard?”

“They are with me, certainly!”

Gerrard unbuttoned his cassock, and disclosed a pair of huge calves arrayed in football stockings.

“No pockets, even!” he declared triumphantly, pointing to his knickers.

“Good gracious, Gerrard!” exclaimed Lorey; “is this the garb of your Order, or what?”

“Oh, it’s helpful in various ways. There’s the distinct advantage of no pockets, to begin with. Then, if I perceive on my peregrinations some of our choir-boys playing footer on a piece of building-land with an empty meat-tin, I can tuck up the cassock, blue-coat fashion, and wire in a buster.”

“Don’t talk such absolute rot!” interpolated Philip.

“Well, then, we’ll put in the excuse of hard times, as other gentlemen do. I only have any funds when Philip lends me some.”

“And you don’t have them long, then,” added his colleague, severely. “You see, Lorey, where all my little balance goes?”

Finally Philip took two reserved-seat tickets and Lorey had to be satisfied with that. When he’d departed, Gerrard asked:

“Are you really hard-up, Phil?”

“Well, I am, rather. I spend too much, one way and another. If I had nothing but Crawley’s miserable twenty pounds a quarter, I should be in a nice mess.”

“You’re so extravagant, old chap. And so generous. Why don’t you pull in a bit?”

“Oh, I don’t want to save anything. I don’t think I exceed my income. At any rate, I don’t owe anything now at Oxford. My mother’s legacy keeps me going, and without that my father would have to allow me something till I get a living.”

“Or else you’d have to float your boy off on his own, eh?”

“Oh, I couldn’t do that just now, could I?”

“Well, it would be a great trial. I suppose your money’s well-invested?”

“It brings me in rather more than a hundred a year, as you know. Father manages all the investments; I’m not really sure where my mother’s money was, or is.”

“Well,” said Gerrard reflectively, “Teddy won’t be on your hands for more than another year or two, I suppose?”

“I don’t know. I can’t quite see what will happen. It’s a problem that keeps me awake at night sometimes.”

“I do hope you’ll be sensible over the little chap’s future, old man. He must have some work in prospect, and learn and labour truly to get his own living. You know he must, for his own sake as well as yours.”

“Well, now, Gerrard! Only the other day you said I needn’t worry about anything, at present.”

“No more you need; at present. There’s no worry in thinking over the next move, and being ready for the opportunity. You can’t make a professional man of him; you know you can’t. It isn’t in his line, and it costs a mint of money.”

“I could finance it, right enough,” said Philip, “if it was the right thing for him. But, as you say, I don’t think it is. I don’t think twice about the Church or the Army - “

“Or the Navy!” said Gerrard, with a smile.

“I’m not so sure about that! Just because a kid is sea-sick once, you shouldn’t dismiss the Navy like that, Gerrard! But I don’t think, all the same, Teddy would like it. Nor like Medicine; nor, still less, the Law.”

“My opinion is that he’ll contentedly settle down to any sphere of work which you suggest. Boys seldom have much predilection. Very few can follow their fancy, if they have one; and a good job, too, for they’d find it a big mistake.”

“Of course,” mused Philip, as he rose from the table, “the Stage or Music naturally seems to be the right thing.”

“Not necessarily, old man. I think I know how you feel about it. As an actor or a professional singer you think you could keep your boy much as he is now. You want him to remain gay, light-hearted, irresponsible. You like to think of him still a public favourite, and a person of some

importance. You want to secure him a good income without the anxieties and cares of everyday life.”

“Well, there’s some truth in that. But if course there *would* be hard work for him, too.”

“Yes, yes; there would be that, I grant. But you try to shirk the fact that Teddy must personally think and act for himself, and play a man’s part in the world. You want him to be always a boy, dependent on your advice and guidance, and you must realise that he can’t be that. He might be more so in a bank or an office than anywhere else, but you don’t want to make a clerk of a boy like Teddy. Let him learn a trade, and set him up in business, unless you’ve spoiled him for it by high-flown notions. Or else, train him for a school-master; or, best of all, let him learn farming.”

Philip thought it over for a few minutes. Then he replied,

“I expect you’re right. I seem to hate the idea of Teddy’s acting or thinking for himself in any capacity. Poor little chap, what a lot of worry and work there is in store for him! I want to save him some of it.”

“Well, then, you can’t. A young man must face life for himself; you know he must. How do these ideas present themselves to you; first, Teddy with his arm round a girl’s waist pleading for her love; and, second, Teddy going to Church with his wife and children - a sedate, bearded man, with a home of his own, and a family. Yet, that is all on the cards, and rightly so, you’ll admit, Philip? Ah, now I make you wince, poor old boy!”

“Yes; it’s horrid, Jerry!” and Philip made a sound and a grimace as though he had a nasty taste in his mouth; “but it’s bound to come, I suppose. The question is, what is to become of me when these things shall be?”

“No, old man, I can’t admit that that is the question. One of you must have the first consideration, and I take it you’ll put Teddy first. And, indeed, by doing so, you’ll do the right thing for yourself. What joy will it give you if you let your love for him block the way to his normal development and his proper destiny? You won’t gain happiness that way. But if you achieve his welfare and success and content you attain your dearest wish yourself. Is it not so?”



“Yes, that’s right enough. I *do* love Teddy better than myself. I know that, because I could die for him tomorrow if my existence spoilt his life. But it’s a harder thing, somehow, to contemplate living without him.”

“You won’t live without him. You’re not twenty-four, and you scarcely know yet what living or dying means. This romantic or poetic side of life is evanescent; presently it will develop into something deeper and better; it will become a life-long friendship that Teddy will appreciate and be thankful for as long as he lives, in spite of beard, wife and family!”

“No, that won’t wash, old chap. I can faintly imagine that sort of thing, but it’s too much like my attitude towards you or Horsted. I shall always want something above and beyond that; something to complete my life, as Teddy completes it now.”

“Well, then, that something must continue to be Teddy. And I don’t see why it shouldn’t be. Can you possibly say when the time will arrive - the precise psychological moment when your present complement will vanish?”

“No, of course I can’t.”

“If he should die in his boyhood you would probably find your memories of him sufficient?”

“O, Gerrard; don’t!”

“But, really, you would, Philip; I know you well enough to be sure. And the things I’ve foreshadowed are not so disastrous as death.”

“They’re not nearly so soothing to a lover, though!”

“All right, then, if you’re that kind of a lover, then I *don’t* know you, after all. Go and pray henceforth for Teddy to die young. And tell him to his face that you would rather see him dead than grown-up and fulfilling a man’s part in the world!”

“I say, Jerry!” remonstrated Philip, in a piteous tone; “you’re giving it me a bit strong, aren’t you?”

Gerrard came round, and put his arm in his friend’s, saying in a very low voice, “It’s nasty medicine, old chap, I know. But the demon must be exorcised, and he seems to be as stubborn a

devil sometimes as the one my namesake heard the friar of Rome rate so roundly! Do you remember him? *Come out of him, Ashtoreth; come out of him, Belial* - “

Philip could not help smiling, and helped his friend's failing memory with,

“Oh, yes! *Come out of him, Feriander; well, then, Foletho! O, It's not Foletho, then come out of him, Nebul!* We haven't got the beggar's name right yet, Jerry. I rather suspect it to be ‘Philip’, eh?”

“Well, I wouldn't venture to contradict your suspicion, old man. It certainly might be a Philip that I don't recognise; I've hinted so much already, I'm afraid!”

“I'll wrestle with him, anyhow; he hasn't beaten me yet. And you'll help me, I know.”

“Yes, of course. But just now I must hurry up into Church. So long!”

Then Philip went up to his room, and looking out at the dark cloudy sky from the window, he decided that his head was better, and that a little exercise would be good for him.

“Why don't you pull your own blinds down?” he repeated to himself; and, as he did so, a soft little hand seemed to apply healing balm to his sorely-wounded feelings.



## CHAPTER XII

### AN ANALYSIS

He had a long solitary tramp till after eight o'clock, through the busy, thronged, lamp-lit noisy streets of Kentish Town and Camden Town; down Hampstead Road to the tram terminus. He rather enjoyed rubbing shoulders with the Saturday evening mob, and jostling down the crowded pavements. From force of habit he stopped to look in certain shop-windows; he often bought Teddy a tie from a hosier's display, or a packet of new paper from a photographic chemist's. And, in spite of the apparent distractions, he could think quite well on a walk like this.

