thirty or forty boys had gone, but the rest stayed on. There was a general wish to please the Doctor, and a feeling that it was cowardly to run away.

On the Saturday Thompson died, in the bright afternoon, while the cricket-match was going on as usual on the big-side ground: the Doctor coming from his death-bed, passed along the gravel-walk at the side of the close, but no one knew what had happened till the next day. At morning lecture it began to be rumoured, and by afternoon chapel was known generally; and a feeling of seriousness and awe at the actual presence of death among them came over the whole school. In all the long years of his ministry the Doctor perhaps never spoke words which sank deeper than some of those in that day's sermon.

'When I came yesterday from visiting all but the very death-bed of him who has been taken from us, and looked around upon all the familiar objects and scenes within our own ground, where your common amusements were going on with your common cheerfulness and activity, I felt there was nothing painful in witnessing that; it did not seem in any way shocking or out of tune with those feelings which the sight of a dying Christian must be supposed to awaken. The unsuitableness in point of natural feeling between scenes of mourning and scenes of liveliness did not at all present itself. But I did feel that if at that moment any of those faults had been brought before me which sometimes occur amongst us; had I heard that any of you had been guilty of falsehood, or of drunkenness, or of any other such sin; had I heard from any quarter the language of profaneness, or of unkindness, or of indecency; had I heard or seen any signs of that wretched folly which courts the laugh of fools by affecting not to dread evil and not to care for good, then the unsuitableness of any of these things with the scene I had just quitted would indeed have been most intensely painful. And why? Not because such things would really have been worse than at any other time, but because at such a moment the eyes are opened really to know good and evil, because we then feel what it is so to live as that death becomes an infinite blessing, and what it is so to live also, that it were good for us if we had never been born.'

Tom had gone into chapel in sickening anxiety about Arthur, but he came out cheered and strengthened by those grand words, and walked up alone to their study. And when he sat down and looked round, and saw Arthur's straw-hat and cricket-jacket hanging on their pegs, and marked all his little neat arrangements, not one of which had been disturbed, the tears indeed rolled down his cheeks; but they were calm and blessed tears, and he repeated to himself, 'Yes, Geordie's eyes are opened—he knows what it is so to live as that death becomes an infinite blessing. But do I? Oh, God, can I bear to lose him?'

The week passed mournfully away. No more boys sickened, but Arthur was reported worse each day, and his mother arrived early in the week. Tom made many appeals to be allowed to see him, and several times tried to get up to the sick-room; but the housekeeper was always in the way, and at last spoke to the Doctor, who kindly but peremptorily forbade him.

Thompson was buried on the Tuesday, and the burial service, so soothing and grand always, but beyond all words solemn when read over a boy's grave to his companions, brought him much comfort, and many strange new thoughts and longings. He went back to his regular life, and played cricket and bathed as usual: it seemed to him that this was the right thing to do, and the new thoughts and longings became more brave and healthy for the effort. The crisis came on Saturday, the day week that Thompson had died; and during that long afternoon Tom sat in his study reading his Bible, and going every half-hour to the housekeeper's room, expecting each time to hear that the gentle and brave little spirit had gone home. But God had work for Arthur to do: the crisis passed—on Sunday evening he was declared out of danger; on Monday he sent a message to Tom that he was almost well, had changed his room, and was to be allowed to see him the next day.

It was evening when the housekeeper summoned him to the sick-room. Arthur was lying on the sofa by the open window, through which the rays of the western sun stole gently, lighting up his white face and golden hair. Tom remembered a German picture of an angel

which he knew; often had he thought how transparent and golden and spirit-like it was; and he shuddered to think how like it Arthur looked, and felt a shock as if his blood had all stopped short, as he realized how near the other world his friend must have been to look like that. Never till that moment had he felt how his little chum had twined himself round his heart-strings; and as he stole gently across the room and knelt down, and put his arm round Arthur's head on the pillow, felt ashamed and half angry at his own red and brown face, and the bounding sense of health and power which filled every fibre of his body, and made every movement of mere living a joy to him. He needn't have troubled himself; it was this very strength and power so different from his own which drew Arthur so to him.

Arthur laid his thin white hand, on which the blue veins stood out so plainly, on Tom's great brown fist, and smiled at him; and then looked out of the window again, as if he couldn't bear to lose a moment of the sunset, into the tops of the great feathery elms, round which the rooks were circling and clanging, returning in flocks from their evening's foraging parties. The elms rustled, the sparrows in the ivy just outside the window chirped and fluttered about, quarrelling, and making it up again; the rooks young and old talked in chorus, and the merry shouts of the boys and the sweet click of the cricket-bats came up cheerily from below.

'Dear George,' said Tom, 'I am so glad to be let up to see you at last. I've tried hard to come so often, but they wouldn't let me before.'

'Oh, I know, Tom; Mary has told me every day about you, and how she was obliged to make the Doctor speak to you to keep you away. I'm very glad you didn't get up, for you might have caught it; and you couldn't stand being ill, with all the matches going on. And you're in the eleven, too, I hear—I'm so glad.'

'Yes, ain't it jolly?' said Tom proudly; 'I'm ninth too. I made forty at the last pie-match, and caught three fellows out. So I was put in above Jones and Tucker. Tucker's so savage, for he was head of the twenty-two.'

'Well, I think you ought to be higher yet,' said Arthur, who was as jealous for the renown of Tom in games, as Tom was for his as a scholar.

'Never mind, I don't care about cricket or anything now you're getting well, Geordie; and I shouldn't have hurt, I know, if they'd have let me come up,—nothing hurts me. But you'll get about now directly, won't you? You won't believe how clean I've kept the study. All your things are just as you left them; and I feed the old magpie just when you used, though I have to come in from big-side for him, the old rip. He won't look pleased all I can do, and sticks his head first on one side and then on the other, and blinks at me before he'll begin to eat, till I'm half inclined to box his ears. And whenever East comes in, you should see him hop off to the window, dot and go one, though Harry wouldn't touch a feather of him now.'

Arthur laughed. 'Old Gravey has a good memory; he can't forget the sieges of poor Martin's den in old times.' He paused a moment, and then went on: 'You can't think how often I've been thinking of old Martin since I've been ill; I suppose one's mind gets restless, and likes to wander off to strange unknown places. I wonder what queer new pets the old boy has got; how he must be revelling in the thousand new birds, beasts, and fishes!'

Tom felt a pang of jealousy, but kicked it out in a moment. 'Fancy him on a South-Sea Island, with the Cherokees or Patagonians, or some such wild niggers!' (Tom's ethnology and geography were faulty, but sufficient for his needs); 'they'll make the old Madman cock medicine-man and tattoo him all over. Perhaps he's cutting about now all blue, and has a squaw and a wigwam. He'll improve their boomerangs, and be able to throw them too, without having old Thomas sent after him by the Doctor to take them away.'

Arthur laughed at the remembrance of the boomerang story, but then looked grave again, and said, 'He'll convert all the island, I know.'

'Yes, if he don't blow it up first.'

'Do you remember, Tom, how you and East used to laugh at him and chaff him, because he said he was sure the rooks all had calling-over or prayers, or something of the sort, when the locking-up bell rang? Well, I declare,' said Arthur, looking up seriously into Tom's laughing eyes, 'I do think he was right. Since I've been lying here, I've watched them every night; and, do you know, they really do come and perch, all of them, just about locking-up time; and then first there's a regular chorus of caws, and then they stop a bit, and one old fellow, or perhaps two or three in different trees, caw solos, and then off they all go again, fluttering about and cawing anyhow till they roost.'

'I wonder if the old blackies do talk,' said Tom, looking up at them. 'How they must abuse me and East, and pray for the Doctor for stopping the slinging!'

'There! look, look!' cried Arthur, 'don't you see the old fellow without a tail coming up? Martin used to call him the "clerk." He can't steer himself. You never saw such fun as he is in a high wind, when he can't steer himself home, and gets carried right past the trees, and has to bear up again and again before he can perch.'

The locking-up bell began to toll, and the two boys were silent, and listened to it. The sound soon carried Tom off to the river and the woods, and he began to go over in his mind the many occasions on which he had heard that toll coming faintly down the breeze, and had to pack his rod in a hurry and make a run for it, to get in before

the gates were shut. He was roused with a start from his memories by Arthur's voice, gentle and weak from his late illness.

'Tom, will you be angry if I talk to you very seriously?'

'No, dear old boy, not I. But ain't you faint, Arthur, or ill? What can I get you? Don't say anything to hurt yourself now—you are very weak; let me come up again.'

'No, no, I sha'n't hurt myself: I'd sooner speak to you now, if you don't mind. I've asked Mary to tell the Doctor that you are with me, so you needn't go down to calling-over; and I mayn't have another chance, for I shall most likely have to go home for change of air to get well, and mayn't come back this half.'

'Oh, do you think you must go away before the end of the half? I'm so sorry. It's more than five weeks yet to the holidays, and all the fifth-form examination and half the cricket-matches to come yet. And what shall I do all that time alone in our study? Why, Arthur, it will be more than twelve weeks before I see you again. Oh, hang it, I can't stand that! Besides, who's to keep me up to working at the examination books? I shall come out bottom of the form, as sure as eggs is eggs.'

Tom was rattling on, half in joke, half in earnest, for he wanted to get Arthur out of his serious vein, thinking it would do him harm; but Arthur broke in—

'Oh, please, Tom, stop, or you'll drive all I had to say out of my head. And I'm already horribly afraid I'm going to make you angry.'

'Don't gammon, young 'un,' rejoined Tom (the use of the old name, dear to him from old recollections, made Arthur start and smile, and feel quite happy); 'you know you ain't afraid, and you've never made me angry since the first month we chummed together. Now I'm going to be quite sober for a quarter of an hour, which is more than I am once in a year; so make the most of it; heave ahead, and pitch into me right and left.'

'Dear Tom, I ain't going to pitch into you,' said Arthur, piteously; 'and it seems so cocky in me to be advising you, who've been my back-bone ever since I've been at Rugby, and have made the school a paradise to me. Ah, I see I shall never do it, unless I go head-over-heels at once, as you said when you taught me to swim. Tom, I want you to give up using vulgus-books and cribs.'

Arthur sank back on to his pillow with a sigh, as if the effort had been great; but the worst was now over, and he looked straight at Tom, who was evidently taken aback. He leant his elbows on his knees, and stuck his hands into his hair, whistled a verse of 'Billy Taylor,' and then was quite silent for another minute. Not a shade crossed his face, but he was clearly puzzled. At last he looked up, and caught Arthur's anxious look, took his hand, and said simply—

'Why, young 'un?'

'Because you're the honestest boy in Rugby, and that ain't honest.'

'I don't see that.'

'What were you sent to Rugby for?'

'Well, I don't know exactly—nobody ever told me. I suppose because all boys are sent to a public school in England.'

'But what do you think yourself? What do you want to do here, and to carry away?'

Tom thought a minute. 'I want to be A 1 at cricket and football, and all the other games, and to make my hands keep my head against any fellow, lout or gentleman. I want to get into the sixth before I leave, and to please the Doctor; and I want to carry away just as much Latin and Greek as will take me through Oxford respectably. There now, young 'un, I never thought of it before, but that's pretty much about my figure. Ain't it all on the square? What have you got to say to that?'

'Why, that you are pretty sure to do all that you want, then.'

'Well, I hope so. But you've forgot one thing, what I want to leave behind me. I want to leave behind me,' said Tom, speaking slow, and looking much moved, 'the name of a fellow who never bullied a little boy, or turned his back on a big one.'

