THE FLOWER THAT FELL AMONG THORNS

By Helen Frances Huntington.

"UNK' PETER, tell me a story 'bout a lil' girl," coaxed the child with the beautiful eyes, that reminded M'sieu of other eyes forever hidden from the world's gaze, behind the walls of a convent not a day's journey from the white wilderness of Manitoba.

Peter uncrossed his buckskinned knees and looked down at the flower-soft-face with its curved, infantile contour, and smiled reminiscently. "I dunno any," he answered simply.

"Didn't you ever know any lil' girl 'cept me, Unk' Peter?"

"Yes," said Peter, letting his uninjured hand trail across the crisply-curling golden head. "Yes, one time I knew another lil' girl."

"Was she like me, Unk' Peter?"

"Yes. Jest like you—same great, shiney brown eyes, same soft lil smile, an' curly hair like dark gold, only mebbe she was a little bigger'n you."

"Did she have a doll an' things?"

"I 'spect she did, honey. I reely don't know about that," said Peter apologetically. "I didn't pay much 'tention to such things."

"Course she had dolls," murmured the child drowsily, with a little gurgle of laughter that died away in a long sleepy sigh. Her head leaned closer till a shower of crinkled gold rippled over the old buckskins and the horny knuckles of the trapper's hand dented the rose of her cheek.

M'sieu' replenished the sinking flames which sent up a spume of rosy heat, licked the resinous bark of the newly-added log, and sang on as before, the song of a lonely hearth in the snow-bound wilderness of the far north. Without the vast, solemn stillness of uninhabited forests and ice-chained river, the starry, tranquil night and the bitter, bitter cold of midwinter within four stark walls of a trapper's hut, warmth, light and the rythmic breathing of a sleeping child.

"Lucky I chanced across you just now," said M'sieu' in a voice that made Peter trembled with strange gladness, for he had not heard that soft inflection of refinement for five years. "I will bandage that broken arm so that it will heal straight as ever. Where shall I look for a bit of linen?"

Peter thought at last of a white shirt, the remnant of gala days, which lay at the bottom of his trunk. M'sieu' lifted the little sleeper gently, placed her on the bed and drew the coarse blankets closely about her throat and shoulders. Then he dragged the clumsy old box toward the blazing hearth and pushed back its creaking hinges. Within lay Peter's ancient suit of frieze-and-fur carefully folded and camphored, under that two old books, a sandal-box still faintly redolent of the perfumed east, and a set of chessmen huddled in a cordless box. Below that, bereft of its tissue wrappings, was a roll of soft, webby stuff which uncurled as he lifted it, and rippled down in airy masses, an exquisite cloud of diaphanous gauze, with little silken rosebuds inwrought throughout its fairy meshes.

Had M'sieu' discovered a jeweled crown he would not have been more astonished than he was at the sight of that milliner's confection in Peter's old wooden box. He lookeod over his shoulder at the trapper, whose uninjured hand was raised as if to shield his eyes from the glare that enveloped the kneeling figure, his patient, sensitive lips curved in a smile that showed how sweet a spirit that rough breast harbored.

M'sieu' let the gauzy web slip through his fingers and got out the shirt. He tore the yellow linen into strips, which he subsequently rolled into tight little wads, Peter watching him meantime under his cupped hand; but not a word passed between them until M'sieu' had fastened the ends of the bandage securely in place and drawn the coarse sleeve down over the wounded arm.

"That will do the work," said the stranger, cheerfully, refolding the diminished shirt and placing it in the trunk.

"Thank you. Will you please take out the scarf, M'sieu'?" Peter asked before the lid fell into place. "I'd like to look at it. Please hang it here where the light strikes it plain. Thank you."

"Tell me about it," said M'sieu' gently.

"Did you ever know the love of a woman?" Peter asked in a voice of singular sweetness.

A light leaped into M'sieu's eyes, a great sweetness and radiance that answered what his lips could not or would not say.

"Have you ever heard 'bout Tantere, M'sieu'? No? Well, it was a very good place when I went there 10 years ago for to work in the big lumber camp. The people were mostly Swedes and Danes who worked very hard and lived close to save moneys to go back to the old country. The wimmen was big, strong, white-faced, red-fisted, with no good looks, but plenty of bone and muscle. We never thought much about their homely looks until she come—the flower that fell among thorns.