As he went along he summed up, in his judicial way, his varying moods of the day just past. He set himself to find, without any bluff or subterfuge, the real cause of his fretful, querulous attitude. And he decided that it came from a strong sense of the boy's ingratitude. Yet he felt himself to be in the wrong, even then. For the root of the evil lay in himself; he ought *not* to have this imaginary grievance; as Teddy said, "he wanted too much!" He was making his own unhappiness as usual. He was like a spoilt child - wanting everything his own way; refusing to be content with his many enjoyments just because he couldn't get the one he specially desired. It was disgraceful in him; it was unmanly; and it wasn't in the true spirit of love and friendship. It showed all too clearly what a selfish thing his affection for Teddy was; it discounted all he'd ever done for his little friend, because it showed that after all - yes, there was no getting away from it! - he was simply working for his own ends. It was not Teddy's happiness and welfare that he prized most; it was a joy that he had set before himself which had been at the bottom of two-and-a-half years of devotion and patronage. Oh, how he wished he could honestly feel that the value of love is in the loving; but he wasn't going to lie to himself like that! He could *not* feel it; any more than he could feel the value of life is in the living of it. "*The end and aim of all living is Life,*" says Goethe. This was how it *ought* to stand with him; he knew it ought. But it didn't. It was too ideal, too impractical for him, and perhaps for any other man. Of course, good souls like

Gerrard preached the counsel of perfection, and even practised it in the eyes of the world; but who could read their inmost thoughts? Who except God? And probably He knew that the purest spirit dwelling on earth had never emancipated itself from the trammels of the flesh. The man who affected to find in life itself an ample excuse for existence was probably insincere; or, if he really believed his own doctrine, he probably deceived himself into such belief by a chain of specious reasoning, which would break down under the pressure of a sufficiently powerful test. Life was valuable to him, Philip frankly admitted to himself, for what he could get out of it; and at present he had never grasped the value of the abstract. He felt intuitively that God made man to be happy and contented with life; but he had not yet got beyond his old favourite dictum:

*“The world is so full of a number of things,  
I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings!”*

That seemed still to him to be the last word on the subject. When he could get the things then he would be happy; and he saw that his happiness for twenty-four years had been dependent on the things of the world. But his better self urged on him - even as he urged it on others from the pulpit - that there is something higher than loving the world and the things of the world. Was it not incumbent upon him, first as a man and after that as a clergyman, to set his own house in order? He knew well enough that life would be misery to him stripped of all its creature comforts; without a fair income, a decent social position, a good home with good clothes and good food, what would life be to him at that moment? Nay, more, what would it be to him without his tobacco, his easy-chair, his books, his pictures? Would God be sufficient for him in destitution? Would love compensate him for the loss of all else? Ah, if he could only honestly say *Yes!* but he was compelled to say *No!* And so the riddle of life remains unsolved. *“Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.”* How was it, he asked himself, that he couldn’t do this; could do it no more than the young ruler could do it, nearly two thousand years ago; could no more do it than the so-called

Christian of to-day? Of course, there was only one answer: *Because we don't believe it!* The materialist or the agnostic cannot be expected to risk all that he has, because he doesn't value the treasure in heaven - doesn't even believe in its existence. But the Christian, who *does* value it, who *does* believe in it - why doesn't he live up to his profession? Why dares he not to speculate in real estate?

And this expression made Philip smile involuntarily by its aptness, as he turned away from vacantly staring into a jeweller's window on his homeward tramp. He stopped at a second-hand bookshop, some little distance up Hampstead Road, and turned over the contents of the cheap boxes. One day he had picked up here, for three or four pence, A. M. Gilkes' "Boys and Masters", and ever since he'd never passed the shop without a further investigation. But none of the numerous bargains had been transferred to his book-shelves subsequent to the one solitary "find". Philip never bought a book, however cheap, unless it was one he had previously wanted. Without this precaution it would have been unsafe for him to take his frequent pleasurable strolls through Charing Cross Road, or Holywell Street (not then a thing of the past).

On this Saturday night he went away again empty-handed, and turned into an outfitter's shop, where he bought two neck-ties for Teddy - a deep orange-coloured one with a brown snaky pattern, and a pale-blue one, with a white flower pattern. These he put in his pocket; and, mounting a yellow tram, he began to feel better mentally. It really gave Philip the keenest pleasure to do something for his boy; and he had often quelled the vague exigent demands of his own heart by giving something extra, or doing something extra, for Teddy, who couldn't give even ordinary tokens of love! As he rode along the crowded street, and looked down upon the seething motley throng of Saturday-night shoppers, nearly all of the lower class, there came stealing into his soul the feeling of content, and his mood took a brighter colour. He had abandoned, for the time being, the hopeless struggle for religious consistency, and after all, he had only been drawn into the argument as a side-issue, through contemplating the abstract value of life as analogous to the abstract value of love. And, really, Philip had a far better knowledge of love than he had of life, and it was evident that it would be through love, if at all, that he must

come to the right view of life. For he did truly believe in love as the pearl of great price; it was to him the hidden treasure, and he was ready to purchase the field if it cost him his all to do so. He knew by experiment - and that was much more convincing than argument - the exaltation of his whole being that followed a sacrifice of himself in the service of his beloved boy. And coming back to the vexed question from another point of view, he began to think that he had not been quite fair to himself in his pedestrian estimate of his own character. As from the tram-roof he saw more than he had seen on the pavement, he seemed now to get a better view of his heart's affection than he had taken half-an-hour previously. Like an invigorating stimulant there trickled into his consciousness the fact that the value of love *was*, at any rate, to some extent, in the loving; and that he was, in some degree, realising it at that very moment. For what was it now that was hushing his complaints, and silencing his grievances, and sweetening his bitter mood? Was it Teddy, or his love for Teddy? He thought of this quotation:

*"God sends us Love. Something to love  
He lends us; but, when Love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and Love is left alone."*

So that, after all, he could honestly say that he was now finding his happiness and peace and joy in loving; i.e. in abstract love. And he remembered something that Teddy had said to him one Wednesday evening, when Philip had gently reproached him for wasting his half-holiday.

"You've been doing nothing, then, old boy, by your own confession; that's very stupid!" Philip had said.

And Teddy had replied, with a merry smile, quite unabashed by his friend's reproof:

"No, I haven't; I've been *living*! That's something, isn't it?"

Evidently Teddy had solved one-half of the great problem, and held life to be, in itself, worth living. And Philip was finding love to be, in itself, worth loving. Perhaps each of them was

working along the line of least resistance to a common goal! Perhaps each of them could help the other in that half of the problem which lay within his own, but outside the other's perception? What a splendid vista was opening up before them in that case; the man and the boy working together towards the correct solution, each supplying the other's deficiencies! Yes, that was just splendid! He would harp on that idea in future, and he'd tell it to Lorey, and to Gerrard - yes, and to Teddy, too, though Teddy wouldn't comprehend it fully. He would say, "Teddy, dear, you are teaching me the value of life and how to live; and I think I must be teaching you the value of loving and how to love!"





### CHAPTER XIII

#### A CATALOGUE

It was after eight when Philip got back to the clergy-house, and Gerrard soon came in, ready for supper.

“Hallo, old chap! What have you been up to?” was his greeting.

“Been exorcising Nebul!” responded Philip cheerfully.

“How do you spell that word, eh?”

“N-e-b-u-l!” said Philip, wilfully misunderstanding the question. Then he added, “Sometimes spelt P-h-i-l-i-p!”

And Gerrard replied,

“Or, more safely, S-e-l-f!”