Arthur pressed his hand, and after a moment's silence went on: 'You say, Tom, you want to please the Doctor. Now, do you want to please him by what he thinks you do, or by what you really do?'

'By what I really do, of course.'

'Does he think you use cribs and vulgus-books?'

Tom felt at once that his flank was turned, but he couldn't give in. 'He was at Winchester himself,' said he; 'he knows all about it.'

'Yes, but does he think *you* use them? Do you think he approves of it?'

'You young villain!' said Tom, shaking his fist at Arthur, half vexed and half pleased, 'I never think about it. Hang it—there, perhaps he don't. Well, I suppose he don't.'

Arthur saw that he had got his point; he knew his friend well, and was wise in silence as in speech. He only said, 'I would sooner have the Doctor's good opinion of me as I really am, than any man's in the world.'

After another minute, Tom began again: 'Look here, young 'un, how on earth am I to get time to play the matches this half, if I give up cribs? We're in the middle of that long crabbed chorus in the Agamemnon; I can only just make head or tail of it with the crib. Then there's Pericles's speech coming on in Thucydides, and "The Birds" to get up for the examination, besides the Tacitus.' Tom groaned at the thought of his accumulated labours. 'I say, young 'un, there's only five weeks or so left to holidays; mayn't I go on as usual for this half? I'll tell the Doctor about it some day, or you may.'

Arthur looked out of the window; the twilight had come on, and all was silent. He repeated in a low voice, 'In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth

TOM'S VISIT TO ARTHUR AFTER THE FEVER

into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.'

Not a word more was said on the subject, and the boys were again silent—one of those blessed, short silences in which the resolves which colour a life are so often taken.

Tom was the first to break it. 'You've been very ill indeed, haven't you, Geordie?' said he, with a mixture of awe and curiosity, feeling as if his friend had been in some strange place or scene, of which he could form no idea, and full of the memory of his own thoughts during the last week.

'Yes, very. I'm sure the Doctor thought I was going to die. He gave me the Sacrament last Sunday, and you can't think what he is when one is ill. He said such brave, and tender, and gentle things to me, I felt quite light and strong after it, and never had any more fear. My mother brought our old medical man, who attended me when I was a poor sickly child; he said my constitution was quite changed, and that I'm fit for anything now. If it hadn't, I couldn't have stood three days of this illness. That's all thanks to you, and the games you've made me fond of.'

'More thanks to old Martin,' said Tom; 'he's been your real friend.'

'Nonsense, Tom; he never could have done for me what you have.'

'Well, I don't know; I did little enough. Did they tell you—you won't mind hearing it now, I know—that poor Thompson died last week? The other three boys are getting quite round, like you.'

'Oh, yes, I heard of it.'

Then Tom, who was quite full of it, told Arthur of the burial-service in the chapel, and how it had impressed him, and, he believed, all the other boys. 'And though the Doctor never said a word about it,' said he, 'and it was a half-holiday and match day, there wasn't a game played in the close all the afternoon, and the boys all went about as if it were Sunday.'

'I'm very glad of it,' said Arthur. 'But, Tom, I've had such strange thoughts about death lately. I've never told a soul of them, not even my mother. Sometimes I think they're wrong, but, do you know, I don't think in my heart I could be sorry at the death of any of my friends.'

Tom was taken quite aback. 'What in the world is the young 'un after now?' thought he; 'I've swallowed a good many of his crotchets, but this altogether beats me. He can't be quite right in his head.' He didn't want to say a word, and shifted about uneasily in the dark; however, Arthur seemed to be waiting for an answer, so at last he said, 'I don't think I quite see what you mean, Geordie. One's told so often to think about death, that I've tried it on sometimes, especially this last week. But we won't talk of it now. I'd better go—you're getting tired, and I shall do you harm.'

'No, no, indeed I ain't, Tom; you must stop till nine, there's only twenty minutes. I've settled you shall stop till nine. And oh! do let me talk to you—I must talk to you. I see it's just as I feared. You think I'm half mad—don't you now?'

'Well, I did think it odd what you said, Geordie, as you ask me.'

Arthur paused a moment, and then said quickly, 'I'll tell you how it all happened. At first, when I was sent to the sick-room, and found I had really got the fever, I was terribly frightened. I thought I should die, and I could not face it for a moment. I don't think it was sheer cowardice at first, but I thought how hard it was to be taken away from my mother and sisters, and you all, just as I was beginning to see my way to many things, and to feel that I might be a man and do a man's work. To die without having fought, and worked, and given one's life away, was too hard to bear. I got terribly impatient, and accused God of injustice, and strove to justify myself; and the harder I strove the deeper I sank. Then the image of my dear father often came across me, but I turned from it. Whenever it came, a heavy numbing throb seemed to take hold of my heart, and say, "Dead—dead—dead." And I cried out, "The living, the living shall praise Thee, O God; the dead cannot praise Thee. There is no work in the grave; in the night no man can work. But I can work. I can do great things. I *will* do great things. Why wilt Thou slay me?" And so I struggled and plunged, deeper and deeper, and went down into a living black tomb. I was alone there, with no power to stir or think; alone with myself; beyond the reach of all human fellowship; beyond Christ's reach, I thought, in my nightmare. You, who are brave and bright and strong, can have no idea of that agony. Pray to God you never may. Pray as for your life.'

Arthur stopped—from exhaustion, Tom thought; but what between his fear lest Arthur should hurt himself, his awe, and longing for him to go on, he couldn't ask, or stir to help him.

Presently he went on, but quite calm and slow. 'I don't know how long I was in that state. For more than a day, I know; for I was quite conscious, and lived my outer life all the time, and took my medicines, and spoke to my mother, and heard what they said. But I didn't take much note of time; I thought time was over for me, and that that tomb was what was beyond. Well, on last Sunday morning, as I seemed to lie in that tomb, alone, as I thought, for ever and ever, the black dead wall was cleft in two, and I was caught up and borne through into the light by some great power, some living mighty spirit. Tom, do you remember the living creatures and the wheels in Ezekiel? It was just like that; "when they went I heard

the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host; when they stood they let down their wings"—"and they went every one straight forward; whither the spirit was to go they went, and they turned not when they went." And we rushed through the bright air, which was full of myriads of living creatures, and paused on the brink of a great river. And the power held me up, and I knew that that great river was the grave, and death dwelt there; but not the death I had met in the black tomb—that I felt was gone for ever. For on the other bank of the great river I saw men and women and children rising up pure and bright, and the tears were wiped from their eyes, and they put on glory and strength, and all weariness and pain fell away. And beyond were a multitude which no man could number, and they worked at some great work; and they who rose from the river went on and joined in the work. They all worked, and each worked in a different way, but all at the same work. And I saw there my father, and the men in the old town whom I knew when I was a child; many a hard stern man, who never came to church, and whom they called atheist and infidel. There they were, side by side with my father, whom I had seen toil and die for them, and women and little children, and the seal was on the foreheads of all. And I longed to see what the work was, and could not; so I tried to plunge in the river, for I thought I would join them, but I could not. Then I looked about to see how they got into the river. And this I could not see, but I saw myriads on this side, and they too worked, and I knew that it was the same work; and the same seal was on their foreheads. And though I saw that there was toil and anguish in the work of these, and that most that were working were blind and feeble, yet I longed no more to plunge into the river, but more and more to know what the work was. And as I looked I saw my mother and my sisters, and I saw the Doctor, and you, Tom, and hundreds more whom I knew; and at last I saw myself too, and I was toiling and doing ever so little a piece of the great work. Then it all melted away, and the power left me, and as it left me I thought I heard a voice say, "The vision is for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it, for in the end it shall speak and not lie, it shall surely come, it shall not tarry." It was early morning I know, then, it was so quiet and cool, and my mother was fast asleep in the chair by my bedside; but it wasn't only a dream of mine. I know it wasn't a dream. Then I fell into a deep sleep, and only woke after afternoon chapel; and the Doctor came and gave me the Sacrament, as I told you. I told him and my mother I should get well—I knew I should; but I couldn't tell them why. Tom,' said Arthur, gently, after another minute, 'do you see why I could not grieve now to see my dearest friend die? It can't be—it isn't, all fever or illness. God would never have let me see it so clear if it wasn't true. I don't understand it all yet—it will take me my life and longer to do that—to find out what the work is.'

When Arthur stopped there was a long pause. Tom could not speak, he was almost afraid to breathe, lest he should break the train of Arthur's thoughts. He longed to hear more, and to ask questions. In another minute nine o'clock struck, and a gentle tap at the door called them both back into the world again. They did not answer, however, for a moment, and so the door opened and a lady came in carrying a candle.

She went straight to the sofa, and took hold of Arthur's hand, and then stooped down and kissed him.

'My dearest boy, you feel a little feverish again. Why didn't you have lights? You've talked too much, and excited yourself in the dark.'

'Oh, no, mother, you can't think how well I feel. I shall start with you to-morrow for Devonshire. But, mother, here's my friend; here's Tom Brown—you know him?'

'Yes, indeed, I've known him for years,' she said, and held out her hand to Tom, who was now standing up behind the sofa. This was Arthur's mother: tall and slight and fair, with masses of golden hair drawn back from the broad white forehead, and the calm blue eye meeting his so deep and open—the eye that he knew so well, for it was his friend's over again, and the lovely tender mouth that trembled while he looked—she stood there, a woman of thirty-eight, old enough to be his mother, and one whose face showed the lines which must be written on the faces of good men's wives and widows—but he thought he had never seen anything so beautiful. He couldn't help wondering if Arthur's sisters were like her.

Tom held her hand, and looked on straight in her face; he could neither let it go nor speak.

'Now, Tom,' said Arthur, laughing, 'where are your manners? you'll stare my mother out of countenance.' Tom dropped the little hand with a sigh. 'There, sit down, both of you. Here, dearest mother, there's room here;' and he made a place on the sofa for her. 'Tom, you needn't go; I'm sure you won't be called up at first lesson.' Tom felt that he would risk being floored at every lesson for the rest of his natural school-life sooner than go; so sat down. 'And now,' said Arthur, 'I have realized one of the dearest wishes of my life—to see you two together.'

And then he led away the talk to their home in Devonshire, and the red bright earth, and the deep green combes, and the peat streams like cairngorm pebbles, and the wild moor with its high cloudy Tors for a giant background to the picture—till Tom got jealous and stood up for the clear chalk streams, and the emerald water meadows and great elms and willows of the dear old Royal county, as he gloried to call it. And the mother sat on quiet and loving,

rejoicing in their life. The quarter-to-ten struck, and the bell rang for bed, before they had well begun their talk, as it seemed.

Then Tom rose with a sigh to go.

'Shall I see you in the morning, Geordie?' said he, as he shook his friend's hand. 'Never mind though; you'll be back next half, and I shan't forget the house of Rimmon.'

Arthur's mother got up and walked with him to the door, and there gave him her hand again, and again his eyes met that deep loving look, which was like a spell upon him. Her voice trembled slightly as she said, 'Good-night—you are one who knows what our Father has promised to the friend of the widow and the fatherless. May He deal with you as you have dealt with me and mine!'