"The coach come up from Saint Marque twice a month with letters an' provisions an' sometimes a couple of raw emigrants what had heard 'bout the steady work at Tantere. One night it fetched two wimmen, but nobody didn't see the other—nobody never seen anything while she was near. M'sieu', it was like as if you'd find a great red rose in the dry desert. No man could pass her without wantin' to pluck her away from harm an' shelterin' her with his own life. Like a flower, M'sieu', what fell among thorns, for she made them big, coarse, rough dull wimmen look more dull and rough an' homely, like weeds what you want to fling out of her way.

"Well, M'sieu', she come to church that fust Sunday in a lil white dress an' that fishu wavin' across her shoulders like it had dropped from the sky, so light an' soft an' fine—an' a lil gold cross on her bosom. The minister, he see that an', being Protestant, didn't say nothing 'bout joinin' his church, but he shook hands with her and told her he was glad to see her at the house of prayer. Then she told him that she come to Tantere because she heard that it was a very nice, quiet place, an' she wanted to live quiet for a lil while, an' wouldn't he please tell her where she could find a lil house jest far 'nough away from the lumber camp so's the noise wouldn't disturb her?

"M'sieu', every word of that lil bird-like voice fell on my heart like pearls." Peter leaned forward and touched the diaphanous web beside him, which seemed to absorb and purify the fire-glow as the fine white mists of early summer softens and radiates the sun's light.

"So she found a lil house at the edge of the settlement where nobody don't ever have no business to go, an' she lived there with her maid, Celeste, a strange, dark, silent woman, what never spoke to nobody. But b'm'b the young men got to goin' that way to work an' when Mam-zelle met them she would always speak very pleasant, but she never ask nobody to come an' see her. Yet them young men left off visitin' the girls like they uster do 'fore Mam-zelle come, when we would sit in their big kitchens, singin' an' playin' de fiddle every Sunday and Wednesday night. They like better to sit in Mam-zelle's lil house an' talk an' listen to her. The wimmen got mad an' sullen by'm'by, when their beaux forgot them, an' got to hate Mam-zelle so fierce they never even look at her when she come to the settlement for to buy her provisions, but she didn't take no notice, she just go on her way as quiet an' gentle as if all the world been at peace with her. She was always alone, for that big, dark, silent woman never went out of the house, 'cept once in a while, when she'd walk up an' down the lonely road where nobody didn't ever come.

"One night when I stopped to see Mam'zelle Lars Knutsen, a great big Dane what uster go oftenest to see Mam'zelle, stood by the gate talkin' with Lena Bogg, a Swede girl what he had been keepin' company with for two years steady, Lena looked pale an' mad, an' by'mby she sept up to the poarch an' call Mam'zelle for to come out, an' when Mam'zelle answer the dark woman followed her out quick, like she was afraid something might happen.

"Lena looked at Mam'zelle like she wanted to strike her dead, but Mam'zelle she only said 'Bon soir, Miss Lena, won't you come in?'

"'No, I won't,' the other woman answered. 'I wouldn't put my foot where your has been for all the moneys in the world, you Jezebel!'

"The rose of Mam'zelle's cheek deepened like it had been scorched with fire, an' she shrank back toward the dark woman, who put her hand on her shoulder and kept it there.

"'You have bewitched all the men with your bold enchantments,' said Lena in a loud, rough voice. 'Before you come we all had our sweethearts, and now none of them even look at us. Tell me this, do you love Lars Knutsen?'

"Mam'zelle toss back her head like she wanted to answer sharp, but after a minute she just said, 'No, I do not love him.'

"Lena flung back her head an' laughed very loud. 'You hear that, Lars Knutsen,' she mocked. 'She don't love you any more than she loves all other men what crawl at her feet.'

"Lars he looked at the white, dull face of the girl he had been courtin' steady for two years, an' swore by his soul an' the soul of all his kind that he did not love her an' would not so long as the sun shine an' the wind blow, an' that he did love Mam'zelle an' would always forever.

"Lena put her big, course hand over her breast an' ketched her breath very hard like she was bad hurt, then she looked at Mam'zelle an' said, 'Hell has a place for such as you, sorceress!' then before you could draw a breath she ran up to the dark woman and tore off her wig an' little black cape an' there stood, shaven an' thin an' flat-chested, for all the world like a man. 'Look!' Lena screamed. 'Look at Mam'zelle's fine lover masqueradin' in woman's clothes! Now will you believe me, Lars Knutsen?'