Then they dropped their banter, and talked philosophy in Philip’s room till nearly ten o’clock. Gerrard retired then, as it was his Early Celebration next day, leaving Philip to read the Church Times. This failed to hold him long, as his mind was still ruffled after the conflicts of the day. He wouldn’t strum, for fear of disturbing his colleague, so he unlocked a drawer and took a packet of letters, and read a few here and there. They were all Teddy’s letters, neatly and chronologically arranged in Philip’s usual methodical fashion. Every scrap of the boy’s correspondence was there, even to little pencilled notes on bits of exercise paper. Teddy had always written in a neat, boyish hand, even from his early days; but now he was changing its character considerably, and Philip had noticed for the past few months how closely imitative it was of his own! In the form of the capitals Teddy, perhaps unconsciously, was copying his mentor; he also copied accurately Philip’s heading of the paper; first the year in Roman numerals, under that the day of the month, written in words, and the address in the third line; and all these on the left-top corner of the page. Most of these letters began with “*Dear Sir*”; some

few had “*Dear Mr Luard*”; some plunged at once *in media res*.<sup>24</sup> Nearly all ended with, “*Best love from Teddy*”; a few were signed “*E.T*”, and the first half-dozen concluded with “*Yours obediently, E. Faircloth*”’ but even some of these also contained “*With best love*”. The affectionate little country lad of twelve had never questioned Philip’s motives for the great interest in him and efforts on his behalf; had no more doubted that it was because of love than he doubted the love of his mother. And as Philip tied up once more his precious bundle, he felt that Teddy was content, even now, with no other explanation of it all. Had he but been able to take the love in the letters as literal, actual, and meaning just the same as he himself meant when he wrote “*With best love*”, then (he told himself) all the doubts, perplexities, anxieties and grievances would vanish like smoke! But he had never yet been able to make himself believe that Teddy loved him; and, so foolish had he grown of late, that even if the boy had admitted it in just so many words, saying orally “*I love you*” and looking into his face with those sweet, trustful, honest eyes, as he said it - even then Philip knew he would be still sceptical!

Next he took out an envelope containing a few unmounted photographs of Teddy. And he lingered long over the first snap-shot, which showed the little boy with nothing on but an old battered hat, dipping one foot into the cool summer stream. Teddy did not love this photo of himself. “Not because I’m naked,” he had explained, more than once, “but because I’m ugly and stupid-looking.” Then Philip would kiss it, to Teddy’s disgust, and would say, “It’s sweet! It’s beautiful! It is my own dear little sweetheart, and I love him!”

Putting the letters and photos back in the drawer of the writing-table, he wandered round the room gazing vacantly at the pictures on the walls. The writing-table stood under the window; on the right of it was “Beata Beatrix” - a ten-by-twelve Hollier photograph. On the long wall between window and door the place of honour was occupied by a wonderful nocturne, in blue, in a white frame; an oil-painting by a young Irish artist who had learned his methods in a French school; representing the Thames at night, looking from the Chelsea Embankment over to the Battersea side. The chimney-shafts and high factory buildings, scarcely outlined in the vague

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<sup>24</sup> Straight into the subject.

distance, were as light and aëry and picturesque as Venetian towers and cupolas; a splotch or two of yellow illumination among them was repeated in the dark river in long reflections; in the left foreground a barge was moored, end-on to the spectator, with its sail loosely furled about its mainmast, its hull anchored in a patch of deepest shadowy night. It was a delightful piece of impressionist work; nothing but paint, looked at too closely, but resolving itself, when seen from the hearthrug, into a bit of real river-by-night in which Philip saw something new every time he looked. This masterpiece was flanked on either side by a delicate water-colour; the one on the left a slight sketch of the Medway at Rochester (so Philip thought, but he was not quite sure about it). There was a foreground of mud in light greens and browns; a strip of pale-yellow river in the middle distance; and an indication in the background of high rising hillside with a square tower atop. A black boat, lying lengthwise on the mud, under a clear yellow-white sunset sky, held together the somewhat loose details of the picture. The water-colour on the right was much more solidly painted; a rustic church nestled among a cluster of summer trees, seen through a shadow on which lay scattered sheep. There was an evening sky here, too - full of fleecy cloudlets showing roseate hues here and there. Thus, though Philip had never remarked it, night was dominant on this principal wall-space. These three pictures were well above the line of the eye; on the line were three long photo-frames all in a row; the middle one held six cartes-de-visite and the other two held six cabinets; all of the photographs were of boys. Philip often went right through them one by one, saying the names and bestowing a passing thought on each. He did so this Saturday night. Beginning at the left they ran this: (1) Gilbert, aged thirteen, full-length, standing outdoors beside a rustic chair on which sat a fox-terrier, with the boy's left hand round the dog's neck. A sturdy, mischievous-looking boy, dressed in cord riding-breeches with three buttons at the knee, a little unbuttoned round jacket, and a cap with a white badge. (2) Charlie, aged twelve; a half-length of a dark round-faced little fellow in an Eton jacket, one arm resting on an ornamental table, the thumb of the other hand in his trouser-pocket. Rather deep-set eyes; the shadow of an amused smile on firm, well, closed mouth. (3) Willie, aged sixteen; a half-length, sitting down with folded arms, enlarged by Philip on smooth bromide paper out of a

group; the surrounding portions of other people's anatomies ruthlessly pencilled over, and the outlines of the shoulders helped a little by a pencil line. A bright, honest face, with a cap worn well back on the head; a stand-up collar with points turned-over, and a big sailors-knot necktie. Jacket open, and handkerchief hanging out of the breast pocket. (4) Earnest, aged thirteen; head and shoulders only of a pale, delicate boy, with fat cheeks, languid eyes, and pretty curving lips. Hair parted on right and brushed very smooth. Wearing a high-cut jacket, closely buttoned-up. A soupçon of seriousness - not to say sullenness - in his expression. (5) Frank, aged fourteen; a handsome boy in Eton jacket, with a large expressive mouth, showing his front teeth in a rather broad smile; hair cropped very short, making his ears look prominent. (6) Jack, aged fifteen; full-length, standing in front of an ivy-covered wall, one hand in trouser-pocket. A pretty but weak face; stand-up collar with a cross-bow; thick watch-chain right across waistcoat.

Then came the smaller photographs, as follows: (1) Bertie, aged fifteen; head and shoulders of a bonny, square-built lad, with very fair hair, frank, wide-open eyes, and very round chin; lines indicative of fat under the eyes, and a little upward curl on the full well-arched upper lip. Broad turn-down collar with jacket worn outside it. (2) Same Jack again, rather younger, about fourteen; taken by Philip with a small camera indoors. A pianoforte, open, for the background, looking ludicrously small though only a foot or two behind the figure. The boy is wearing trousers and a turn-down collar; left hand on left hip, and right foot on music stool, making an ungainly space between the two legs. Right elbow on right knee, and the right hand supporting the pretty, but yielding and complacent face: hair in utter confusion (he'd been bathing). (3) Alec, aged twelve; a sweet, serious little face, with dark eyes that looked you through and through; chubby cheeks and rounded chin; resolute mouth; a profusion of dark hair falling over a high broad forehead. A head and shoulders only visible; Eton jacket, broad lapels, and clear sheeny black tie. (4) A different Jack, aged sixteen; clean-cut delicate features, and intellectual, alert face, with wide-awake eyes; an expression of power and self-restraint and fearlessness; high all-round collar, and big knotted white necktie. (5) Wilfred, aged twelve; full-length out-of-doors under a leafy hedge. Philip photographed him; a demure, plump little chap in Norfolk jacket and

knickers, his stockings turned down over the continuations. Left thumb in waist-band; right hand hanging down with a superfluity of white cuff falling over it. A circular face, with a set look and puckered little eyes, under a wavy coronal of fluffy fair hair. (6) Sidney, aged fourteen; another of Philip's attempts at portraiture, printed on a smooth bromide. A fine, dark, impudent face, with rather thick lips and a tangled mass of black hair; bright eyes, and well-marked brows. Head finely poised; low collar, and jacket with top button fastened.

Last came the set of larger portraits to the right of these: (1) Otho, aged thirteen; full-length in cassock and surplice; one hand on a chair, a book in the other. A wonderfully handsome little choir-boy, with bold black eyes and a defiant mouth. (2) Gilbert, again aged fifteen. Nearly full-length, sitting on a low settee, with both hands steadying himself. Norfolk jacket, with the buttons undone but the belt fastened; riding breeches as before. Quiet, penetrating expression; fair hair brushed up high off the forehead. (3) Henry, aged fourteen; another choir-boy, taken by Philip, full-length, in a garden, with a glass door for background, in which the trees are reflected. A bright gentlemanly little lad, looking rather troubled, with his two hands loosely clasped in front of his short surplice. (4) Another Ernest - distinct from the former one - aged twelve; a slightly-built, aristocratic child, in a suit of black velveteen, with tunic buttoned all the way up. Three-quarters length only, so no legs visible. Pretty wavy well-brushed hair; rather sleepy expression; small, delicate mouth, with a deep dimple under the lower lip. Leaning against a table, left hand in pocket of knickers; right hand hanging loose, and painfully large owing to its prominence. (5) Tom, aged eleven; a large head of a strikingly handsome boy, with great light eyes in a dark oval face; a tuft of hair growing down over a low forehead, a rosebud of a mouth, rather big ears. Jacket buttoned, and over the top-button two white geranium blossoms with three leaves. (6) Alec, again, aged sixteen; enlarged, not too clearly, out of a football group; in a dark shirt, with a collar, and white buttons; same serious eyes looking straight out from under low brows; lips closely compressed, chin grown more determined, luxuriant mane tumbling anyhow over forehead. What at first might be taken for a curtain behind the head resolving itself, upon inspection, into the wrinkled folds of some other boy's footer bags!