Tom was quite upset; he mumbled something about owing everything good in him to Geordie—looked in her face again, pressed her hand to his lips, and rushed down-stairs to his study, where he sat till old Thomas came kicking at the door, to tell him his allowance would be stopped if he didn't go off to bed. (It would have been stopped anyhow, but that he was a great favourite with the old gentleman, who

TOM AND ARTHUR'S MOTHER

loved to come out in the afternoons into the close to Tom's wicket, and bowl slow twisters to him, and talk of the glories of bygone Surrey heroes, with whom he had played former generations.) So Tom roused himself, and took up his candle to go to bed; and then for the first time was aware of a beautiful new fishing-rod, with old Eton's mark on it, and a splendidly bound Bible, which lay on his table, on the title-page of which was written—'TOM BROWN, from his affectionate and grateful friends, Frances Jane Arthur, George Arthur.'

I leave you all to guess how he slept, and what he dreamt of.

## CHAPTER VII

### HARRY EAST'S DILEMMAS AND DELIVERANCES

> 'The Holy Supper is kept indeed,
> In whatso we share with another's need—
> Not that which we give, but what we share,
> For the gift without the giver is bare:
> Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three,
> Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me.'
>
> LOWELL, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, p. 11.

THE next morning, after breakfast, Tom, East, and Gower met as usual to learn their second lesson together. Tom had been considering how to break his proposal of giving up the crib to the others, and having found no better way (as indeed none better can ever be found by man or boy), told them simply what had happened; how he had been to see Arthur, who had talked to him upon the subject, and what he had said, and for his part he had made up his mind, and wasn't going to use cribs any more: and not being quite sure of his ground, took the high and pathetic tone, and was proceeding to say, 'how that having learnt his lessons with them for so many years, it would grieve him much to put an end to the arrangement, and he hoped at any rate that if they wouldn't go on with him, they should still be just as good friends, and respect one another's motives—but——'

Here the other boys, who had been listening with open eyes and ears, burst in—

'Stuff and nonsense!' cried Gower. 'Here, East, get down the crib and find the place.'

'Oh, Tommy, Tommy!' said East, proceeding to do as he was bidden, 'that it should ever have come to this! I knew Arthur 'd be the ruin of you some day, and you of me. And now the time's come,'—and he made a doleful face.

'I don't know about ruin,' answered Tom; 'I know that you and I would have had the sack long ago, if it hadn't been for him. And you know it as well as I.'

'Well, we were in a baddish way before he came, I own; but this new crotchet of his is past a joke.'

'Let's give it a trial, Harry; come—you know how often he has been right and we wrong.'

'Now, don't you two be jawing away about young Square-toes,' struck in Gower. 'He's no end of a sucking wiseacre, I dare say; but we've no time to lose, and I've got the fives'-court at half-past nine.'

'I say, Gower,' said Tom, appealingly, 'be a good fellow, and let's try if we can't get on without the crib.'

'What! in this chorus? Why, we shan't get through ten lines.'

'I say, Tom,' cried East, having hit on a new idea, 'don't you remember, when we were in the upper fourth, and old Momus caught me construing off the leaf of a crib which I'd torn out and put in my book, and which would float out on to the floor; he sent me up to be flogged for it?'

'Yes, I remember it very well.'

'Well, the Doctor, after he'd flogged me, told me himself that he didn't flog me for using a translation, but for taking it in to lesson, and using it there when I hadn't learnt a word before I came in. He said there was no harm in using a translation to get a clue to hard passages, if you tried all you could first to make them out without.'

'Did he, though?' said Tom; 'then Arthur must be wrong.'

'Of course he is,' said Gower, 'the little prig. We'll only use the crib when we can't construe without it. Go ahead, East.'

And on this agreement they started: Tom, satisfied with having made his confession, and not sorry to have a *locus pœnitentiæ*, and not to be deprived altogether of the use of his old and faithful friend.

The boys went on as usual, each taking a sentence in turn, and the crib being handed to the one whose turn it was to construe. Of course Tom couldn't object to this, as, was it not simply lying there to be appealed to in case the sentence should prove too hard altogether for the construer? But it must be owned that Gower and East did not make very tremendous exertions to conquer their sentences before having recourse to its help. Tom, however, with the most heroic virtue and gallantry rushed into his sentence, searching in a high-minded manner for nominative and verb, and turning over his dictionary frantically for the first hard word that stopped him. But in the meantime Gower, who was bent on getting to fives, would peep quietly into the crib, and then suggest, 'Don't you think this is the meaning?' 'I think you must take it this way, Brown;' and as Tom didn't see his way to not profiting by these suggestions, the lesson went on about as quickly as usual, and Gower was able to start for the fives'-court within five minutes of the half-hour.

When Tom and East were left face to face, they looked at one another for a minute, Tom puzzled, and East chock-full of fun, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

'Well, Tom,' said East, recovering himself, 'I don't see any objection to the new way. It's about as good as the old one, I think; besides the advantage it gives one of feeling virtuous, and looking down on one's neighbours.'

Tom shoved his hand into his back hair. 'I ain't so sure,' said he; 'you two fellows carried me off my legs: I don't think we really tried one sentence fairly. Are you sure you remember what the Doctor said to you?'

'Yes. And I'll swear I couldn't make out one of my sentences to-day. No, nor ever could. I really don't remember,' said East, speaking slowly and impressively, 'to have come across one Latin or Greek sentence this half that I could go and construe by the light of nature. Whereby I am sure Providence intended cribs to be used.'

'The thing to find out,' said Tom, meditatively, 'is how long one ought to grind at a sentence without looking at the crib. Now I think if one fairly looks out all the words one don't know, and then can't hit it, that's enough.'

'To be sure, Tommy,' said East demurely, but with a merry twinkle in his eye. 'Your new doctrine too, old fellow,' added he, 'when one comes to think of it, is a cutting at the root of all school morality. You'll take away mutual help, brotherly love, or, in the vulgar tongue, giving construes, which I hold to be one of our highest virtues. For how can you distinguish between getting a construe from another boy, and using a crib? Hang it, Tom, if you're going to deprive all our school-fellows of the chance of exercising Christian benevolence and being good Samaritans, I shall cut the concern.'

'I wish you wouldn't joke about it, Harry; it's hard enough to see one's way, a precious sight harder than I thought last night. But I suppose there's a use and an abuse of both, and one 'll get straight enough somehow. But you can't make out anyhow that one has a right to use old vulgus-books and copy-books.'

'Hullo, more heresy! How fast a fellow goes downhill when he once gets his head before his legs. Listen to me, Tom. Not use old vulgus-books?—why, you Goth! ain't we to take the benefit of the wisdom, and admire and use the work of past generations? Not use old copy-books? Why you might as well say we ought to pull down Westminster Abbey, and put up a go-to-meeting-shop with churchwarden windows; or never read Shakspere, but only Sheridan Knowles. Think of all the work and labour that our predecessors have bestowed on these very books; and are we to make their work of no value?'

'I say, Harry, please don't chaff; I'm really serious.'

'And then, is it not our duty to consult the pleasure of others rather than our own, and above all that of our masters? Fancy then the difference to them in looking over a vulgus which has been carefully touched and retouched by themselves and others, and which must bring them a sort of dreamy pleasure, as if they'd met the thought or expression of it somewhere or another—before they were born perhaps; and that of cutting up and making picture-frames round all your and my false quantities, and other monstrosities. Why, Tom, you wouldn't be so cruel as never to let old Momus hum over the "O genus humanum" again, and then look up doubtingly through his spectacles, and end by smiling and giving three extra marks for it: just for old sake's sake, I suppose.'

'Well,' said Tom, getting up in something as like a huff as he was capable of, 'it's deuced hard that when a fellow's really trying to do what he ought, his best friends 'll do nothing but chaff him and try to put him down.' And he stuck his books under his arm and his hat on his head, preparatory to rushing out into the quadrangle, to testify with his own soul of the faithlessness of friendships.

'Now don't be an ass, Tom,' said East, catching hold of him, 'you know me well enough by this time; my bark's worse than my bite. You can't expect to ride your new crotchet without anybody's trying to stick a nettle under his tail and make him kick you off: especially as we shall all have to go on foot still. But now sit down, and let's go over it again. I'll be as serious as a judge.'

Then Tom sat himself down on the table, and waxed eloquent about all the righteousness and advantages of the new plan, as was his wont whenever he took up anything; going into it as if his life depended upon it, and sparing no abuse which he could think of, of the opposite method, which he denounced as ungentlemanly, cowardly, mean, lying, and no one knows what besides. 'Very cool of Tom,' as East thought, but didn't

say, 'seeing as how he only came out of Egypt himself last night at bed-time.'

'Well, Tom,' said he at last, 'you see, when you and I came to school there were none of these sort of notions. You may be right—I dare say you are. Only what one has always felt about the masters is, that it's a fair trial of skill and last between us and them—like a match at football, or a battle. We're natural enemies in school, that's the fact. We've got to learn so much Latin and Greek and do so many verses, and they've got to see that we do it. If we can slip the collar and do so much less without getting caught, that's one to us. If they can get more out of us, or catch us shirking, that's one to them. All's fair in war but lying. If I run my luck against theirs, and go into school without looking at my lessons and don't get called up, why am I a snob or a sneak? I don't tell the master I've learnt it. He's got to find out whether I have or not; what's he paid for? If he calls me up and I get floored, he makes me write it out in Greek and English. Very good; he's caught me, and I don't grumble. I grant you, if I go and snivel to him, and tell him I've really tried to learn it, but found it so hard without a translation, or say I've had a toothache or any humbug of that kind, I'm a snob. That's my school morality; it's served me, and you too, Tom, for the matter of that, these five years. And it's all clear and fair, no mistake about it. We understand it, and they understand it, and I don't know what we're to come to with any other.'

Tom looked at him pleased, and a little puzzled. He had never heard East speak his mind seriously before, and couldn't help feeling how completely he had hit his own theory and practice up to that time.

'Thank you, old fellow,' said he. 'You're a good old brick to be serious, and not put out with me. I said more than I meant, I dare say, only you see I know I'm right: whatever you and Gower and the rest do, I shall hold on—I must. And as it's all new and an uphill game, you see, one must hit hard and hold on tight at first.'

'Very good,' said East; 'hold on and hit away, only don't hit under the line.'

'But I must bring you over, Harry, or I shan't be comfortable. Now, I'll allow all you've said. We've always been honourable enemies with the masters. We found a state of war when we came, and went into it of course. Only don't you think things are altered a good deal? I don't feel as I used to the masters. They seem to me to treat one quite differently.'

'Yes, perhaps they do,' said East; 'there's a new set you see, mostly, who don't feel sure of themselves yet. They don't want to fight till they know the ground.'

'I don't think it's only that,' said Tom. 'And then the Doctor, he does treat one so openly, and like a gentleman, and as if one was working with him.'

'Well, so he does,' said East; 'he's a splendid fellow, and when I get into the sixth I shall act accordingly. Only you know he has nothing to do with our lessons now, except examining us. I say, though,' looking at his watch, 'it's just the quarter. Come along.'

As they walked out they got a message, to say 'that Arthur was just starting, and would like to say good-bye;' so they went down to the private entrance of the School-house, and found an open carriage, with Arthur propped up with pillows in it, looking already better, Tom thought.

They jumped up on to the steps to shake hands with him, and Tom mumbled thanks for the presents he had found in his study, and looked round anxiously for Arthur's mother.

East, who had fallen back into his usual humour, looked quaintly at Arthur, and said—

'So you've been at it again, through that hot-headed convert of yours there. He's been making our lives a burden to us all the morning about using cribs. I shall get floored to a certainty at second lesson, if I'm called up.'

Arthur blushed and looked down. Tom struck in—

'Oh, it's all right. He's converted already; he always comes through the mud after us, grumbling and sputtering.'