"Lars grabbed Mam'zelle's hand and pulled her toward him. 'You tell me the truth, by God, or I'll kill you!' he cried in a voice that what 'most choked him. 'Is he your lover?'

"Mam'zelle just looked at him steady in the eyes for what time it takes to draw your breath three times, an' everything was so still you could hear her breath come an' go like the wind on a still night, then she said, 'Yes, it is true. This man is my lover. Now go, all of you. Leave me forever.'

"Lars laughed a big, bad, fiendish laugh, and struck out one mad blow that hit the other man over the temple, an' with that a fight began, such as you see when wild beasts meet, a fight so terrible, yet so short, that it was over before you could step between them, an' the strange man fell like a stone at Mam'zelle's feet.

"Yes, M'sieu,' he was dead. I tried to find one breath of life, but his heart was still. When Mam'zelle discovered the truth she just give one lil pitiful cry an' stretched out her arms to me: 'Peter, Peter, my heart is broken. Help me.'

"M'sieu', that lil cry still rings in my heart, an' when I shut my eyes I see her just like she stood in the soft summer dusk, all in white, with her arms stretched out to me an' a look of death in her great brown eyes. I don't remember much more until we stood alone in the dark forest beside the open grave when she knelt down before his coffin and threw back the cover from the dead man's shoulder an' I saw, for the first time, the death mark of the white plague—the deep, glistening snow-white stain of a leper!

"'Peter,' said she, between great tearless sobs, 'I know God will forgive me for my deception. He was my husband an' I could not let him be taken away to die without me in the leper colony. They would not take me for the sake of my child, so I stole away with him to this lonely place where I believed his presence would never harm nobody, where I could be with him to the last. May God forgive that girl for her heartless cruelty—I never can.'

"Then M'sieu', she broke down an' cried, cried like I never seen any woman cry before, not loud or wild but pitiful, without hope or desire. Me, M'sieu', I couldn't speak one word even when my heart was breaking for her. I just held her in my arm while she thanked me for bein' so true a friend to her—she told me that if she ever needed me she would send for me."

'And did she?' asked M'sieu', very softly.

Peter nodded toward the sleeping child. "Two years ago when she died in the convent she sent Suzanne to me, 'to her truest friend,' was what her letter said, 'an' the only one what knew the secret of her heart.' She is as like her mother as flesh and blood can be," said Peter in a voice of infinite tenderness, "but I don't need nobody to remember her by, for her face is graven on my heart just like she looked when she turned 'round to wave her last good-bye on the broad, dusty road to Saint Marque, so white an' lovely an' sorrowful. What M'sieu's blood-taint in Suzanne? Oh, no, I ain't 'fraid of that. God will be good to her child."

Peter's voice died away in an almost impalpable sigh and for many moments M'sieu' seemed lost in thought, for his heart was with Peter's on the white, lonely road leading to Saint Marque, where she had passed out of his sight and life forever. He, too, had known a love so pure as to be not unworthy of the angels.

The little girl stirred in her sleep and put out one rosy, dimpled hand. M'sieu' stopped suddenly and laid his lips upon it as gently as one would touch the most sacred thing on earth. "God bless her," he murmured under his breath.

"Un K' Peter, Tell Me a Stor y 'bout a Li'l Girl."

Woodmen's Fight With a Bear.

From the Eugene Guard.

On Wednesday George Willoughby and Elmer Lee, timber cruisers, while in the woods about four miles west of J. D. Palmer's ranch on Brumbaugh creek, found a hollow log which seemed to be inhabited. On looking in they found Mr. Bruin at home. Willoughby wanted to leave him alone, but Lee wanted to kill him.

Upon careful examination the entrance was found to be so large Mr. Bruin could get out easily, so Willoughby watched the bear while Lee cut some logs from a fallen tree, and placing them in such a way as to partially fill the entrance, he drove some stakes to hold them there and partially fill the two smaller side openings.