All these eighteen portraits, then, made a long line of boyish forms and faces along the wall, level with the eye - or a little below the level of Philip's eye, which was not less than five feet six inches up the wall. "Your harem," Lorey had said one morning, as he passed them all in review, much as Philip was doing now. Philip could afford to smile at this witticism which completely missed the mark. Gerrard called them, respectively, *The Joyful*, *The Sorrowful* and *The Glorious Mysteries*, and always declared it was just like Philip's extravagance to have one too many of each!

Over the door was an enlargement, bought by Philip out of the annual Dudley Gallery Show; a piece of the broadest impressionism. It represented a boy, seen from behind, batting in a cricket-net in the last light of a summer's eve; a well-knit, broad-shouldered lad with uplifted bat; dressed in ordinary clothes, minus his jacket. Between the eye and the figure came the wavy lines of net-work, quite out of focus. The figure was fairly sharp, but beyond it everything was dependent on the observer's imagination; a few hazy ghost-like forms might be the bowler or bowlers, and one or two fieldsmen; the background might or might not be hillside with a splash of evening sky crowning it. At twelve feet distance you could see in it almost everything you cared to see. Gerrard called it, "Portrait of a cricket-bat supporting a shirt-sleeve". The original title bestowed on it by the perpetrator was, "Just One More!"

On the wall opposite the window were five large framed photographic groups - football and cricket teams, choir-groups and undergraduate groups; Philip figured in them all. High up in the central position was a charming idyllic enlargement of a nude boy of about thirteen, standing among the boughs of a low-growing leafy pear-tree, with a shepherd's pipe at his lips and both hands laid upon it. He had fluffy hair upon which the sunlight fell, and his shapely rounded form was patched here and there by leaves and leaf-shadows and broad flecks of sunshine.<sup>25</sup> Philip saw a good bit of Teddy in the face and figure; several of his friends refused to believe the truthful assertion that it was not Teddy himself.

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<sup>25</sup> Describes the frontispiece of *A Chaplet of Southernwood*.

Between the corner of the wall and the fire-place stood the high book-case, with five glass-fronted shelves, and a cupboard underneath them. Two whole shelves were filled with volumes of verse; the middle one contained fiction; the two lowest, *belles-lettres* and theology. Philip was very eclectic in his modest library; he was wont to say that a book could only figure in it on one of two pleas - either surpassing merit or surpassing interest; on the latter count he included a number of presentation copies of works by his personal acquaintances. A catalogue of our friend's literary treasures, it strikes me here very forcibly, would sum up Philip's tastes, tendencies and ideals for my reader as no amount of delineation could possibly do. But, for fear of incurring that reader's possible wrath, the strong temptation to make such a list must be avoided; and I will content myself with saying that the poetry ranged from Tennyson and Rossetti to Philip's own slim volume - "A Garland of Southernwood"<sup>26</sup>, and a similar one by his college-chum Balsham; the fiction from George Meredith's "Richard Feverel" to Ouida's "Signa"; the essays from Emerson to Alice Meynell; the theology from "Lux Mundi" to Drummond. Vainly the ghost of Philip's maternal grandfather (a highly-cultured country rector of the Early Victorian period) might have sought a familiar title throughout the five shelves! Philip was hopelessly modern in his tastes.

On the mantelpiece, among countless nic-nacs, there were two framed photographs. One was his mother. The other was Teddy, aged twelve and a half, taken in the garden of Philip's Chalk End home. The boy was lolling - without hat, coat or waistcoat, and with the sleeves of his cricket-shirt turned back above his elbows - in a hammock-chair; both hands were behind his head; his eyes were half-closed; everything below his belt was vignettied off, as he had been taken full-face, and Philip's hand-camera had so exaggerated the legs and feet (in which Nature unaided had been fairly bountiful!) that they were unpresentable. This photo was known to them as *The Dolce Far Niente*<sup>27</sup>Teddy. Philip held it very dear, and Teddy had accidentally cracked the negative one day in the dark-room, which enhanced the value of the few good prints extant.

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<sup>26</sup> cf. *A Chaplet of Southernwood* by Nicholson.

<sup>27</sup> Sweet idleness.



Between the fire-place and the next corner stood the pianoforte; on it was Teddy in his “choir-suit”, in a heavy elaborate gilt frame. Over the piano hung a sketch in oils by an Associate, an artist *de la première force* in his particular line; a slight study of the back of a naked boy in a boat, leaning over a pole or an oar which he dipped into a translucent green sea; a sunlight effect, with wonderful pinks and blues in the flesh treatment; face seen in profile over the right shoulder, bright yellow hair, exquisite curves of back and arms.

Then on the left of the window was a Hollyer photograph of Rosetti’s “Ecce Ancilla Domini”, matching the companion picture on the right.

And now the clock chimed twelve, and Philip, as his custom was, put out the gas and retired. Getting undressed he speculated on what Teddy had been doing that evening, and - a matter less problematic - what he was doing at that moment. He tried to banish the little prick out of his now serene mood, though it stabbed him now and again; he did so want to enter into all his boy’s plans and achievements - not to be left in complete ignorance of his Saturday amusements and adventures! But he successfully combated this grievance, telling himself that certainly Teddy had been happily enjoying himself whatever or wherever the adventure had been. Therefore it behoved him, Philip, to be happy, too. Teddy often said, “I *do wish* you’d enjoy things without me! I can’t always be with you; and you can’t expect me to have much interest in many things which you can enjoy. You are not to give up your own employments and amusements, you’ll be such a loser by doing that. And I’m not going to drag you into all my little affairs. Always imagine me having a good time when I’m away from you; and let me think the same about you.” As Philip turned in he thought about this, and knew Teddy was right; he also remembered his wise colleague’s quaint remark: “Keep him happy, then: so shall you have much joy!” How easily he could spoil the contentment of that affectionate little heart! But he resolved never to do so; he would be to Teddy like God was, and like Nature was; showering love and help and blessings on his life, but not making exigent demands in return: being satisfied with the spontaneous love and confidence of a child’s heart: finding his chief reward in seeing how

simply and unquestioningly the sweet disposition accepted all its benefits, and how splendidly the little bud was developing and thriving and opening out under helpful and loving influences.

Before he fell asleep he went back to the little “Daisy Chain” lyric, and tried to imagine Teddy standing on a flower-decked platform, in a room blazing with gas lights, dressed in his Eton suit, with white gloves and perhaps a white flower in his buttonhole, singing in the quartet; he secured a good mental image of it all, and could almost hear the fresh, sweet, flute-like voice in “Thank you very much indeed!”.