The clock struck, and they had to go off to school, wishing Arthur a pleasant holiday; Tom lingering behind a moment to send his thanks and love to Arthur's mother.

Tom renewed the discussion after second lesson, and succeeded so far as to get East to promise to give the new plan a fair trial.

Encouraged by his success, in the evening, when they were sitting alone in the large study, where East lived now almost, '*vice* Arthur on leave,' after examining the new fishing-rod, which both pronounced to be the genuine article ('play enough to throw a midge tied on a single hair against the wind, and strength enough to hold a grampus'), they naturally began talking about Arthur. Tom, who was still bubbling over with last night's scene and all the thoughts of the last week, and wanting to clinch and fix the whole in his own mind, which he could never do without first going through the process of belabouring somebody else with it all, suddenly rushed into the subject of Arthur's illness, and what he had said about death.

East had given him the desired opening; after a serio-comic grumble, 'that life wasn't worth having now they were tied to a young beggar who was always "raising his standard"; and that he, East, was like a prophet's donkey, who was obliged to struggle on after the donkey-man who went after the prophet; that he had none of the pleasure of starting the new crotchets, and didn't half understand them, but had to take the kicks and carry the luggage as if he had all the fun,'—he threw his legs up on to the sofa, and put his hands behind his head, and said—

'Well, after all, he's the most wonderful little fellow I ever came across. There ain't such a

meek, humble boy in the school. Hanged if I don't think now, really, Tom, that he believes himself a much worse fellow than you or I, and that he don't think he has more influence in the house than Dot Bowles, who came last quarter and isn't ten yet. But he turns you and me round his little finger, old boy—there's no mistake about that.' And East nodded at Tom sagaciously.

'Now or never!' thought Tom; so shutting his eyes and hardening his heart, he went straight at it, repeating all that Arthur had said, as near as he could remember it, in the very words, and all he had himself thought. The life seemed to ooze out of it as he went on, and several times he felt inclined to stop, give it all up, and change the subject. But somehow he was borne on, he had a necessity upon him to speak it all out, and did so. At the end he looked at East with some anxiety, and was delighted to see that that young gentleman was thoughtful and attentive. The fact is, that in the stage of his inner life at which Tom had lately arrived, his intimacy with and friendship for East could not have lasted if he had not made him aware of, and a sharer in, the thoughts that were beginning to exercise him. Nor indeed could the friendship have lasted if East had shown no sympathy with these thoughts; so that it was a great relief to have unbosomed himself, and to have found that his friend could listen.

Tom had always had a sort of instinct that East's levity was only skin-deep; and this instinct was a true one. East had no want of reverence for anything he felt to be real; but his was one of those natures that burst into what is generally called recklessness and impiety the moment they feel that anything is being poured upon them for their good which does not come home to their inborn sense of right, or which appeals to anything like self-interest in them. Daring and honest by nature, and out-spoken to an extent which alarmed all respectabilities, with a constant fund of animal health and spirits which he did not feel bound to curb in any way, he had gained for himself with the steady part of the school (including as well those who wished to appear steady as those who really were so) the character of a boy with whom it would be dangerous to be intimate; while his own hatred of everything cruel, or underhand, or false, and his hearty respect for what he could see to be good and true, kept off the rest.

Tom, besides being very like East in many points of character, had largely developed in his composition the capacity for taking the weakest side. This is not putting it strongly enough; it was a necessity with him, he couldn't help it any more than he could eating or drinking. He could never play on the strongest side with any heart at football or cricket, and was sure to make friends with any boy who was unpopular, or down on his luck.

Now, though East was not what is generally called unpopular, Tom felt more and more every day, as their characters developed, that he stood alone, and did not make friends among their contemporaries; and therefore sought him out. Tom was himself much more popular, for his power of detecting humbug was much less acute, and his instincts were much more sociable. He was at this period of his life, too, largely given to taking people for what they gave themselves out to be; but his singleness of heart, fearlessness, and honesty were just what East appreciated, and thus the two had been drawn into great intimacy.

This intimacy had not been interrupted by Tom's guardianship of Arthur.

East had often, as has been said, joined them in reading the Bible; but their discussions had almost always turned upon the characters of the men and women of whom they read, and not become personal to themselves. In fact, the two had shrunk from personal religious discussion, not knowing how it might end; and fearful of risking a friendship very dear to both, and which they felt somehow, without quite knowing why, would never be the same, but either tenfold stronger or sapped at its foundation after such a communing together.

What a bother all this explaining is! I wish we could get on without it. But we can't. However, you'll all find, if you haven't found it out already, that a time comes in every human friendship when you must go down into the depths of yourself, and lay bare what is there to your friend, and wait in fear for his answer. A few moments may do it; and it may be (most likely will be, as you are English boys) that you will never do it but once. But done it must be, if the friendship is to be worth the name. You must find what is there, at the very root and bottom of one another's hearts; and if you are at one there, nothing on earth can, or at least ought to sunder you.

East had remained lying down until Tom finished speaking, as if fearing to interrupt him; he now sat up at the table, and leant his head on one hand, taking up a pencil with the other, and working little holes with it in the table-cover. After a bit he looked up, stopped the pencil, and said, 'Thank you very much, old fellow; there's no other boy in the house would have done it for me but you or Arthur. I can see well enough,' he went on after a pause, 'all the best big fellows look on me with suspicion; they think I'm a devil-may-care, reckless young scamp. So I am—eleven hours out of twelve, but not the twelfth. Then all of our contemporaries worth knowing follow suit, of course; we're very good friends at games and all that, but not a soul of them but you and Arthur ever tried to break through the crust, and see whether there was anything at the bottom of me; and then the bad ones I won't stand, and they know that.'

'Don't you think that's half fancy, Harry?'

'Not a bit of it,' said East bitterly, pegging

away with his pencil. 'I see it all plain enough. Bless you, you think everybody's as straightforward and kind-hearted as you are.'

'Well, but what's the reason of it? There must be a reason. You can play all the games as well as any one, and sing the best song, and are the best company in the house. You fancy you're not liked, Harry. It's all fancy.'

'I only wish it was, Tom. I know I could be popular enough with all the bad ones, but

EAST UNBURTHENING HIMSELF TO TOM

that I won't have, and the good ones won't have me.'

'Why not?' persisted Tom; 'you don't drink or swear, or get out at night; you never bully, or cheat at lessons. If you only showed you liked it, you'd have all the best fellows in the house running after you.'

'Not I,' said East. Then with an effort he went on, 'I'll tell you what it is. I never stop the Sacrament. I can see, from the Doctor downwards, how that tells against me.'

'Yes, I've seen that,' said Tom, 'and I've been very sorry for it, and Arthur and I have talked about it. I've often thought of speaking to you, but it's so hard to begin on such subjects. I'm very glad you've opened it. Now, why don't you?'

'I've never been confirmed,' said East.

'Not been confirmed?' said Tom, in astonishment. 'I never thought of that. Why weren't you confirmed with the rest of us nearly three years ago? I always thought you'd been confirmed at home.'

'No,' answered East sorrowfully; 'you see this was how it happened. Last Confirmation was soon after Arthur came, and you were so taken up with him, I hardly saw either of you. Well, when the Doctor sent round for us about it, I was living mostly with Green's set—you know the sort. They all went in—I dare say it was all right, and they got good by it; I don't want to judge them. Only all I could see of their

reasons drove me just the other way. 'Twas "because the Doctor liked it;" "no boy got on who didn't stay the Sacrament;" it was the "correct thing," in fact, like having a good hat to wear on Sundays. I couldn't stand it. I didn't feel that I wanted to lead a different life, I was very well content as I was, and I wasn't going to sham religious to curry favour with the Doctor, or any one else.'

East stopped speaking, and pegged away more diligently than ever with his pencil. Tom was ready to cry. He felt half sorry at first that he had been confirmed himself. He seemed to have deserted his earliest friend, to have left him by himself at his worst need for those long years. He got up and went and sat by East and put his arm over his shoulder.

'Dear old boy,' he said, 'how careless and selfish I've been. But why didn't you come and talk to Arthur and me?'

'I wish to heaven I had,' said East, 'but I was a fool. It's too late talking of it now.'

'Why too late? You want to be confirmed now, don't you?'

'I think so,' said East. 'I've thought about it a good deal: only often I fancy I must be changing, because I see it's to do me good here, just what stopped me last time. And then I go back again.'

'I'll tell you now how 'twas with me,' said Tom warmly. 'If it hadn't been for Arthur, I should have done just as you did. I hope I should. I honour you for it. But then he made it out just as if it was taking the weak side before all the world—going in once for all against everything that's strong and rich and proud and respectable, a little band of brothers against the whole world. And the Doctor seemed to say so too, only he said a great deal more.'

'Ah!' groaned East, 'but there again, that's just another of my difficulties whenever I think about the matter. I don't want to be one of your saints, one of your elect, whatever the right phrase is. My sympathies are all the other way; with the many, the poor devils who run about the streets and don't go to church. Don't stare, Tom; mind, I'm telling you all that's in my heart—as far as I know it—but it's all a muddle. You must be gentle with me if you want to land me. Now I've seen a deal of this sort of religion, I was bred up in it, and I can't stand it. If nineteen-twentieths of the world are to be left to uncovenanted mercies, and that sort of thing, which means in plain English to go to hell, and the other twentieth are to rejoice at it all, why—'

'Oh! but, Harry, they ain't, they don't,' broke in Tom, really shocked. 'Oh, how I wish Arthur hadn't gone! I'm such a fool about these things. But it's all you want too, East; it is indeed. It cuts both ways somehow, being confirmed and taking the Sacrament. It makes you feel on the side of all the good and all the bad too, of everybody in the world. Only there's some great dark strong power, which is crushing you and everybody else. That's what Christ conquered, and we've got to fight. What a fool I am! I can't explain. If Arthur were only here!'

'I begin to get a glimmering of what you mean,' said East.

'I say now,' said Tom, eagerly, 'do you remember how we both hated Flashman?'

'Of course I do,' said East; 'I hate him still. What then?'

'Well, when I came to take the Sacrament, I had a great struggle about that. I tried to put him out of my head; and when I couldn't do that, I tried to think of him as evil, as something that the Lord who was loving me hated, and which I might hate too. But it wouldn't do. I broke down; I believe Christ Himself broke me down; and when the Doctor gave me the bread and wine, and leant over me praying, I prayed for poor Flashman, as if it had been you or Arthur.'

East buried his face in his hands on the table. Tom could feel the table tremble. At last he looked up. 'Thank you again, Tom,' said he; 'you don't know what you have done for me to-night. I think I see now how the right sort of sympathy with poor devils is got at.'

'And you'll stop the Sacrament next time, won't you?' said Tom.

'Can I, before I'm confirmed?'

'Go and ask the Doctor.'

'I will.'

That very night, after prayers, East followed the Doctor and the old Verger bearing the candle, up-stairs. Tom watched, and saw the Doctor turn round when he heard footsteps following him closer than usual, and say, 'Hah, East! Do you want to speak to me, my man?'

'If you please, sir;' and the private door closed, and Tom went to his study in a state of great trouble of mind.

It was almost an hour before East came back: then he rushed in breathless.

'Well, it's all right,' he shouted, seizing Tom by the hand. 'I feel as if a ton weight were off my mind.'

'Hurra,' said Tom. 'I knew it would be; but tell us all about it.'