Two axes, the only weapons at hand, weighing about one pound each and carried in their belts, were made ready for use. Mr. Lee opened the fight by jabbing bruin with the compass staff. Then a rush was made for the main entrance, where the bear received a blow from the axe. This only angered him and he ran his big feet out through the bark and slivers in a way that made his opponents feel anxious. He would gnash his teeth and stir up such a dust they could not see him, and thus the battle went on until Bruin threw himself on his back, biting and clawing at the small openings, thrusting his head out far enough so that Mr. Lee was able to deal him a blow between the ear and eye. Bruin turned, pulling the axe from Lee's hand and landing it in the nest behind the bear, thus leaving them with but one axe and the compass staff to fight the bear with.

Willoughby then proposed giving up the battle, but Lee had to have his axe, and the only way to get it was to kill Mr. Bear, so the fight continued, Bruin getting more enraged at every turn.

Finally he started out, and Lee, seeing the advantage, let him come until he was well out of the tree, and then called to his partner, who was instantly on the spot and dealt him a blow full in the face, which ended the conflict. The bear proved to be one of the largest the two men had ever seen.

ITALIAN MYSTERY RECALLS THE CRIMES OF THE BORGIAS

(By Journal Staff Correspondent.)

NAPLES, Aug. 4.—All Italy, the land of romance is discussing a tragic mystery which recalls in many of its details the crimes of the Borgias. Murder, intrigue and avarice are the ingredients which go to make up this choice tit-bit of gossip and the victims are an aged and wealthy duke, his wife and a maid servant. True to the canons of mediaeval romance, the villians of the piece are a handsome monk, a beautiful countess and the duke's valet.

On one of the most beautiful hills near Naples, that of the Vomero, overlooking the bay and the surrounding country and set about with magnificent chestnut trees nestles the Villa Lydia. Here lived for many years Don Alfredo di Montfort d'Aquino Pico, Duke of Laurito, and his wife. They were known to all the country people as "The Lovers," so great was the affection for each other displayed by the old couple. The Montfort family is very old and aristocratic, having come to Italy during the Bourbon days in France. The autumn of 1907 was fatal to the last duke of his line, who, at 66 years of age, was still robust and youthful both in body and mind. With the falling of the leaves came the breaking up of his home and life. The duchess, until then strong and active, complained of illness one morning and a couple of days after she was dead.

The household consisted of a maid, a valet and butler, a cook and a few unimportant servants. Just after the funeral and before any suspicion had arisen, the maid complained in the same way as her mistress and like her died within a few hours. The duke, however, now alone in the hands of his household, whom he trusted, saw nothing abnormal, and it was not many days before he, too—heartbroken over the death of his wife, it was given out—fell ill and died. It began to be whispered—probably the story was circulated by those interested in cheapening its value—that the delicious Villa Lydia, which seemed the home of peace and tranquillity, had been "overlooked," that it was affected by the "evil eye," that it had become the home of malign spirits, and that people not of this world had been seen moving about in the house and garden. To inspire dread of this kind in the minds of the superstitious people about was not difficult and the Villa Lydia was studiously avoided.

In due time, the heirs, who lived mostly in Paris, and the duke's favorite niece, who had a house in Naples, and was not informed of her uncle's illness until he was too far gone to speak, ordered their lawyers to make an inventory to facilitate the partition of the estate, as they knew he kept rather large sums in cash and stocks and bonds in the house, while the duchess had quantities of most valuable old and modern jewelry, and the collection of pictures and objects of art represented a large sum of money. The lawyers arrived at the villa, but made no inventory, for there was nothing to catalogue. The house had been stripped of all valuables and it was learned that after the death of the duke only the valet, Salvatore Sicliiani, and a monk known as Fra Valeriano, both of whom had enjoyed the confidence of the duke, had lived there, but the heirs who were all rich and didn't care for the publicity of an investigation, decided unanimously to let the matter drop, although it was considered more than suspicious that not one of the duke's family had been called in time to see him alive.

Meanwhile Naples society had received a most welcome addition in the person of the young, charming and wealthy Countess Vincenzina Ciura of Taranto, whose husband, a large landowner, visited her at short intervals. Her father had been a senator and an author, besides fighting for the liberty of the Naples provinces, so that the countess was received with open arms and without question. She lived in a sumptuous apartment with her two pretty little children and received her friends frequently. The most regular of her visitors was Fra Valeriano, and soon the countess and the monk became the subjects of gossip, as the monk was young, elegant and handsome and the lady also youthful and attractive.