Then his thoughts took a backward turn, and reverted to some other occasions when Teddy’s voice had stirred his heartstrings. There was the evening of Ascension Day, only a few months ago. Philip had been paying a visit in Town - a Town of vivid green parks and crowded picture-exhibitions - and went to Festal Evensong at St Saviour’s mainly to see his protégé; the fact of there being a Colonial Bishop as preacher did not weigh very much with him. There was a processional hymn at both ends of the service, and the second one was “Hail the day that sees Him rise”. It made an indelible impression on Philip; he could quite easily bring it back mentally. There was the gathering of the banners at the Chancel-steps; the vesting of the Bishop by the two handsome acolytes, in their scarlet cassocks and skull-caps; the fat-cheeked thurifer bringing in the censer from the vestry, followed by his tiny satellite, and two boys bearing the lights. The big Cross, held by a stalwart, white-gloved, girdled crucifer, waited to head the procession. Then the hymn rang out, strong and joyful; the thurifer led the way down the narrow south aisle, the censer swinging out before him in rhythmic mechanical motion, sending out at the top of every swing its little cloud of incense-smoke, that went floating up among the dark pillars and rafters, leaving its pungent savour circling and spreading through the church. The demure little boat-boy paced on his left; then came the lights and the Cross. Teddy was almost last of the boy-choristers, walking with a dark serious-looking boy; he was revelling in the hymn, but he had known where to look for his friend, and had not forgotten to give him a smile in passing. Philip could pick out the voice he loved among all the rest; and in every verse, when it came to the pause on the E, at the end of the last line, Teddy sent it ringing out like a bugle-note,

hanging on to it till it vibrated through and through the whole building. As he came abreast of Philip, who sat high up near the south aisle, the hymn had advanced to the second verse, and the young man (he wasn't ordained at that time) marked how careful his protégé was not to make the old mistake over "waits" and "gates"; in fact, he was making "weets" and "geets" of them, in his anxiety to avoid the Chalk End fashion. One Sunday night, after Evensong, Philip heard Teddy remark to some other boy just outside the vestry door, "Whoy, that ryne!" Without endless pains Teddy would have sung "*There for "Im "oigh troiump wytes*". The memory of that hymn was flavoured even now with the emotion of that bygone moment; the soft Spring evening which had darkened during the service, till all the deep crimsons and violets and blues of the south windows had gradually faded, as Philip watched them, into dull lifeless black; the strangeness of the church to him, who had never been there before on a week-day, contrasting with the familiarity of it to the boy, who had been singing there for twelve months; the pride of hearing the lovely voice so perfectly produced, so splendidly under control; the vague uneasiness and regret assailing his heart, as he grudged so much of Teddy's company and intercourse and training to any but himself; and, as an undercurrent, flowing below all these things, the religious emotions evoked by the underlying thought of the hymn and the sermon and the whole service, penetrated and intensified to an aesthetic soul like Philip's by the elaborate dignified ritual.

During the sermon he had been impressed by the nearest wall-decoration; a panel in monotone between two of the windows on the south side. A dignified but sorrowful Figure held out His hands in blessing; from beneath His feet crushed grapes sent forth their juice. Below ran the passage, '*I have trodden the winepress alone*'.<sup>28</sup>

But perhaps there was a more piquant flavour in the memories of some of the boy's triumphs in his native place. Philip began to think of one Sunday evening in August, when at Chalk End Teddy had electrified them by his singing as the anthem, "Angels ever bright and fair". Philip had read the Lessons, leaving Cecil Vickers to divide his attention between the organ and the pulpit, and old Mr Vickers to mumble out the prayers. He recalled the breathless calm of the hot

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<sup>28</sup> Jeremiah 63:3.

summer evening; he stood at the lectern, and looked down the dim church; half of the west door was opened, and he could see the churchyard outside - the green grass, the gravel path, the tombstones, the trees listlessly swaying in the light breeze, the long shadows which the low sun was throwing right up to the porch. On the upland meadow, beyond the wall, a white hen was parading her brood of chicks. The birds were still twittering, the smell of mignonette was blown about the musty old pews, the candles on the lectern flickered. The dust of a vicar of long ago reposed almost under his feet. Scarcely legible now were the letters on the flat much-worn stone, but Philip knew the inscription well, and for him there was glamour in the old figures 1793, and the Latin that had puzzled him in childhood, *In die novissima gaudebit*.<sup>29</sup> Dreamy, drowsy, odorous was the atmosphere; and listless, stupefied, somnolent was the congregation. But, though it was half-asleep upon its knees while the Vicar droned and mumbled "Lighten our darkness", it woke up the next minute, compelled to attention by young Faircloth's penetrating soprano. First came the few bars of Handel's symphonic prelude on the inadequate organ, whose pipes emitted windy notes; then the flute-like voice piercing the heavy air, throbbing and beating through the scented dusk, creating a keen poignant ecstasy of delight in the musical souls, and a sensation of supreme amazement in the uncultured ones. The choir-boys gaped with open mouth, staring at this quondam fellow-mortal who had become metamorphosed in twelve months into a perfect musical instrument. Teddy sang the *notes* well enough, certainly; his time, tune and voice-production were wonderful; but there was something more - the actual rendering of the *music*, the spirit of the composition, the thought, the idea of the composer; one could scarcely understand whence it came - this power of translating melody into sentiment, but undoubtedly Teddy had it. But the deep underlying aspiration of the music did not prevent Philip from appreciating the technical excellence of the solo; for instance, he enjoyed the good accent of the passages - time-accent and word-accent alike. He contrasted his little friend's vowel-sounds of the past with the way in which he now controlled the word "care", as he held it out steadily on its very long note. The feeble accompaniment enhanced the beauty of the boy's voice, as they

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<sup>29</sup> In the newest of days shall he rejoice.

took alternate possession of the melodious phrasing; the voice which seemed to be, for a time, tolerating, yielding to the interruption of the less capable instrument in order that it might reassert later its own vast superiority; might ultimately burst out again in full irresistible flood. To Philip a curious comparison had presented itself vividly - the building was like a glass vessel full of colourless fluid, and the voice was a bright stream of red aniline dye, slowly and sinuously penetrating the mass, forcing its way among the molecules, and tingeing the whole very gradually, while still preserving its own identity as it sank down to the bottom of the vessel following the wavy line of least resistance. The idea, originated on that Sunday evening, had been present to his mind on a good many subsequent occasions when he had heard Teddy sing solos; but it never came to him when the boy was merely holding his own in a balanced quartet, or joining in a hymn or a chorus. Perhaps it was the organ-accompaniment which suggested the volume of colourless liquid, filling the containing vessel so fully that the colouring matter could scarce find space for itself therein. And with the idea invariably came the impression of glimmering windows in the dusk; plain square glass panes, out of which the cross-like divisions seemed to emerge more and more clearly as the fading light grew slowly less and less.

Then just one other reminiscence cropped up in Philip's drowsy consciousness. A Sunday morning in a suburban London church; a bright, cold, wintry atmosphere; a hymn being sung by the congregation on their knees at the conclusion of High Celebration. Teddy was kneeling in the pew at his side, and singing, "And now, O Father, mindful of the love"; possibly a good many other voices were singing it, too, but that escaped Philip's notice! When they got to the third verse, the celebrant gave the signal of readiness to recede, and they rose to their feet to sing:

*"And then for these, our dearest and our best.*

*By this prevailing Presence we appeal"*

Philip had the divine and the earthly love so intricately interwoven in his thoughts just then that they seemed to be but one. And, as he glanced from Teddy at his side to the Crucifix on the

pillar beside the pulpit, a noontide gleam of sunshine shot down the narrow lancet window on the south side of the Sanctuary, and lit up the eddyng incense-wreaths that were hanging about the Chancel, and floating up towards the light.

But now all thoughts, all memories, all ideas blended into the haze of sleepiness, and when Philip woke it was morning.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A CATECHISM

At half-past three Teddy put in an appearance. On Sundays he wore an Eton suit; the grey trousers fitted him well, and Philip liked watching him from behind. True, Teddy's fine legs retired into privacy on Sundays, but Philip often got compensation by a fleeting glimpse of bare calf when Teddy drew attention to a new pair of socks, or adjusted an old pair. Philip was overjoyed to see him, and tried to conceal his disappointment of the previous day, asking many questions about the football. Hamlin really had made up a scratch team to play a rival choir, but they hadn't asked him to Lorey's hypothetical tea-party. They had gone to a Kilburn tea-shop for the grub after the game.

"Sorry I had to refuse you," said Teddy, as he sat in Philip's arm-chair; "but they couldn't spare me, of course."

"Of course not!" said Philip, meaningly.

"I played centre-forward, you know, and we don't get many real matches. I *had* to play! I thought you'd understand. You did, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes, Teddy," said Philip, with a smile, "I understood."

"But you should have gone to the Hippodrome, then! Why didn't you?"

"Didn't want to, old chap. Mr Gerrard stole the tickets, and gave them to Herbert and Godfrey!"

"Oh, I don't believe that; I'll ask him if he did. Where's he gone now?"

"Catechising small urchins in the Church; can't you hear the squalls of misery? Don't you want to go and be catechised?"

"Not me! You can catechise me if you like, here; but I warn you that I don't know the right answers! I suppose I'll have to learn them when I'm confirmed. When shall I have to be confirmed, sir?"

“When you’re about thirty-two, I think!” answered Philip, leaning over the chair-back and turning up Teddy’s face to look into his eyes.