'Well, I just told him all about it. You can't think how kind and gentle he was, the great grim man, whom I've feared more than anybody on earth. When I stuck, he lifted me, just as if I'd been a little child. And he seemed to know all I'd felt, and to have gone through it all. And I burst out crying—more than I've done this five years, and he sat down by me, and stroked my head; and I went blundering on, and told him all; much worse things than I've told you. And he wasn't shocked a bit, and didn't snub me, or tell me I was a fool, and it was all nothing but pride or wickedness, though I dare say it was. And he didn't tell me not to follow out my thoughts, and he didn't give me any cut-and-dried explanation. But when I'd done he just talked a bit—I can hardly remember what he said, yet; but it seemed to spread round me like healing, and strength, and

light; and to bear me up, and plant me on a rock, where I could hold my footing, and fight for myself. I don't know what to do, I feel so happy. And it's all owing to you, dear old boy!' and he seized Tom's hand again.

'And you're to come to the Communion?' said Tom.

'Yes, and to be confirmed in the holidays.'

Tom's delight was as great as his friend's. But he hadn't yet had out all his own talk, and was bent on improving the occasion: so he proceeded to propound Arthur's theory about not being sorry for his friends' deaths, which he had hitherto kept in the background, and by which he was much exercised; for he didn't feel it honest to take what pleased him and throw over the rest, and was trying vigorously to persuade himself that he should like all his best friends to die off-hand.

But East's powers of remaining serious were exhausted, and in five minutes he was saying the most ridiculous things he could think of, till Tom was almost getting angry again.

Despite of himself, however, he couldn't help laughing and giving it up, when East appealed to him with, 'Well, Tom, you ain't going to punch my head, I hope, because I insist upon being sorry when you got to earth?'

And so their talk finished for that time, and they tried to learn first lesson; with very poor success, as appeared next morning, when they were called up and narrowly escaped being floored, which ill-luck, however, did not sit heavily on either of their souls.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TOM BROWN'S LAST MATCH

'Heaven grant the manlier heart, that timely, ere
Youth fly, with life's real tempest would be coping;
The fruit of dreamy hoping
Is, waking, blank despair.'
CLOUGH, *Ambarvalia.*

THE curtain now rises upon the last act of our little drama—for hard-hearted publishers warn me that a single volume must of necessity have an end. Well, well! the pleasantest things must come to an end. I little thought last long vacation, when I began these pages to help while away some spare time at a watering-place, how vividly many an old scene, which had lain hid away for years in some dusty old corner of my brain, would come back again, and stand before me as clear and bright as if it had happened yesterday. The book has been a most grateful task to me, and I only hope that all you, my dear young friends who read it (friends assuredly you must be, if you get as far as this), will be half as sorry to come to the last stage as I am.

Not but what there has been a solemn and a sad side to it. As the old scenes became living, and the actors in them became living too, many a grave in the Crimea and distant India, as well as in the quiet churchyards of our dear old country, seemed to open and send forth their dead, and their voices and looks and ways were again in one's ears and eyes, as in the old School-days. But this was not sad; how should it be, if we believe as our Lord has taught us? How should it be, when one more turn of the wheel, and we shall be by their sides again, learning from them again, perhaps, as we did when we were new boys?

Then there were others of the old faces so dear to us once, who had somehow or another just gone clean out of sight—are they dead or living? We know not, but the thought of them brings no sadness with it. Wherever they are, we can well believe they are doing God's work and getting His wages.

But are there not some, whom we still see sometimes in the streets, whose haunts and homes we know, whom we could probably find almost any day in the week if we were set to do it, yet from whom we are really farther than we are from the dead, and from those who have gone out of our ken? Yes, there are and must be such; and therein lies the sadness of old School memories. Yet of these our old comrades, from whom more than time and space separate us, there are some by whose sides we can feel sure that we shall stand again when time shall be no more. We may think of one another now as dangerous fanatics or narrow bigots, with whom no truce is possible, from whom we shall only sever more and more to the end of our lives, whom it would be our respective duties to imprison or hang, if we had the power. We must go our way, and they theirs, as long

as flesh and spirit hold together: but let our own Rugby poet speak words of healing for this trial:—

> 'To veer how vain! on, onward strain,
> Brave barks! in light, in darkness too;
> Through winds and tides one compass guides,—
> To that, and your own selves, be true.
>
> 'But, O blithe breeze; and O great seas,
> Though ne'er that earliest parting past,
> On your wide plain they join again,
> Together lead them home at last.
>
> 'One port, methought, alike they sought,
> One purpose hold where'er they fare.
> O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
> At last, at last, unite them there!'[1]

This is not mere longing, it is prophecy. So over these too, our old friends, who are friends no more, we sorrow not as men without hope. It is only for those who seem to us to have lost compass and purpose, and to be driven helplessly on rocks and quicksands; whose lives are spent in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil; for self alone, and not for their fellow-men, their country, or their God, that we must mourn and pray without sure hope and without light; trusting only that He, in whose hands they as well as we are, who has died for them as well as for us, who sees all His creatures

> 'With larger other eyes than ours,
> To make allowance for us all,'

will, in His own way and at His own time, lead them also home.

* * * * *

Another two years have passed, and it is again the end of the summer half-year at Rugby; in fact, the School has broken up. The fifth-form examinations were over last week, and upon them have followed the speeches, and the sixth-form examinations for exhibitions; and they too are over now. The boys have gone to all the winds of heaven, except the town boys and the eleven, and the few enthusiasts besides who have asked leave to stay in their houses to see the result of the cricket matches. For this year the Wellesburn return match and the Marylebone match was played at Rugby, to the great delight of the town and neighbourhood, and the sorrow of those aspiring young cricketers who have been reckoning for the last three months on showing off at Lords' ground.

The Doctor started for the Lakes yesterday morning, after an interview with the Captain of the eleven, in the presence of Thomas, at which he arranged in what school the cricket dinners were to be, and all other matters necessary for the satisfactory carrying out of the festivities; and warned them as to keeping all spirituous liquors out of the close, and having the gates closed by nine o'clock.

The Wellesburn match was played out with great success yesterday, the School winning by three wickets; and to-day the great event of the cricketing year, the Marylebone match, is being played. What a match it has been! The London eleven came down by an afternoon train yesterday, in time to see the end of the Wellesburn match; and as soon as it was over, their leading men and umpire inspected the ground, criticizing it rather unmercifully. The Captain of the School eleven, and one or two others, who had played the Lords' match before, and knew old Mr. Aislabie and several of the Lords' men, accompanied them: while the rest of the eleven looked on from under the Three Trees with admiring eyes, and asked one another the names of the illustrious strangers, and recounted how many runs each of them had made in the late matches in *Bell's Life*. They looked such hard-bitten, wiry, whiskered fellows, that their young adversaries felt rather desponding as to the result of the morrow's match. The ground was at last chosen, and two men set to work upon it to water and roll; and then, there being yet some half-hour of daylight, some one had suggested a dance on the turf. The close was half full of citizens and their families, and the idea was hailed with enthusiasm. The cornopean-player was still on the ground; in five minutes the eleven and half a dozen of the Wellesburn and Marylebone men got partners somehow or another, and a merry country-dance was going on, to which every one flocked, and new couples joined in every minute, till there were a hundred of them going down the middle and up again—and the long line of school buildings looked gravely down on them, every window glowing with the last rays of the western sun, and the rooks clanged about in the tops of the old elms, greatly excited, and resolved on having their country-dance too, and the great flag flapped lazily in the gentle western breeze. Altogether it was a sight which would have made glad the heart of our brave old founder, Lawrence Sheriff, if he were half as good a fellow as I take him to have been. It was a cheerful sight to see; but what made it so valuable in the sight of the Captain of the School eleven was, that he there saw his young hands shaking off their shyness and awe of the Lords' men, as they crossed hands and capered about on the grass together; for the strangers entered into it all, and threw away their cigars, and danced and shouted like boys; while old Mr. Aislabie stood by looking on in his white hat, leaning on a bat, in benevolent enjoyment. 'This hop will be worth thirty runs to us to-morrow, and will be the making of Raggles and Johnson,' thinks the young leader, as he revolves many things in his mind, standing by the side of Mr. Aislabie, whom he will not leave for a minute, for he feels that the character of the School for courtesy is resting on his shoulders.

But when a quarter to nine struck, and he saw old Thomas beginning to fidget about with the keys in his hand, he thought of the Doctor's parting monition, and stopped the cornopean at once, notwithstanding the loud-voiced remonstrances from all sides; and the crowd scattered away from the close, the eleven all going into the School-house, where supper and beds were provided for them by the Doctor's orders.

[1] Clough, *Ambarvalia*.

Deep had been the consultations at supper as to the order of going in, who should bowl the first over, whether it would be best to play steady or freely; and the youngest hands declared that they shouldn't be a bit nervous, and praised their opponents as the jolliest fellows in the world, except perhaps their old friends the Wellesburn men. How far a little good-nature from their elders will go with the right sort of boys!

The morning had dawned bright and warm, to the intense relief of many an anxious youngster, up betimes to mark the signs of the weather. The eleven went down in a body before breakfast, for a plunge in the cold bath in a corner of the close. The ground was in splendid order, and soon after ten o'clock, before spectators had arrived, all was ready, and two of the Lords' men took their places at the wickets; the School, with the usual liberality of young hands, having put their adversaries in first. Old Bailey stepped up to the wicket, and called play, and the match has begun.

* * * * * *

'Oh, well bowled! well bowled, Johnson!' cries the Captain, catching up the ball and sending it high above the rook trees, while the third Marylebone man walks away from the wicket, and old Bailey gravely sets up the middle stump again and puts the bails on.

'How many runs?' away scamper three boys to the scoring-table, and are back again in a minute amongst the rest of the eleven, who are collected together in a knot between wicket. 'Only eighteen runs, and three wickets down!' 'Huzza for old Rugby!' sings out Jack Raggles, the long-stop, toughest and burliest of boys, commonly called 'Swiper Jack'; and forthwith stands on his head, and brandishes his legs in the air in triumph, till the next boy catches hold of his heels, and throws him over on to his back.

'Steady there, don't be such an ass, Jack,' says the Captain; 'we haven't got the best wicket yet. Ah, look out now at cover-point,' adds he, as he sees a long-armed, bare-headed, slashing-looking player coming to the wicket. 'And, Jack, mind your hits; he steals more runs than any man in England.'

And they all find that they have got their work to do now; the new-comer's off-hitting is tremendous, and his running like a flash of lightning. He is never in his ground except when his wicket is down. Nothing in the whole game so trying to boys; he has stolen three byes in the first ten minutes, and Jack Raggles is furious, and begins throwing over savagely to the further wicket, until he is sternly stopped by the Captain. It is all that young gentleman can do to keep his team steady, but he knows that everything depends on it, and faces his work bravely. The score creeps up to fifty, the boys begin to look blank, and the spectators, who are now mustering strong, are very silent. The ball flies off his bat to all parts of the field, and he gives no rest and no catches to any one. But cricket is full of glorious chances, and the goddess who presides over it loves to bring down the most skilful players. Johnson the young bowler is getting wild, and bowls a ball almost wide to the off; the batter steps out and cuts it beautifully to where cover-point is standing very deep, in fact almost off the ground. The ball comes skimming and twisting along about three feet from the ground; he rushes at it, and it sticks somehow or other in the fingers of his left hand, to the utter astonishment of himself and the whole field. Such a catch hasn't been made in the close for years, and the cheering is maddening. 'Pretty cricket,' says the Captain, throwing himself on the ground by the deserted wicket with a long breath: he feels that a crisis has passed.