Thus the matter stood, when rumors of something wrong reached the police, and as the chief of police had been a friend of the duke, he took the matter up personally and at last, after shadowing the monk for a long time he found that Fra Valeriano had pawned a large quantity of antique jewels, strings of pearls, diamonds and rubies. About this time the monk got wind of the police investigations and disappeared, leaving absolutely no trace. The police were distracted, until, thinking over his companions, one suddenly exclaimed: "I have it! He is said to appreciate the charms of women and to find Countess Ciura too fascinating." "Pshaw!" said his companion, "do you want to insinuate that a person like the countess would stoop to a vulgar theft, if not murder? Try again!" "Not at all," said the other, "I do not say she had anything to do with it, but the monk, if he is still in Naples, will not be able to keep away from her long. Watch her door and we have our man."

This was done and in fact before many days had passed Fra Valeriano ran up the stairs and the police watchers heard him tap three times on the door, instead of ringing—evidently a preconcerted signal. When he came out it was the work of a moment to clap on the handcuffs and the bird was in the net.

That night the countess waited in vain for her friend, but she had no suspicion of what had befallen him. She had a few friends to dinner and when the rumors of dread things at the Villa Lydia, which were now public property, were freely discussed, she exclaimed: "It is nonsense to talk of foul play! Don't old people die every day and don't they give away their possessions, even the most precious, and don't the heirs always raise an outcry of rage that they have been defrauded? I see nothing in it but the anger of a few rich people who are always greedy!"

All laughed and applauded, but afterwards it was considered curious that she should hint that certain things were "given" away just at the moment that the monk was saying the same thing in prison, for Fra Valeriano, put to the test, had finished by confessing that he had come into possession of much of the missing property, but insisted that it had been a spontaneous gift from the dying duke. The gay heart of the little countess would probably have beaten considerably faster that evening could she have heard her friend saying that he had lent part of the money to Count Ciura. The net was closing about her, too, but she went to bed with no other feeling than that of disappointment that she had not seen the attractive monk.

Meanwhile it came to the ears of the valet that the monk had been arrested, so, thinking it best to come forward, he gave himself up to the police, stating that he was a victim of the churchman, as the stocks and bonds had been given to him personally by the duke, as a reward for his faithful services, and the monk had taken them from him. The police, now thoroughly on the alert, thought that a search of the Ciura houses at Naples and Taranto simultaneously could do no harm and might be profitable, so the pretty countess was awakened from her dreams of the fascinating monk by a knocking on her door which would have raised the dead.

"Oh, bother," she exclaimed, "now I shall look a fright all day! Really, Maria," she added fretfuly to the servant who entered, "you must teach your friend the milkman to make less noise."

"The milkman," exclaimed the white-faced maid, "altro che! milkman, it is the police!" and in spite of the protests of the lady they entered and made a thorough search of the bedroom. In both the houses were found pawnbrokers' receipts for jewels and works of art, besides pictures and other things easily recognized as having been once the property of the duke. The count was arrested at the Taranto station on his way to Rome and the countess had to bundle into her clothes and exchange the comfort of her warm apartments for the chill of a prison cell. Neither attempted to deny that certain objects were or had been in their hands, but what they most vehemently did deny was that they knew them to be stolen, insisting that Fra Valeriano had given the articles to them.

It was discovered later that the count was in a very bad financial condition, from speculations which had gone wrong and that the countess was never out of funds, although she never hesitated when it was a matter of spending. When the case is tried the valet and monk will be accused of theft if not of a graver crime and the count and countess of receiving stolen goods.

Carolina Tarantula.

From the Anderson Mail.

A. W. Pickens of Garvin township brought to this office Saturday an enormous spider which he called a Carolina tarantula. It was captured by some boys on his plantation.

The spider was an inch and a half long and half an inch broad after having been killed and drawn to the smallest compass. Before being killed it was much larger. The animal was equipped with ten legs, four at the prow and six at the stern, and a particularly wicked looking mouth. The bite of this spider, Mr. Pickens says, is as deadly as that of a rattlesnake.