“Have I been baptised yet, please? And will you sit down, please?”

“Well, I *suppose* your sort of baptism can be accepted, though I’m afraid your name wasn’t given by your godfather and godmother!”

“No, I’m sure it wasn’t! Now let’s get a Prayer-book and see all about it.”

And Teddy, as Philip wouldn’t sit down, but remained behind his chair looking at the back of the boy’s head, jumped up, and hunted out a Prayer-book, and began to turn over the pages, with an air of the most urgent haste.

“Give it to me, my son,” said Philip, quietly, taking it away from him. He sat down on a chair, which he drew up alongside Teddy’s, and proposed with a smile:

“Now, shall I ask you some riddles out of it? Just to show how impossible it is for you to read the book unless I help you?”

“Fire away, then. I’ll guess some of the answers, I daresay.”

“Yes, you’ll guess them wrong, if your ideas at fifteen -”

“Fourteen!” expostulated Teddy.

“-and-a-half,” added Philip, “are as vague as mine about grammar, etcetera.”

“Oh, well, now; you can’t expect me to know things you’ve only just found out yourself! And I don’t want a grammar lesson; we have that on Mondays and Thursdays at school.”

“Just shut up a minute, my fine fellow, will you? Are not these the days of perfect education for youth, whereas I lived in the dark ages. First question, then!”

“Come on, then!” cried Teddy, leaning back in his chair with a air of being martyred. “I know my own name, so you can skip that one!”

“Duffer! I’m not going to hear your catechism, I tell you; I’m going to explore the ideas you have (or haven’t) regarding sixteenth century English!”

“Good Lord!” sighed Teddy.

“*Imprimis!*” said Philip again.



“Oh, I give that one up! Is that sixteenth-century English?” exclaimed his pupil.

“Shut up! *That’s* twentieth-century, and you understand that, I think. Now, to begin with: what does this request convey to your young idea, *Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings?* Explain “*prevent*”, please.”

“No, I’d rather not. There’s a catch in it, I can see. Doesn’t it mean *to hinder*?”

“I used to think so! and I did Latin verbs, too!”

“So do I; I can conjugate *Amo*. ”

“I wish I could believe that, old boy! You can conjugate *Amor*, anyhow.”

“I can’t, so there! Now, what’s *prevent* mean?”

“*To come in front of*, I think, doesn’t it?”<sup>30</sup>

“Ah, I see,” said Teddy, shutting his eyes. “Hmm - yes! I ought to have understood that.”

“Not at all,” Philip hastened to say. “Next, what do you mean by *the kindly fruits of the earth*? Especially *kindly*?”

“I mean *nice, good to eat*,” smiled Teddy.

“Then you’re wrong again; it means *various, different fruits*. ”

“Oh, I say!” deprecated Teddy; “why does it?”

“Well, there are two sorts of *kind*, you’ll admit. Never mind; that’s another boss to you. Try another. *The whole state of Christ’s Church...* ”

“...*militant here on earth*. I know what *militant* means. That’s one I’ve scored.”

“*In earth*, please! But I don’t want to know what *militant* means, my young friend. Rather give the meaning of *whole*. ”

Teddy made a little grimace of chagrin, and puckered up his mouth, shutting his left eye to think more clearly. Presently he opened it and his mouth a little way, and suggested tentatively, “*Complete or entire?* ”

“No; rather *sound or healthy*, I’m afraid. Connected with *holy*, you know.”

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<sup>30</sup> Philip is not quite right. “Go before” would be more accurate.

“Oh, that’s like Mr Lorey’s pun on *Holy Innocents’ Church*, last week,” cried Teddy, gleefully.

“What was it? You didn’t tell me!”

“I can’t tell you everything, can I? It was Mr Lorey’s joke. “I thought he’d tell you himself. Well, then, he said they called that church that name because it was *wholly innocent* of architecture!”

“Not bad!” admitted Philip. “But now for question four! In what person are the Absolutions written, eh?”

“I don’t know, to begin with, what the Absolutions are!” admitted Teddy.

“Well, you know what Confession is, anyhow!” laughed Philip; “and the Absolution follows. You hear it two or three times every Sunday, and at least once every week-day!”

He handed his Prayer-book to Teddy - the handsome big book that Teddy knew so well, with the red and black print, and its Cross on the morocco cover. The boy studied for a minute the portion of Morning Prayer to which Philip pointed. Then he objected:

“You said *Absolutions*; there’s only one here. Is that the catch?”

“No, it isn’t; I’m asking about *person*, not about *number*, my lad! But here’s the other one for you, as you’re so particular!”

Philip showed him the place in the Communion Office. Teddy bestowed considerable attention on it, and then delivered himself of the following opinion: -

“Well, it isn’t second person, nor all first, so I suppose it’s third. We’re not supposed to be praying to God, it seems.”

“You’re not supposed to be doing anything! The priest is telling you that God forgives sins, and hoping therefore that yours are being forgiven. However, it’s too knotty a point for a kid; the *mood* is peculiar, and not the same as in the two Absolutions quite. Anyhow, like me, you used to think it was a prayer to God?”

“Yes.”

“Well, we both should have known it wasn’t, because of the way it’s said; eh?”

“What way?”

“Why, the priest standing, of course!”

“Oh, yes; I see! But they sometimes stand up to pray, don’t they. Our minister at Chapel used to, and so they do at outdoor services.”

“Very likely; but you’ve got to consider how these things are done in Churches, my boy.”

Teddy had turned back to the Mattins, and compared the two forms of Absolution.

“I don’t see what they put this *He* in for, sir! *He pardoneth and absolveth...*”

“Oh, there’s the sixteenth-century for you, old boy. In those days the preacher, taking for his text the serpent in the Garden of Eden, said, ‘Let us consider, brethren, who the Devil he was, where the Devil he was, and what the Devil he was doing.’ Surely you’ve heard that before, Teddy boy? It’s as old as Adam.”

Teddy was grinning at it, but with rather an astonished mirth; he was not used to hearing what he must still think “bad language” from Philip’s mouth! Yet he chimed in with two irreverent stories (how early in life does this tendency show itself, to cap story with story, to try to go one better!).

“Do you know the one about the housemaid in Lent, sir? She didn’t like family prayers in Lent because her master always read the prayer: *Almighty God, Who hatest nothing but the housemaid!*”<sup>31</sup>

“Who told you that, Teddy?”

“Mr Harwood: just to show how badly we pronounce; and he told us about a little girl who was writing out: “I believe,” and put, *suffered under a bunch of spiders!*”<sup>32</sup>

Philip was obliged to laugh, though with the same shocked air that Teddy had put on a minute before.

“I wonder if we clergy pronounce as badly as that, after all our lessons in elocution, Teddy,” he said, to give a turn to the subject.

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<sup>31</sup> Should have been: “..who hatest nothing that Thou has made..”

<sup>32</sup> Should have been: “..suffered under Pontius Pilate..”

“And sacrificing your moustaches, into the bargain!” added the boy mischievously.

“Well, never mind that! Of course you’re always near the parson, so there’s no excuse for your not hearing.”

“I’m nearly always behind him, though; I can’t hear the sermons often.”

“My dear boy! You are indeed highly favoured!”

“Nor the banns, either.”

“You don’t want to hear *them*, surely!”

“Yes, I do; it’s a bit of interest. How is it I can’t hear the names! I never can catch them, somehow.”

“Because they’re not familiar, I suppose, like all the rest of the service (including the sermon!); you don’t know what to expect in the banns of marriage!”

“You’ve changed some of your pictures since I used this book last, haven’t you?” asked Teddy, turning over the leaves.

Philip kept four cards in his Prayer-book as bookmarks. They were very Roman, having come out of a Roman Missal which he had picked up cheap on a Farringdon Road stall. In it he had found dozens of little French cards, some of them very pretty; most of them edged with a perforated lace-like border, but this Philip cut away when he transferred a picture to his own book. Teddy had often amused himself, when sitting with Philip in church, by examining these bookmarks, and trying to read the mottoes, and the printed matter on the back of them. He was looking at them critically now.

Marking the Litany was a Crucifixion in monotone, surrounded with a black and silver border. The Virgin Mary and St John knelt on either side of the Cross; the face of Christ was sweet and benignant; there was a bit of landscape for background. Beneath was the prayer, “*Behold, O kind and most sweet Jesus, I cast myself upon my knees in thy sight*”, etc. It was evidently a memorial card of some departed English Romanist; for on the back you were asked to pray for the repose of the soul of Thomas Scott, who departed this life at the age of seventy-three, fortified by the rites of Holy Church.