I wish I had space to describe the match; how the Captain stumped the next man off a leg-shooter, and bowled slow lobs to old Mr.

Aislabie, who came in for the last wicket. How the Lords' men were out by half-past twelve o'clock for ninety-eight runs. How the Captain of the School eleven went in first to give his men pluck, and scored twenty-five in beautiful style; how Rugby was only four behind in the first innings. What a glorious dinner they had in the fourth-form school, and how the cover-point hitter sang the most topping comic songs, and old Mr. Aislabie made the best speeches that ever were heard, afterwards. But I haven't space, that's the fact, and so you must fancy it all, and carry yourselves on to half-past seven o'clock, when the School are again in, with five wickets down, and only thirty-two runs to make to win. The Marylebone men played carelessly in their second innings, but they are working like horses now to save the match.

There is much healthy, hearty, happy life scattered up and down the close; but the group to which I beg to call your especial attention is there, on the slope of the island, which looks towards the cricket-ground. It consists of three figures; two are seated on a bench, and one on the ground at their feet. The first, a tall, slight, and rather gaunt man, with a bushy eyebrow, and a dry humorous smile, is evidently a clergyman. He is carelessly dressed, and looks rather used up, which isn't much to be wondered at, seeing that he has just finished six weeks of examination work; but there he basks, and spreads himself out in the evening sun, bent on enjoying life, though he doesn't quite know what to do with his arms and legs. Surely it is our friend the young Master, whom we have had glimpses of before, but his face has gained a great deal since we last came across him.

And by his side, in white flannel shirt and trousers, straw hat, the Captain's belt, and the untanned yellow cricket shoes which all the eleven wear, sits a strapping figure, near six feet high, with ruddy tanned face and whiskers, curly brown hair and a laughing dancing eye. He is leaning forward with his elbows resting on his knees, and dandling his favourite bat, with which he has made thirty or forty runs to-day, in his strong brown hands. It is Tom Brown, grown into a young man nineteen years old, a præpostor and Captain of the eleven, spending his last day as a Rugby boy, and let us hope as much wiser as he is bigger, since we last had the pleasure of coming across him.

And at their feet on the warm dry ground, similarly dressed, sits Arthur, Turkish fashion, with his bat across his knees. He too is no longer a boy, less of a boy in fact than Tom, if one may judge from the thoughtfulness of his face, which is somewhat paler too than one could wish; but his figure, though slight, is well knit and active, and all his old timidity has disappeared, and is replaced by silent quaint fun, with which his face twinkles all over, as he listens to the broken talk between the other two, in which he joins every now and then.

All three are watching the game eagerly, and joining in the cheering which follows every good hit. It is pleasing to see the easy friendly footing which the pupils are on with their master, perfectly respectful, yet with no reserve and nothing forced in their intercourse. Tom has clearly abandoned the old theory of 'natural enemies' in this case at any rate.

But it is time to listen to what they are saying, and see what we can gather out of it.

'I don't object to your theory,' says the master, 'and I allow you have made a fair case for yourself. But now, in such books as Aristophanes, for instance, you've been reading a play this half with the Doctor, haven't you?'

'Yes, the Knights,' answered Tom.

'Well, I'm sure you would have enjoyed the wonderful humour of it twice as much if you had taken more pains with your scholarship.'

'Well, sir, I don't believe any boy in the form enjoyed the sets-to between Cleon and the Sausage-seller more than I did—eh, Arthur?' said Tom, giving him a stir with his foot.

'Yes, I must say he did,' said Arthur. 'I think, sir, you've hit upon the wrong book there.'

'Not a bit of it,' said the master. 'Why, in those very passages of arms, how can you thoroughly appreciate them unless you are master of the weapons? and the weapons are the language, which you, Brown, have never half worked at; and so, as I say, you must have lost all the delicate shades of meaning which make the best part of the fun.'

'Oh! well played—bravo, Johnson!' shouted Arthur, dropping his bat and clapping furiously, and Tom joined in with a 'bravo, Johnson!' which might have been heard at the chapel.

'Eh! what was it? I didn't see,' inquired the master; 'they only got one run, I thought?'

'No, but such a ball, three-quarters length and coming straight for his leg bail. Nothing but that turn of the wrist could have saved him, and he drew it away to leg for a safe one. Bravo, Johnson!'

'How well they are bowling, though,' said Arthur; 'they don't mean to be beat, I can see.'

'There now,' struck in the master, 'you see that's just what I have been preaching this half-hour. The delicate play is the true thing. I don't understand cricket, so I don't enjoy those fine draws which you tell me are the best play, though when you or Raggles hit a ball hard away for six I am as delighted as any one. Don't you see the analogy?'

'Yes, sir,' answered Tom, looking up roguishly, 'I see; only the question remains whether I should have got most good by understanding Greek particles or cricket thoroughly. I'm such a thick, I never should have had time for both.'

'I see you are an incorrigible,' said the master with a chuckle; 'but I refute you by an example. Arthur there has taken in Greek and cricket too.'

'Yes, but no thanks to him; Greek came natural to him. Why, when he first came I remember he used to read Herodotus for pleasure as I did Don Quixote, and couldn't have made a false concord if he'd tried ever so hard—and then I looked after his cricket.'

'Out! Bailey has given him out—do you see,

'Oh, Brown, mayn't I go in next?' shouts the Swiper.

'Whose name is next on the list?' says the Captain.

'Winter's, and then Arthur's,' answers the boy who carries it; 'but there are only twenty-six runs to get, and no time to lose. I heard

THE CONVERSATION DURING THE MATCH

Tom?' cries Arthur. 'How foolish of them to run so hard.'

'Well, it can't be helped, he has played very well. Whose turn is it to go in?'

'I don't know; they've got your list in the tent.'

'Let's go and see,' said Tom, rising; but at this moment Jack Raggles and two or three more came running to the island moat.

Mr. Aislabie say that the stumps must be drawn at a quarter past eight exactly.'

'Oh, do let the Swiper go in,' chorus the boys; so Tom yields against his better judgment.

'I dare say now I've lost the match by this nonsense,' he says, as he sits down again; 'they'll be sure to get Jack's wicket in three or four minutes; however, you'll have the chance,

sir, of seeing a hard hit or two,' adds he, smiling, and turning to the master.

'Come, none of your irony, Brown,' answers the master. 'I'm beginning to understand the game scientifically. What a noble game it is, too!'

'Isn't it? But it's more than a game. It's an institution,' said Tom.

'Yes,' said Arthur, 'the birthright of British boys old and young, as *habeas corpus* and trial by jury are of British men.'

'The discipline and reliance on one another which it teaches is so valuable, I think,' went on the master, 'it ought to be such an unselfish game. It merges the individual in the eleven; he doesn't play that he may win, but that his side may.'

'That's very true,' said Tom, 'and that's why football and cricket, now one comes to think of it, are such much better games than fives' or hare-and-hounds, or any others where the object is to come in first or to win for oneself, and not that one's side may win.'

'And then the Captain of the eleven!' said the master, 'what a post is his in our School-world! almost as hard as the Doctor's; requiring skill and gentleness and firmness, and I know not what other rare qualities.'

'Which don't he may wish he may get!' said Tom, laughing; 'at any rate he hasn't got them yet, or he wouldn't have been such a flat to-night as to let Jack Raggles go in out of his turn.'

'Ah, the Doctor never would have done that,' said Arthur, demurely. 'Tom, you've a great deal to learn yet in the art of ruling.'

'Well, I wish you'd tell the Doctor so then, and get him to let me stop till I'm twenty. I don't want to leave, I'm sure.'

'What a sight it is,' broke in the master, 'the Doctor as a ruler! Perhaps ours is the only little corner of the British Empire which is thoroughly, wisely, and strongly ruled just now. I'm more and more thankful every day of my life that I came here to be under him.'

'So am I, I'm sure,' said Tom; 'and more and more sorry that I've got to leave.'

'Every place and thing one sees here reminds one of some wise act of his,' went on the master. 'This island now—you remember the time, Brown, when it was laid out in small gardens, and cultivated by frost-bitten fags in February and March?'

'Of course I do,' said Tom; 'didn't I hate spending two hours in the afternoon grubbing in the tough dirt with the stump of a fives'-bat! But turf-cart was good fun enough.'

'I dare say it was, but it was always leading to fights with the townspeople; and then the stealing flowers out of all the gardens in Rugby for the Easter show was abominable.'

'Well, so it was,' said Tom, looking down, 'but we fags couldn't help ourselves. But what has that to do with the Doctor's ruling?'

'A great deal, I think,' said the master; 'what brought island-fagging to an end?'

'Why, the Easter Speeches were put off till Midsummer,' said Tom, 'and the sixth had the gymnastic poles put up here.'

'Well, and who changed the time of the Speeches, and put the idea of gymnastic poles into the heads of their worships the sixth form?' said the master.

'The Doctor, I suppose,' said Tom. 'I never thought of that.'

'Of course you didn't,' said the master, 'or else, fag as you were, you would have shouted with the whole school against putting down old customs. And that's the way that all the Doctor's reforms have been carried out when he has been left to himself—quietly and naturally, putting a good thing in the place of a bad, and letting the bad die out; no wavering, and no hurry—the best thing that could be done for the time being, and patience for the rest.'

'Just Tom's own way,' chimed in Arthur, nudging Tom with his elbow, 'driving a nail where it will go;' to which allusion Tom answered by a sly kick.

'Exactly so,' said the master, innocent of the allusion and by-play.

Meantime Jack Raggles, with his sleeves tucked up above his great brown elbows, scorning pads and gloves, has presented himself at the wicket; and having run one for a forward drive of Johnson's, is about to receive his first ball. There are only twenty-four runs to make, and four wickets to go down; a winning match if they play decently steady. The ball is a very swift one, and rises fast, catching Jack on the outside of the thigh, and bounding away as if from india-rubber, while they run two for a leg-bye amidst great applause, and shouts from Jack's many admirers. The next ball is a beautifully-pitched ball for the outer stump, which the reckless and unfeeling Jack catches hold of, and hits right round to leg for five, while the applause becomes deafening: only seventeen runs to get with four wickets—the game is all but ours!

It is over now, and Jack walks swaggering about his wicket, with his bat over his shoulder, while Mr. Aislabie holds a short parley with his men. Then the cover-point hitter, that cunning man, goes on to bowl slow twisters. Jack waves his hand triumphantly towards the tent, as much as to say, 'See if I don't finish it all off now in three hits.'

Alas, my son Jack! the enemy is too old for thee. The first ball of the over Jack steps out and meets, swiping with all his force. If he had only allowed for the twist! but he hasn't, and so the ball goes spinning up straight in the air, as if it would never come down again. Away runs Jack, shouting and trusting to the chapter of accidents, but the bowler runs steadily under it, judging every spin, and calling out 'I have it,' catches it, and playfully pitches it on to the back of the stalwart Jack, who is departing with a rueful countenance.

'I knew how it would be,' says Tom, rising. 'Come along, the game's getting very serious.'

So they leave the island and go to the tent,

and after deep consultation Arthur is sent in, and goes off to the wicket with a last exhortation from Tom to play steady and keep his bat straight. To the suggestions that Winter is the best bat left, Tom only replies, 'Arthur is the steadiest, and Johnson will make the runs if the wicket is only kept up.'

'I am surprised to see Arthur in the eleven,' said the master, as they stood together in front of the dense crowd, which was now closing in round the ground.

'Well, I'm not quite sure that he ought to be in for his play,' said Tom, 'but I couldn't help putting him in. It will do him so much good, and you can't think what I owe him.'