Some boys on Mr. Pickens' plantation found a peculiar looking hole in the ground and decided to investigate. After digging for a while they came upon an odd looking nest. Prying it open they found the spider inside. The nest was provided with a trap door, which the spider could close after himself as he went into the nest, and would be safe from intruders. Mr. Pickens brought the nest to the city with him. It was a very ingeniously contrived affair and was of almost as much interest as the spider itself.

YOUNGEST SOLDIER OF CIVIL WAR

THERE was more than one "Little Mac" in the federal army during the rebellion, but the hero of this tale was not only the smartest "Mac," but the youngest and most diminutive enlisted member of the army of the United States, and now for more than 25 years by far the youngest comrade in the Grand Army of the Republic and a frequent and a welcome guest at many a reunion of the G. A. R. posts other than his own.

Never has this youthful veteran's recital of the surprising incidents surrounding his remarkable enlistments, filled in with ink now faded, although clearly decipherable—his enlistment and discharge papers—failed to arouse enthusiasm among his older comrades.

In the little Mississippi river town of Fort Madison, Iowa, the site of a former governmental frontier fort and the scene of many a skirmish and more than one full fledged battle between the redskins on one hand and the soldiers and pioneers on the other, there lived in the late '50s a young and patriotic physician, Abel Commins Roberts, a graduate of the University of Michigan, with his wife and two little sons.

In addition to being a physician Dr. Roberts was the editor and publisher of a weekly newspaper, the Fort Madison Plaindealer. He was a strong advocate of a policy of colonizing the negroes and of having the government reimburse the masters of the colonized slaves. He advocated this as the only plan that would make possible the avoidance of war.

However, partisan feeling was strong in those days—so strong, in fact, that a party of Fort Madison men provided themselves with a long, stout rope and called on the editor one night at his home and offered him the unenviable choice of abandoning his policy of advocating negro colonization and of publicly apologizing for some of the pointed things he had said in print or taking a plunge in the father of waters tied to his old Washington hand press with the rope.

But Dr. Roberts had heard that he would be called upon and he had blood in his veins, so after listening quietly to the leaders of the mob he calmly laid his Colt's navy on the porch rail and talked bluntly and forcibly about the constitutional guaranties of free speech and of free press and of his steadfast determination to avail himself of his constitutional rights, mob or no mob. He concluded by inviting them to "come on" if they were still dissatisfied. They refused to accept, and the editor did not change his policy.

Later, when war began and volunteers were called, he forsook both the pen and his advocacy of colonization and became a member of the Twenty-first Missouri infantry volunteers, as surgeon major, and as Major Abel C. Roberts served through the entire period of the war with but one furlough.

In 1863 the Twenty-first was quartered at Memphis, Tenn. Opposite the camp was the home of a then wealthy southern planter, Dr. Wheaton. The surgeon of the Twenty-first found occupation plenty and seldom left his quarters.

One day, however, while all was quiet in camp, a willowy, sweet faced southern girl came rushing from the old mansion of the Wheatons and into the camp of "the enemy." Mary Wheaton was in deep trouble. She had been left alone that day and something had gone wrong. Two of her father's pet pickaninnies had indulged in poison berries and were in the grip of death. The girl hastily told her troubles and asked:

"Is there not some one here who will help me, please? For they sure 'nough dying."

Moved by the girl's distress, Major Roberts volunteered. An emetic was given, a bit of pummelling done, and, after a brief while the tangles were straightened and the children sprawled themselves out in the sun, sadder but wiser Africans.

Major Roberts and Dr. Wheaton grew to be great friends. One day the regimental surgeon betrayed "an anxiety concerning his wife, then ill in the north, to his southern friend, and what did the old planter do but command Major Roberts to send for his little family at once. There was no disregarding such a proffer of hospitality. The open door of a southerner means "Come in," and happy is he who does as bidden.

A few days later saw the little family reunited—the husband in his tent and the little wife and two boys only a stone's throw away, safely lodged in the old planter's home.

In the early morning of December 21, 1863, there arrived in camp just before reveille a youngster who was promptly christened Edward McClellan Roberts, the Edward being for one Captain Edward Blackburn (of the Twenty-first, now dead), and the McClellan for General George B. McClellan, father of New York's present mayor. Thus it was that the "Little Mac, Junior," became a genuine child of the regiment.