To mark the current Collect, Epistle and Gospel there was a coloured print, oval-shaped; a landscape with trees; in the foreground a scroll with the sentence *J'y pense sans cesse*,<sup>33</sup> heavy dark clouds in the background, and in the clear sky above them an open book, inscribed *Les Sts. Evangiles*, with rays of yellow light emanating from it, and a Cross standing on it. Two cherub-faces, one on each side of the Book, looked upon its pages. Under the picture were printed three lines in French:

*Tant que tu me regarderas, tu m'aimeras...*

*Tant que tu me regarderas, tu m'imiteras...*

*Tant que tu me regarderas, tu me suivras..*<sup>34</sup>

On the back of the card was the Parable of the Sower, freely rendered into French...

In the Communion was a picture in black and white, on a tinted ground. On a heap of vine-leaves, surrounded by blades of swinging corn, knelt little John Baptist; a handsome dark urchin, of perhaps seven years, depicted in purple, clothed in a shaggy skin, which left the near shoulder and the legs bare; one hand grasped a long staff, with a Cross at the top, and a pennant on which was visible part of *Ecce Agnus Dei*.<sup>35</sup> A slight etheric circlet hovered over his head. With the disengaged hand he took a large bunch of grapes from the hand of Christ - a fair child, with chubby legs and wavy hair, clothed in a single garment (Teddy called it "a night-shirt"). The Christ-child held three tall wheat-ears in his left hand; he had a sweet gentle face; a nimbus of the dinner-plate order was behind His head. Beneath the picture was written:

*Celui qui mange ma chair et*

*qui boit mon sang demeure en moi.*<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> I think of it ceaselessly.

<sup>34</sup> The more you will look upon me, the more you will love me/ imitate me/ follow me.

<sup>35</sup> Behold the Lamb of God.

<sup>36</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me.

On the back appeared a quotation from *Un jour de Ciel - je suis le pain vivant*, etc...<sup>37</sup>

Last, in the psalms, was a queer piece of decorative black and white; divided into two parts. In the upper and larger portion, on a black background, bespangled with five pointed stars, sat the Virgin throned and crowned, with the Child standing on her knees. A flame-like aureole encircled them. Below them, standing beside an Altar, encircled by six candle-sticks, stood St Dominique, with the Rosary and the Lily, one in each hand. A scroll in the top-corner referred to the pronouncement by Innocent XI respecting indulgences and the Rosary. The lower part of the picture was a predella of three panels, depicting souls in Purgatorial flames, reaching out hands to winged angels who were descending upon them, and (in one case) lifting a sufferer out of the fire. On the back of this quaint card was a memorial notice of a certain Dominican Bishop of Juliopolis, in some way connected with Trinidad, and the Convent of Woodchester (wherever that might be!); and the English Dominican Province and Dominican Convent at Louvain, at which last he died and was buried. Teddy puzzled a good bit over all this.

“Whatever *is* it all about?” he asked despairingly. “Ought we to know about these things?”

“Of course not,” answered Philip, taking the book from him. “At any rate, *I* don’t.”

“What do you have these things for, then? Aren’t there any pictures of our Church, or English prayers and saints?”

“I think I like them, Teddy, because I don’t understand them. There’s a spice of mystery about things we don’t quite comprehend, you know! That’s a great factor in religion; the sort of super-natural element.”

“Oh, bother it, *I* can’t worry about things like that! I’m so glad we don’t *have* to know such a heap of things; that’s all I can say. But I wouldn’t have some of those things in my book; they’re Catholic pictures!”

“Well,” smiled Philip, “aren’t we Catholics, then?”

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<sup>37</sup> A day of Heaven - I am the living bread...

“You may be; I’m not. I don’t care; I don’t know what I am. It doesn’t matter what you are; I know that, because you’ve said that yourself. I’m a Wesleyan Methodist, I daresay, as I was born and christened one, but it’s the same religion as yours.”

“I’m glad of that, Teddy dear,” said his friend. “I shouldn’t like to be of any other than your religion. By the way, do your ministers preach Purgatory, old chap?”

“Oh, how do I know? I’ve never heard them mention it. Go and ask them yourself. You ought to be some blooming old schoolmaster!”

Teddy was pretending, in a large measure, to be cross, because Philip had got his arm round his neck, and was beginning to talk rather affectionately. He jumped up, putting Philip’s arm off his shoulder, and said, “You haven’t got *The Daisy Chain*, have you?”

“No, old chap; I meant to get it, but somehow I didn’t. Too stingy, I suppose!”

“You’re not too stingy to me; but you are to yourself, I believe. Have you got plenty of money this quarter?”

It was a question Philip was often asked by his little friend of late: the boy was beginning to realise the value of money, and the cost of things.

“Go and look in the bank-book if you want to know,” said Philip, handing him the keys. Teddy knew which drawer to explore, and with which key to open it; he also knew how to acquire the desired information. It was not the first time he had examined into the state of the exchequer. Now he shook his head gravely as his eye ran down the account.

“You spend too much, sir, really. You’d be nowhere without your dividends. I wish you’d spend less on me. I *must* make haste and earn more myself!”

“Why, Teddy boy, you *do* earn a lot, now; precious few boys of your age earn anything. I’m quite satisfied with you: you help the joint account splendidly!”

“I don’t, then!” grumbled Teddy. “I don’t earn my salt. It’s all very well to talk about ‘the joint account’; but you earn all the money, and I spend it all!”

“Liar!” quoth Philip, affectionately. “Besides, some day the boot will be on the other leg. You’ll earn thousands, and I shall benefit by it. We’ll keep that account a joint one, won’t we, Teddy?”

“Of course! What an ungrateful cur I should be not to!”

“And I can have your steam yacht and your motor-car, whenever I like, can’t I, old chap?”

“Rather! I say, really, Mr Luard, I *shall* be so glad when I can give you something or lend you something. I don’t do anything for you, and you do so much for me!”

“Teddy, old chap, stop it!” and Philip caught the boy’s arm as he came back to him with the keys. He put his hand under the little chin, and turned up the pretty face. Looking down into the troubled eyes, he continued, “You give me more than I give you; you give me what money can’t buy; you give me everything!”

He had a great desire to cover the sweet face with kisses, but he felt it would spoil it all for the boy, so he thrust back the wave of longing that surged right through his inmost soul, adding to his magnanimous declaration, “And you’ll give me more soon!”

“I can’t give you more than everything, sir, can I?” asked Teddy, his alert mind seizing the paradox, even in that sentimental moment. Again something within Philip clamoured for utterance. Something cried to him that it was now or never. He took the poker, and broke a lump of coal to gain respite for a moment; he made a purely casual remark about the weather, obviously inconsequential. But Teddy did not help him out; Teddy seemed to be waiting to hear something and was bound to hear it.

So Philip followed his impulse, and explained clearly to his protégé “everything, and more than everything”. He outlined love; as it was from Gerrard’s standpoint, as it was from Lorey’s. Without mentioning names he made himself quite well understood by Teddy; he said “some men” and he said “some boys” when he illustrated his points; he asked, “Do you understand this?” and Teddy said “Yes”. He repeated now what he had said to himself the day before; he assured his little protégé (who was sobered into the most absolute seriousness by Philip’s extraordinary frankness) that he knew what was the right way, that he was resolved to take it;



and he appealed to Teddy, who had helped him in all his difficulties hitherto, to help him henceforth in this matter. He burnt his boats. He felt as he spoke that he was burning his boats. Teddy believed every word of his confession and his warning. To undo it all, some day yet to come, would be to stand in Teddy's eyes a liar confessed; either a liar then, or a liar now. And it would be *then*; Philip hadn't the slightest doubt about it.

It did not take long to make a clean breast of his failings to his protégé; former confidences between them had laid a foundation for this memorable interview. In a few minutes Philip could say,

"Now, Teddy, my dearest Teddy, you know all my secrets!"

"And you know mine, except one," he replied. And, because confidence begets confidence, he told that one to Philip then and there. It was what Philip had never guessed - would never have guessed; the secret was four years old, at least, and it so happened that, though it caused Teddy great self-abasement, it hardly hurt Philip at all.