The master smiled. The clock strikes eight, and the whole field becomes fevered with excitement. Arthur, after two narrow escapes, scores one; and Johnson gets the ball. The bowling and fielding are superb, and Johnson's batting worthy the occasion. He makes here a two, and there a one, managing to keep the ball to himself, and Arthur backs up and runs perfectly: only eleven runs to make now, and the crowd scarcely breathe. At last Arthur gets the ball again, and actually drives it forward for two, and feels prouder than when he got the three best prizes, at hearing Tom's shout of joy, 'Well played, well played, young un!'

But the next ball is too much for the young hand, and his bails fly different ways. Nine runs to make, and two wickets to go down—it is too much for human nerves.

Before Winter can get in, the omnibus which is to take the Lords' men to the train pulls up at the side of the close, and Mr. Aislabie and Tom consult, and give out that the stumps will be drawn after the next over. And so ends the great match. Winter and Johnson carry out their bats, and, it being a one day's match, the Lords' men are declared the winners, they having scored the most in the first innings.

But such a defeat is a victory: so think Tom and all the School eleven, as they accompany their conquerors to the omnibus, and send them off with three ringing cheers, after Mr. Aislabie has shaken hands all round, saying to Tom, 'I must compliment you, sir, on your eleven, and I hope we shall have you for a member if you come up to town.'

As Tom and the rest of the eleven were turning back into the close, and everybody was beginning to cry out for another country-dance, encouraged by the success of the night before, the young master, who was just leaving the close, stopped him, and asked him to come up to tea at half-past eight, adding, 'I won't keep you more than half an hour, and ask Arthur to come up too.'

'I'll come up with you directly, if you'll let me,' said Tom, 'for I feel rather melancholy, and not quite up to the country-dance and supper with the rest.'

'Do, by all means,' said the master; 'I'll wait here for you.'

So Tom went off to get his boots and things from the tent, to tell Arthur of the invitation, and to speak to his second in command about stopping the dancing and shutting up the close as soon as it grew dusk. Arthur promised to follow as soon as he had had a dance. So Tom handed his things over to the man in charge of the tent, and walked quietly away to the gate where the master was waiting, and the two took their way together up the Hillmorton road.

Of course they found the master's house locked up, and all the servants away in the close, about this time no doubt footing it away on the grass, with extreme delight to themselves, and in utter oblivion of the unfortunate bachelor their master, whose one enjoyment in the shape of meals was his 'dish of tea' (as our grandmothers called it) in the evening; and the phrase was apt in his case, for he always poured his out into the saucer before drinking. Great was the good man's horror at finding himself shut out of his own house. Had he been alone, he would have treated it as a matter of course, and would have strolled contentedly up and down his gravel-walk until some one came home; but he was hurt at the stain on his character of host, especially as the guest was a pupil. However, the guest seemed to think it a great joke, and presently, as they poked about round the house, mounted a wall, from which he could reach a passage window: the window, as it turned out, was not bolted, so in another minute Tom was in the house and down at the front door, which he opened from inside. The master chuckled grimly at this burglarious entry, and insisted on leaving the hall-door and two of the front windows open, to frighten the truants on their return; and then the two set about foraging for tea, in which operation the master was much at fault, having the faintest possible idea of where to find anything, and being moreover wondrously short-sighted; but Tom by a sort of instinct knew the right cupboards in the kitchen and pantry, and soon managed to place on the snuggery table better materials for a meal than had appeared there probably during the reign of his tutor, who was then and there initiated, amongst other things, into the excellence of that mysterious condiment, a dripping-cake. The cake was newly baked, and all rich and flaky; Tom had found it reposing in the cook's private cupboard, awaiting her return; and as a warning to her, they finished it to the last crumb. The kettle sang away merrily on the hob of the snuggery, for, notwithstanding the time of year, they lighted a fire, throwing both the windows wide open at the same time; the heaps of books and papers were pushed away to the other end of the table, and the great solitary engraving of King's College Chapel over the mantel-piece looked less stiff than usual, as they settled themselves down in the twilight to the serious drinking of tea.

After some talk on the match, and other indifferent subjects, the conversation came

naturally back to Tom's approaching departure, over which he began again to make his moan.

'Well, we shall all miss you quite as much as you will miss us,' said the master. 'You are the Nestor of the School now, are you not?'

'Yes, ever since East left,' answered Tom.

'By the bye, have you heard from him?'

'Yes, I had a letter in February, just before he started for India to join his regiment.'

'He will make a capital officer.'

'Ay, won't he!' said Tom, brightening; 'no fellow could handle boys better, and I suppose soldiers are very like boys. And he'll never tell them to go where he won't go himself. No mistake about that—a braver fellow never walked.'

'His year in the sixth will have taught him a good deal that will be useful to him now.'

'So it will,' said Tom, staring into the fire. 'Poor dear Harry,' he went on, 'how well I remember the day we were put out of the twenty. How he rose to the situation, and burnt his cigar-cases, and gave away his pistols, and pondered on the constitutional authority of the sixth, and his new duties to the Doctor, and the fifth-form, and the fags. Ay, and no fellow ever acted up to them better, though he was always a people's man—for the fags, and against constituted authorities. He couldn't help that, you know. I'm sure the Doctor must have liked him?' said Tom, looking up inquiringly.

'The Doctor sees the good in every one, and appreciates it,' said the master, dogmatically; 'but I hope East will get a good colonel. He won't do if he can't respect those above him. How long it took him, even here, to learn the lesson of obeying.'

'Well, I wish I were alongside of him,' said Tom. 'If I can't be at Rugby, I want to be at work in the world, and not dawdling away three years at Oxford.'

'What do you mean by "at work in the world"?' said the master, pausing with his lips close to his saucerful of tea, and peering at Tom over it.

'Well, I mean real work; one's profession; whatever one will have really to do, and make one's living by. I want to be doing some real good, feeling that I am not only at play in the world,' answered Tom, rather puzzled to find out himself what he really did mean.

'You are mixing up two very different things in your head, I think, Brown,' said the master, putting down the empty saucer, 'and you ought to get clear about them. You talk of "working to get your living," and "doing some real good in the world," in the same breath. Now, you may be getting a very good living in a profession, and yet doing no good at all in the world, but quite the contrary, at the same time. Keep the latter before you as your one object, and you will be right, whether you make a living or not; but if you dwell on the other, you'll very likely drop into mere money-making, and let the world take care of itself for good or evil. Don't be in a hurry about finding your work in the world for yourself; you are not old enough to judge for yourself yet; but just look about you in the place you find yourself in, and try to make things a little better and honester there. You'll find plenty to keep your hand in at Oxford, or wherever else you go. And don't be led away to think this part of the world important and that unimportant. Every corner of the world is important. No man knows whether this part or that is most so, but every man may do some honest work in his own corner.' And then the good man went on to talk wisely to Tom of the sort of work which he might take up as an undergraduate; and warned him of the prevalent University sins, and explained to him the many and great differences between University and School life; till the twilight changed into darkness, and they heard the truant servants stealing in by the back entrance.

'I wonder where Arthur can be,' said Tom at last, looking at his watch; 'why, it's nearly half-past nine already.'

'Oh, he is comfortably at supper with the eleven, forgetful of his oldest friends,' said the master. 'Nothing has given me greater pleasure,' he went on, 'than your friendship for him; it has been the making of you both.'

'Of me, at any rate,' answered Tom; 'I should never have been here now but for him. It was the luckiest chance in the world that sent him to Rugby, and made him my chum.'

'Why do you talk of lucky chances?' said the master; 'I don't know that there are any such things in the world; at any rate, there was neither luck nor chance in that matter.'

Tom looked at him inquiringly, and he went on. 'Do you remember when the Doctor lectured you and East at the end of one half-year, when you were in the shell, and had been getting into all sorts of scrapes?'

'Yes, well enough,' said Tom; 'it was the half-year before Arthur came.'

'Exactly so,' answered the master. 'Now, I was with him a few minutes afterwards, and he was in great distress about you two. And, after some talk, we both agreed that you in particular wanted some object in the school beyond games and mischief; for it was quite clear that you never would make the regular school work your first object. And so the Doctor, at the beginning of the next half-year, looked out the best of the new boys, and separated you and East, and put the young boy into your study, in the hope that when you had somebody to lean on you, you would begin to stand a little steadier yourself, and get manliness and thoughtfulness. And I can assure you he has watched the experiment ever since with great satisfaction. Ah! not one of you boys will ever know the anxiety you have given him, or the care with which he has watched over every step in your school lives.'

Up to this time, Tom had never wholly given in to, or understood the Doctor. At first he

had thoroughly feared him. For some years, as I have tried to show, he had learnt to regard him with love and respect, and to think him a very great and wise and good man. But, as regarded his own position in the School, of which he was no little proud, Tom had no idea of giving any one credit for it but himself; and, truth to tell, was a very self-conceited young gentleman on the subject. He was wont to boast that he had fought his own way fairly up the School, and had never made up to, or been taken up by any big fellow or master, and that it was now quite a different place from what it was when he first came. And, indeed, though he didn't exactly boast of it, yet in his secret soul he did to a great extent believe, that the great reform in the School had been owing quite as much to himself as to any one else. Arthur, he acknowledged, had done him good, and taught him a good deal, so had other boys in different ways, but they had not had the same means of influence on the School in general; and as for the Doctor, why, he was a splendid master, but every one knew that masters could do very little out of school hours. In short, he felt on terms of equality with his chief, so far as the social state of the School was concerned, and thought that the Doctor would find it no easy matter to get on without him. Moreover, his School Toryism was still strong, and he looked still with some jealousy on the Doctor, as somewhat of a fanatic in the matter of change; and thought it very desirable for the School that he should have some wise person (such as himself) to look sharply after vested School-rights, and see that nothing was done to the injury of the republic without due protest.

TOM AND THE MASTER'S SURVEY OF THE COOK'S CUPBOARD

It was a new light to him to find, that, besides teaching the sixth, and governing and guiding the whole School, editing classics, and writing histories, the great Head-master had found time in those busy years to watch over the career, even of him, Tom Brown, and his particular friends,—and, no doubt, of fifty other

boys at the same time; and all this without taking the least credit to himself, or seeming to know, or let any one else know, that he ever thought particularly of any boy at all.

However, the Doctor's victory was complete from that moment over Tom Brown at any rate. He gave way at all points, and the enemy marched right over him, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, and the land transport corps, and the camp followers. It had taken eight long years to do it, but now it was done thoroughly, and there wasn't a corner of him left which didn't believe in the Doctor. Had he returned to School again, and the Doctor begun the half-year by abolishing fagging, and football, and the Saturday half-holiday, or all or any of the most cherished School institutions, Tom would have supported him with the blindest faith. And so, after a half confession of his previous shortcomings, and sorrowful adieus to his tutor, from whom he received two beautifully bound volumes of the Doctor's Sermons, as a parting present, he marched down to the School-house, a hero-worshipper, who would have satisfied the soul of Thomas Carlyle himself.

There he found the eleven at high jinks after supper, Jack Raggles shouting comic songs, and performing feats of strength; and was greeted by a chorus of mingled remonstrance at his desertion, and joy at his reappearance. And falling in with the humour of the evening, he was soon as great a boy as all the rest; and at ten o'clock was chaired round the quadrangle, on one of the hall benches borne aloft by the eleven, shouting in chorus, 'For he's a jolly good fellow,' while old Thomas, in a melting mood, and the other School-house servants, stood looking on.