Quick to recognize a true soldier in the newcomer, a committee of comrades called at his tent and demanded that he surrender to their wishes. They rolled him up in a blanket and took him to headquarters. There he was regularly enrolled. A soldier at 10 days, Comrade Edward McClellan Roberts! Three years later, as sergeant of his regiment, he was honorably discharged at Fort Morgan, Ala.

Sergeant Roberts' papers are highly prized by him. They bear the genuine signatures of the officers and differ only from other similar papers in the one additional word, "honorary."

For several months prior to the close of the war the Twenty-first Missouri regiment was quartered at Fort Morgan, Ala., on Mobile bay. It was at this post that the 3-year-old sergeant received his discharge.

By the time the regiment had moved to Fort Morgan the lad had become of interest, between 2 and 3 and rather precocious, perhaps, because of his association with his elders. He here found a warm, close chum in Gunner Ephriam Jones.

On one occasion the gunner thought to have a bit of fun at the expense of the juvenile comrade, hoping to give him more "big noise" than he would relish, in close proximity with the coast gun. Accordingly Jones asked the young patriot if he would like to fire the sunset gun for him.

"Sure," replied the lad, in gleeful anticipation. "When may I fire it—now?"

"No, not now; it isn't sunset yet. This big gun, you know, is the one that makes the sun go down. Come around in an hour and we will give the old sun a glorious sendoff."

In an hour "Little Mac Junior," appeared.

Gunner Jones placed the lanyard in the small hands of the lad, held him aloft of the coast defender and commanded, "Fire!"

"Bang!" went the big gun, which had a little extra "food" for the event. The baby gunner dropped the lanyard to applaud the music made by the war dog.

"Didn't it scare you?" asked the regular.

"No, it's better'n a drum. If you are 'fraid of 'er just send for me any time. I'll do it for you."

"Eph" took occasion to be "'frald" quite often thereafter, and "Little Mac, Junior," enjoyed the privilege of helping him out.

For 10 years Sergeant Edward McClellan Roberts has been a resident of New York, devoting his time to writing and literature.

Often has the claim been made for him that he is the youngest soldier of the war of 1860-65 and the youngest member of the G. A. R. been disputed, but a simple recital of the foregoing facts has promptly and easily settled each such dispute.

COMPULSORY ARMY SERVICE IN GREAT BRITAIN ANTICIPATED

SHOULD the bill that has been introduced by Lord Roberts into the British house of lords become a law, Great Britain will abandon her historic policy of an army recruited by voluntary enlistments only, and adopt a plan for military efficiency somewhat similar to that in use in Germany and other nations of continental Europe. The significance of such a change would be great, almost startling, to the rest of the civilized world. Individualism and ideas of individual freedom heretofore have found their stronghold in Britain. Are such ideas to be abandoned because of the needs, defensive or offensive, of a nation that heretofore has placed its reliance chiefly upon its navy? This question is being asked very generally and very earnestly throughout the British empire, while the rest of the civilized world is by no means indifferent to its answer.

Lord Roberts' bill provides that every British subject in the United Kingdom, between the ages of 18 and 30 years, shall be trained to arms. The training is to be normally within four consecutive years, but in exceptional cases it may be from the second to the fifth or the third to the sixth year of the prescribed course. The first year's training will be four months in the infantry and not less than four months in the other branches of the military service. In each of the next four years there must be 15 days' training and attendance upon a course of musketry and drills. Liability to service in case of national danger is to be general.

In proposing this militarism of the nation Lord Roberts apparently is applying the convictions with which he returned to England after ending the South African war. The foremost living soldier of the empire, he has been looked upon as an alarmist because of his frequent and pessimistic utterances about his country's military weakness. But in the face of the showing of Germany's growing naval strength and her well known military power, he has gained support that may force the adoption of his plan. Much as Britons are opposed to compulsory militarism, they are now, it would seem, genuinely alarmed over the prospect that their boasted strength as a fighting nation may not be maintained without the adoption of radical changes.

Lord Roberts asserts that his plan would provide for the nation a million trained soldiers who could be called into action in time of need. The German army has on a peace basis a strength of about 620,000 men, with a total of mobile forces of about 1,760,000. Behind this great army, according to some estimates, there are about 1,500,000 men trained to supply the waste of war. Great Britain, under her present military organization, has at most about 800,000 men, including some 130,000 militia in the United Kingdom and about 337,000 reserve volunteers.