"Oh, I knew you'd forgive me for it," said Teddy, with an eye on the hearthrug, "but I don't know if you can forgive me for not telling you before."

"Well, old boy; you've had one or two good chances."

"I know; I'm awfully sorry. Are you angry with me?"

"No, I'm not angry. I forgive you quite easily. I've had good chances, too, and yet I've never made the situation really clear to you till now. Can you forgive that?"

"Yes, sir; quite easily. QED for short!"

"Now you're getting flippant again, my dear little chum; and the thing is, Do you imagine we can keep up this mutual understanding in future?"

"I think we can; I don't want not to!"

## CHAPTER XV

### THUS FAR

Philip felt a great glow of genuine triumph and happiness, as they went down to tea, and faced Gerrard. The boats were burnt, and well burnt. He knew what Gerrard would have said; it would have been, "That's splendid; you've burnt your boats; go on and conquer!" But Lorey would have said, "That's fatal; you've burnt your boats; you can't go back!" Just then he didn't want to go back; he wanted to go on and conquer.

Gerrard was rather tired, and just a wee bit cross; he'd had too much of parish-duty one way and another that afternoon, for he had been to see several of his sick poor after the children were dismissed. Now, almost before he could drink a cup of tea, or feel the still more potent stimulant of Teddy's chatter, Jane came in to say,

"Old Mrs Newman wants to see you, please sir. I told her you were engaged, but she won't go."

Gerrard jumped up, buttoning his cassock with determination.

"Confound her impudence! The old whiner!" he ejaculated.

Through the open door they heard his colloquy with the notorious old cadger on the doorstep.

"Now, Mrs Newman, what do you mean by coming on a Sunday? I saw you only yesterday."

"Yes, Father," whined the woman; "but, O Father, I felt I must come and see you."

"What's up, eh?"

"Oh, I am such a miserable old woman, Father; I feel I've got no friend except God!"

"Well, if you've got God for your friend you don't want anything else. Good-day!"

And the young curate banged the door in the mendicant's face, and came back to his tea, growling out objurgations on all canting old women. "Why don't the old harpies tease you, Philip?" he cried.

“Oh, the young ones tease me instead!” answered Philip, reaching out an arm to pull Teddy’s love-lock.

“Well, dash it all, they both have their knives in me; it isn’t fair; I shan’t play!”

Gerrard put on a childish air and tone of huge disgust, and made Teddy laugh.

“Shut up laughing at me, young Faircloth!” continued Gerrard, working off his resentment by a pretence of awful rage; “just because you’ve got on your necktie with blue spots you think you’re everybody! I’ll slap you on the ear, sir!”

“That reminds me!” interpolated Philip, who was enjoying this game between his two friends. “I’ve got a couple of ties for you, Teddy; don’t go without them!”

“Better give them to me!” growled Gerrard; “I’ve only got this one, and Teddy’s got scores already.”

“You stupid!” quoth Teddy; “you haven’t got one at all, and you don’t want one either!”

“Well, I’m sure *you* don’t! You are always wearing new ones.”

“No, I’m not. I take turns with them; Mr Luard put me up to it. It’s an awfully decent tip; you put all your ties in a drawer and take the left-hand one every morning, and put it back on the right every night. Then you have a different tie every day, and they don’t wear out that way.”

“Oh, I say, Teddy; do you know where Mr Luard got that idea?”

“No; he used to do it at Oxford, didn’t you, sir?”

“Rubbish; not he! It’s what he does with his sermons, Teddy; it’s a good old dodge. He keeps about twenty, and works them like your ties!”

“You don’t, do you?” asked Teddy, looking at Philip with amusement.

“I tell you he does, then!” said Gerrard. “It’s just like the ties; you have a different one every day, and they last for ages, and yet they’re the same old veterans over and over again!”

“Do you, sir?” asked Teddy, again.

“No; because I haven’t got enough made yet,” answered Philip, with a twinkle in his eye. “The Vicar does it, and Mr Gerrard is mixing us up. He hasn’t heard me preach twenty yet in all his life!”

"I've heard you preach about five," remarked the boy seriously, "and they were all different."

"And yet all alike, in so far as they were pretty rotten ones, eh, Teddy?" suggested Gerrard.

"No, they weren't!" denied Teddy stoutly; "they were jolly decent ones."

"Must have gone off a lot lately!" declared Gerrard.

"Well, what sort do you preach, then?" cried Teddy, aggressively, thus carrying the war into the enemy's country.

"Oh, I don't preach sermons, my boy. I just give little homilies now and then!"

"Now and then!" cried Philip. "That means, literally translated, about once every half-hour all day long, Teddy!"

"Well, they're very short homilies, you see, Teddy," explained Gerrard; "little and often is my style. Our friend here is rather inclined to the forty minutes' style, you know!"

"Liar!" observed Philip, smiling.

"That old woman got a short one," Teddy declared, mischievously.

"Ah, yes, she can't understand long discourses, you see! I hope you let Teddy off with similar lenience, Philip?"

"I let him off altogether!" Philip replied; "he lets me off, you see."

"Good heavens, you're a pair of blooming squibs, evidently. Do you ever both go off simultaneously, may I ask? You mustn't come and sleep with Mr Luard any more, Teddy; we're not insured, you know!"

He looked at Philip with a wink, but Philip answered, with a perfectly serious face,

"We're not fireworks, Teddy and I; we're safety-matches, aren't we, old boy?"

"Rather! Strike only on the box!" declared Teddy.

"My goodness! I'm glad I'm not the box, anyhow! But, by George, the Box *was* here, Wednesday, now I come to think of it, so there was danger. Mr Lorey mustn't bring that fellow here again."

"You don't want to strike us, then?" asked Teddy.

“Well, no; if I struck you there’d be an end to you, you see!”

“As a match, or as a boy?” enquired Philip, rather amused at the under-flow of the conversation.

“I don’t strike boys as boys, my dear Philip!” expostulated Gerrard.

“Perhaps you strike them as donkeys!” suggested Teddy. “I don’t see how you could strike them as matches, anyhow!”

“Very glad you don’t: it was your own pal who called you a match, you know!” argued Gerrard.

“Yes, after you’d squibbed him!” cried Philip.

“Well, let’s hear the conclusion of the whole matter, then. The best safety lies evidently in being neither squib nor match. You can be what you like, Teddy! Only, don’t be sick!” he added, as an afterthought.

“I’ll be what Mr Luard wants me to be, then,” said the little boy, looking towards his patron with a glance of affectionate confidence.

Philip could only look delighted; the right words didn’t come to him. But Gerrard found them, and said,

“Well, then, you’ll have to be a star, my little friend, for I’ll tell you as a secret; that’s what Mr Luard wants you to be. Not a theatrical star, but a real, clear, bright, steadfast celestial star; a sort of star of Bethlehem that leads us up to God. Eh, Phil?”

Philip nodded gratefully; not sorry that the flippant conversation had thus in a moment taken on unplumbed depths. And Teddy, realising that all this bore upon Philip’s appeal to him of half-an-hour earlier, and also feeling intuitively that Gerrard “understood”, said simply and quietly,

“Well, I’m going to try. I’ve promised him I will.”

“You shall then! God bless you, sonny!” and Gerrard placed his hand, as he rose from his seat, on the fair round head. “We’ve given Nebul rather a smack in the eye, Philip, old man, eh? We’d better go upstairs and sing *The Strife is o’er*, or something of that sort!”

“No,” said Teddy; “I shall have to sing *Days and Moments Quickly Flying*, or something of that sort.” And he looked at his watch.

In another five minutes he was gone, and he went alone, for he knew Philip must think of his sermon. But all through the service that evening Teddy’s bright, innocent influence lifted his lover up to serene altitudes of soul. Nor did the exaltation of that day leave Philip for days, weeks, months, years; indeed, it never quite departed - perhaps it never will quite depart.

This was a very bright period in his life, and for a time we can leave him and Teddy here.

Philip read a certain passage, some months later, in “Sister Teresa”, and subscribed to it. George Moore has said some true things, but never a truer than this:

*Physical intimacies are but surface emotions, forgotten as soon as they are satisfied; whereas spiritual intimacies live in the heart, they are part of our eternal life, and reach beyond the stars.*

FELICITER<sup>38</sup>

*Crouch Hill*

*Tattingstone*      1896-1905

*Wood Green*

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<sup>38</sup> No real English equivalent. “May it be blessed” is close.