And the next morning after breakfast he squared up all the cricketing accounts, went round to his tradesmen and other acquaintance, and said his hearty good-byes; and by twelve o'clock was in the train, and away for London, no longer a school-boy, and divided in his thoughts between hero-worship, honest regrets over the long stage of his life which was now slipping out of sight behind him, and hopes and resolves for the next stage upon which he was entering with all the confidence of a young traveller.

## CHAPTER IX

### FINIS

> 'Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
> Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
> Behold, I dream a dream of good,
> And mingle all the world with thee.'
>
> TENNYSON.

In the summer of 1842, our hero stopped once again at the well-known station; and, leaving his bag and fishing-rod with a porter, walked slowly and sadly up towards the town. It was now July. He had rushed away from Oxford the moment that term w:s over, for a fishing ramble in Scotland with two college friends, and had been for three weeks living on oatcake, mutton-hams, and whiskey, in the wildest parts of Skye. They had descended one sultry evening on the little inn at Kyle Rhea ferry; and while Tom and another of the party put their tackle together and began exploring the stream for a sea-trout for supper, the third strolled into the house to arrange for their entertainment. Presently he came out in a loose blouse and slippers, a short pipe in his mouth, and an old newspaper in his hand, and threw himself on the heathery scrub which met the shingle, within easy hail of the fishermen. There he lay, the picture of free-and-easy, loafing, hand-to-mouth young England, 'improving his mind,' as he

shouted to them, by the perusal of the fortnight-old weekly paper, soiled with the marks of toddy-glasses and tobacco-ashes, the legacy of the last traveller, which he had hunted out from the kitchen of the little hostelry, and, being a youth of a communicative turn of mind, began imparting the contents to the fishermen as he went on.

'What a bother they are making about these wretched Corn-laws; here's three or four columns full of nothing but sliding-scales and fixed duties —Hang this tobacco, it's always going out!—Ah, here's something better—a splendid match between Kent and England, Brown! Kent winning by three wickets. Felix fifty-six runs without a chance, and not out!'

Tom, intent on a fish which had risen at him twice, answered only with a grunt.

'Anything about the Goodwood?' called out the third man.

'Rory O'More drawn. Butterfly colt amiss,' shouted the student.

'Just my luck,' grumbled the inquirer, jerking his flies off the water, and throwing again with a heavy sullen splash, and frightening Tom's fish.

'I say, can't you throw lighter over there? we ain't fishing for grampuses,' shouted Tom across the stream.

'Hullo, Brown! here's something for you,' called out the reading man next moment. 'Why, your old master, Arnold of Rugby, is dead.'

Tom's hand stopped half-way in his cast, and his line and flies went all tangling round and round his rod; you might have knocked him over with a feather. Neither of his companions took any notice of him, luckily; and with a violent effort he set to work mechanically to disentangle his line. He felt completely carried off his moral and intellectual legs, as if he had lost his standing-point in the invisible world. Besides which, the deep loving loyalty which he felt for his old leader made the shock intensely painful. It was the first great wrench of his life, the first gap which the angel Death had made in his circle, and he felt numbed, and beaten down, and spiritless. Well, well! I believe it was good for him and for many others in like case; who had to learn by that loss, that the soul of man cannot stand or lean upon any human prop, however strong, and wise, and good; but that He upon whom alone it can stand and lean will knock away all such props in His own wise and merciful way, until there is no ground or stay left but Himself, the Rock of Ages, upon whom alone a sure foundation for every soul of man is laid.

As he wearily laboured at his line, the thought struck him, 'It may be all false, a mere newspaper lie,' and he strode up to the recumbent smoker.

'Let me look at the paper,' said he.

'Nothing else in it,' answered the other, handing it up to him listlessly. 'Hullo, Brown! what's the matter, old fellow—ain't you well?'

'Where is it?' said Tom, turning over the leaves, his hands trembling, and his eyes swimming, so that he could not read.

'What? What are you looking for?' said his friend, jumping up and looking over his shoulder.

'That—about Arnold,' said Tom.

'Oh, here,' said the other, putting his finger on the paragraph. Tom read it over and over again; there could be no mistake of identity, though the account was short enough.

'Thank you,' said he at last, dropping the paper. 'I shall go for a walk: don't you and Herbert wait supper for me.' And away he strode, up over the moor at the back of the house, to be alone, and master his grief if possible.

His friend looked after him, sympathizing and wondering, and, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, walked over to Herbert. After a short parley, they walked together up to the house.

'I'm afraid that confounded newspaper has spoiled Brown's fun for this trip.'

'How odd that he should be so fond of his old master,' said Herbert. Yet they also were both public-school men.

The two, however, notwithstanding Tom's prohibition, waited supper for him, and had everything ready when he came back some half an hour afterwards. But he could not join in their cheerful talk, and the party was soon silent, notwithstanding the efforts of all three. One thing only had Tom resolved, and that was, that he couldn't stay in Scotland any longer; he felt an irresistible longing to get to Rugby, and then home, and soon broke it to the others, who had too much tact to oppose.

So by daylight the next morning he was marching through Ross-shire, and in the evening hit the Caledonian canal, took the next steamer, and travelled as fast as boat and railway could carry him to the Rugby station.

As he walked up to the town, he felt shy and afraid of being seen, and took the back streets; why, he didn't know, but he followed his instinct. At the School-gates he made a dead pause; there was not a soul in the quadrangle—all was lonely, and silent, and sad. So with another effort he strode through the quadrangle, and into the School-house offices.

He found the little matron in her room in deep mourning; shook her hand, tried to talk, and moved nervously about: she was evidently thinking of the same subject as he, but he couldn't begin talking.

'Where shall I find Thomas?' said he at last, getting desperate.

'In the servants' hall, I think, sir. But won't you take anything?' said the matron, looking rather disappointed.

'No, thank you,' said he, and strode off again to find the old Verger, who was sitting in his little den as of old puzzling over hieroglyphics.

He looked up through his spectacles, as Tom seized his hand and wrung it.

'Ah! you've heard all about it, sir, I see,' said he.

Tom nodded, and then sat down on the shoe-board, while the old man told his tale, and wiped his spectacles, and fairly flowed over with quaint, homely, honest sorrow.

By the time he had done, Tom felt much better.

'Where is he buried, Thomas?' said he at last.

'Under the altar in the chapel, sir,' answered Thomas. 'You'd like to have the key, I dare say.'

'Thank you, Thomas—yes, I should very much.' And the old man fumbled among his

TOM'S VISIT TO THE TOMB OF DR. ARNOLD

bunch, and then got up, as though he would go with him; but after a few steps stopped short, and said, 'Perhaps you'd like to go by yourself, sir?'

Tom nodded, and the bunch of keys were handed to him, with an injunction to be sure and lock the door after him, and bring them back before eight o'clock.

He walked quickly through the quadrangle and out into the close. The longing which had been upon him and driven him thus far, like the gad-fly in the Greek legends, giving him no rest in mind or body, seemed all of a sudden not to be satisfied, but to shrivel up, and pall. 'Why should I go on? It's no use,' he thought, and threw himself at full length on the turf, and looked vaguely and listlessly at all the well-known objects. There were a few of the town boys playing cricket, their wicket pitched on the best piece in the middle of the big-side ground, a sin about equal to sacrilege in the eyes of a captain of the eleven. He was very nearly getting up to go and send them off. 'Pshaw! they won't remember me. They've more right there than I,' he muttered. And the thought that his sceptre had departed, and his mark was wearing out, came home to him for the first time, and bitterly enough. He was lying on the very spot where the fights came off; where he himself had fought six years ago his first and last battle. He conjured up the scene till he could almost hear the shouts of the ring, and East's whisper in his ear; and looking across the close to the Doctor's private door, half expected to see it open, and the tall figure in cap and gown come striding under the elm-trees towards him.

No, no! that sight could never be seen again. There was no flag flying on the round tower; the School-house windows were all shuttered up; and when the flag went up again, and the shutters came down, it would be to welcome a stranger. All that was left on earth of him whom he had honoured, was lying cold and still under the chapel floor. He would go in and see the place once more, and then leave it once for all. New men and new methods might do for other people; let those who would, worship the rising star; he at least would be faithful to the sun which had set. And so he got up, and walked to the chapel-door and unlocked it, fancying himself the only mourner in all the broad land, and feeding on his own selfish sorrow.

He passed through the vestibule, and then paused for a moment to glance over the empty benches. His heart was still proud and high, and he walked up to the seat which he had last occupied as a sixth-form boy, and sat himself down there to collect his thoughts.

And, truth to tell, they needed collecting and setting in order not a little. The memories of eight years were all dancing through his brain, and carrying him about whither they would; while, beneath them all, his heart was throbbing with the dull sense of a loss that could never be made up to him. The rays of the evening sun came solemnly through the painted windows above his head, and fell in gorgeous colours on the opposite wall, and the perfect stillness soothed his spirit by little and little. And he turned to the pulpit, and looked at it, and then, leaning forward with his head on his hands, groaned aloud. 'If he could only have seen the Doctor again for one five minutes,—have told him all that was in his heart, what he owed to him, how he loved and reverenced him, and would by God's help follow his steps in life and death,—he could have borne it all without a murmur. But that he should have gone away for ever without knowing it all, was too much to bear.'——'But am I sure that he does not know it all?'—the thought made him start. 'May he not even now be near me, in this very chapel? If he be, am I sorrowing as he would have me sorrow—as I should wish to have sorrowed when I shall meet him again?'

He raised himself up and looked round; and after a minute rose and walked humbly down to the lowest bench, and sat down on the very seat which he had occupied on his first Sunday at Rugby. And then the old memories rushed back again, but softened and subdued, and soothing him as he let himself be carried away by them. And he looked up at the great painted window above the altar, and remembered how when a little boy he used to try not to look through it at the elm-trees and the rooks, before the painted glass came—and the subscription for the painted glass, and the letter he wrote home for money to give to it. And there, down below, was the very name of the boy who sat on his right hand on that first day, scratched rudely in the oak panelling.

And then came the thought of all his old school-fellows; and form after form of boys, nobler, and braver, and purer than he, rose up and seemed to rebuke him. Could he not think of them, and what they had felt and were feeling, they who had honoured and loved from the first the man whom he had taken years to know and love? Could he not think of those yet dearer to him who was gone, who bore his name and shared his blood, and were now without a husband or a father? Then the grief which he began to share with others became gentle and holy, and he rose up once more, and walked up the steps to the altar; and while the tears flowed freely down his cheeks, knelt down humbly and hopefully, to lay down there his share of a burden which had proved itself too heavy for him to bear in his own strength.

Here let us leave him—where better could we leave him, than at the altar, before which he had first caught a glimpse of the glory of his birthright, and felt the drawing of the bond which links all living souls together in one brotherhood—at the grave beneath the altar of him who had opened his eyes to see that glory, and softened his heart till it could feel that bond?

And let us not be hard on him, if at that

moment his soul is fuller of the tomb and him who lies there, than of the altar and Him of whom it speaks. Such stages have to be gone through, I believe, by all young and brave souls, who must win their way through hero-worship to the worship of Him who is the King and Lord of heroes. For it is only through our mysterious human relationships,—through the love and tenderness and purity of mothers, and sisters, and wives,—through the strength and courage and wisdom of fathers, and brothers, and teachers,—that we can come to the knowledge of Him in whom alone the love, and the tenderness, and the purity, and the strength, and the courage, and the wisdom of all these dwell for ever and ever in perfect fulness.

THE END

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