Opponents of Lord Roberts' plan put forward the arguments that not only would the proposed compulsory service be exceedingly distasteful to the people, but it would be enormously expensive. The National Service league, after examining carefully the proposition, claims that the cost would not be more than $20,000,000 additional to the current army estimates. Some other investigators place the increase at about $25,000,000. The league is highly in favor of the plan, and so are military men generally in England. Already, however, the opposition to the plan is formidable. Lord Lucas in the house of lords has characterized it as "costly and unworkable." He condemns it on the ground that it would disorganize labor and would create unmanageable problems of unemployment, besides being ruinous to the regular army and bound to make the military establishment of the empire as costly as the naval. In favor of the plan are many zealous Englishmen of prominence, including the bishops of Exeter, Bath and Wells, who argue that military training would benefit the masses by improving their physical condition and so increasing their efficiency as workmen.

It is proposed to exempt from military service under the plan of Lord Roberts only persons who have held commissions as officers, those who have served as noncommissioned officers or men for not less than three years in the navy or the regular army, those who have served for not less than three years in any police force of the United Kingdom, all sons of widows whose mothers are dependent upon them for support, all ministers of religion, all persons unfit physically or mentally, all persons whom the army council may think it desirable to exempt in the interests of the public service, and all persons unfit by reason of undesirable habits or bad character. Every person exempted or disqualified, however, must pay to the national treasury a sum equal to 1 per cent of his income, should that exceed $200 a year. Any person refusing to comply with these terms is to be refused any office in the service of the crown, be incapable of voting at any parliamentary election and be disqualified for receiving an old-age pension. These provisions seem to include the whole of the population of the United Kingdom under military training, should Lord Roberts' bill become a law.

Probably the strongest argument against the bill, to the British legislators, is that its application would be strongly and obstinately opposed by the public. Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen and Welchmen, it is said, are so unalterably opposed to compulsory military service that they would resist it; in time of peace, by a general revolt. Mr. Haldane, the British secretary of war, is a Scotchman who is opposed to the Roberts plan, and is working to build up the "territorial force" of volunteers provided for under present laws as reserves to the regular army. British faith is chiefly in the navy as a means of national power, and the policy of Dreadnaught building on a large scale, just decided upon, probably will strengthen that reliance. Lord Roberts, in his declarations that the navy alone is not enough for upholding British supremacy, has used the argument that ships of war can be used and are being built rapidly abroad, and his declarations may have had something to do with bringing about the government's decision to add four Dreadnaughts to the number to be completed in the spring of 1912.

Overexertion and Exercise.

From the Youth's Companion.

Since the Marathon run last summer was won by an American, such tests of endurance have been enthusiastically pursued by the youth of the kindred nations. Americans intend to keep this country at the front in future Olympic games. Englishmen are preparing to take away that distinction—training so arduously as to give cause for warnings which their cousins will do well to heed.

The Marathon distance is about 26 miles. At the Olympic it is covered by young men who are supposed to be strong, sound, experienced and directed by experts, who know how to place each stride and get the most out of every muscle. Even so, a Marathon finish is not a pleasing spectacle. It indicates that the contestants have undergone a strain from which they will not soon, if ever, recover.

Medical authorities are agreed that this is the fact. Many go further and declare that just as it harms men to run a long distance, so does it injure growing boys to run a shorter distance if the strain of competition is added. Five of the most eminent physicians and surgeons in England have united in a statement that "school and cross country races exceeding one mile are wholly unsuitable for boys under 19, as the continued strain involved is apt to cause a permanent injury to the heart and other organs."

Some will think that this shows excess of caution. Perhaps it does. At any rate, it shows unselfishness, for the doctors are trying to forestall conditions that in later years they would be called upon to treat. If they are willing to make that sacrifice for what they conceive to be the general good, surely any youth can afford for his own good to give up the hope of a momentary fame.

The Marathon craze has served one useful purpose, however, in that it has led to a thorough reexamination of large and important questions. So far in Great Britain the conservatives seem to have triumphed. Even the setting up drill of the British army has of late been revised with a view to eliminating all movements that put undue strain upon the heart. No one can go far wrong if he follows that precedent.

Exercise is necessary and wholesome. Excessive exercise, the overexertion that leads to collapse or invites accident or brings on fatigue which is not soon dispelled is always harmful—if not today, tomorrow.