

espied a nook sheltered from the sun's level rays by a steep bank where flowers bloomed, and ferns grew. Here he sat down, unslinging his knapsack, and here it was, also, that he first encountered Small Porges.

## CHAPTER IV

*How Small Porges in looking for a fortune for another, found an Uncle for himself instead*

THE meeting of George Bellew and Small Porges, (as he afterward came to be called), was sudden, precipitate, and wholly unexpected; and it befell on this wise:

Bellew had opened his knap-sack, had fished thence cheese, clasp-knife, and a crusty loaf of bread, and, having exerted himself so far, had fallen a thinking or a dreaming, in his characteristic attitude, i. e.:— on the flat of his back, when he was aware of a crash in the hedge above, and then, of something that hurtled past him, all arms and legs, that rolled over two or three times, and eventually brought up in a sitting posture; and, lifting a lazy head, Bellew observed that it was a boy. He was a very diminutive boy with a round head covered with coppery curls, a boy who stared at Bellew out of a pair of very round, blue eyes, while he tenderly cherished a knee, and an elbow. He had been on the brink of tears for a moment, but meeting Bellew's quiz-



zical gaze, he manfully repressed the weakness, and, lifting the small, and somewhat weather-beaten cap that found a precarious perch at the back of his curly head, he gravely wished Bellew "Good afternoon!"

"Well met, my Lord Chesterfield!" nodded Bellew, returning the salute, "are you hurt?"

"Just a bit — on the elbow; but my name's George."

"Why — so is mine!" said Bellew.

"Though they call me 'Georgy-Porgy.'"

"Of course they do," nodded Bellew, "they used to call me the same, once upon a time, —

Georgy Porgy, pudding and pie  
Kissed the girls, and made them cry,

though I never did anything of the kind, — one doesn't do that sort of thing when one is young, — and wise, that comes later, and brings its own care, and — er — heart-break." Here Bellew sighed, and hacked a piece from the loaf with the clasp-knife. "Are you hungry, Georgy Porgy?" he enquired, glancing up at the boy who had risen, and was removing some of the soil and dust from his small person with his cap.

"Yes I am."

"Then here is bread, and cheese, and bottled stout, — so fall to, good comrade."

"Thank you, but I've got a piece of bread an' jam in my bundle, — "

"Bundle?"

"I dropped it as I came through the hedge, I'll get it," and as he spoke, he turned, and, climbing up the bank, presently came back with a very small bundle that dangled from the end of a very long stick, and seating himself beside Bellew, he proceeded to open it. There, sure enough, was the bread and jam in question, seemingly a little the worse for wear and tear, for Bellew observed various articles adhering to it, amongst other things, a battered pen-knife, and a top. These, however, were readily removed, and Georgy Porgy fell to with excellent appetite.

"And pray," enquired Bellew, after they had munched silently together, some while, "pray where might you be going?"

"I don't know yet," answered Georgy Porgy with a shake of his curls.

"Good again!" exclaimed Bellew, "neither do I."

"Though I've been thinking of Africa," continued his diminutive companion, turning the remains of the bread and jam over and over thoughtfully.



"Africa!" repeated Bellew, staring, "that's quite a goodish step from here."

"Yes," sighed Georgy Porgy, "but, you see, there's gold there, oh, lots of it! they dig it out of the ground with shovels, you know. Old Adam told me all 'bout it; an' it's gold I'm looking for, you see, I'm trying to find a fortune."

"I—er—beg your pardon—?" said Bellew.

"Money, you know," explained Georgy Porgy with a patient sigh, "pounds, an' shillings, an' bank-notes—in a sack if I can get them."

"And what does such a very small Georgy Porgy want so much money for?"

"Well, it's for my Auntie, you know, so she won't have to sell her house, an' go away from Dapplemere. She was telling me, last night, when I was in bed,—she always comes to tuck me up, you know, an' she told me she was 'fraid we'd have to sell Dapplemere an' go to live somewhere else. So I asked why, an' she said 'cause she hadn't any money,' an' 'Oh Georgy!' she said, 'oh Georgy, if we could only find enough money to pay off the—the—'"

"Mortgage?" suggested Bellew, at a venture.

"Yes,—that's it, but how did you know?"

"Never mind how, go on with your tale, Georgy Porgy."

"If—we could only find enough money, or somebody would leave us a fortune,' she said,—an' she was crying too, 'cause I felt a tear fall on me, you know. So this morning I got up, awful' early, an' made myself a bundle on a stick,—like Dick Whittington had when he left home, an' I started off to find a fortune."

"I see," nodded Bellew.

"But I haven't found anything—yet," said Georgy Porgy, with a long sigh, "I s'pose money takes a lot of looking for, doesn't it?"

"Sometimes," Bellew answered. "And do you live alone with your Auntie then, Georgy Porgy?"

"Yes;—most boys live with their mothers, but that's where I'm different, I don't need one 'cause I've got my Auntie Anthea."

"Anthea!" repeated Bellew, thoughtfully. Hereupon they fell silent, Bellew watching the smoke curl up from his pipe into the warm, still air, and Georgy Porgy watching him with very thoughtful eyes, and a somewhat troubled brow, as if turning over some weighty matter in his mind; at last, he spoke:



"Please," said he, with a sudden diffidence, "where do you live?"

"Live," repeated Bellew, smiling, "under my hat,—here, there, and everywhere, which means—nowhere in particular."

"But I—I mean—where is your home?"

"My home," said Bellew, exhaling a great cloud of smoke, "my home lies beyond the 'bounding billow.'"

"That sounds an awful' long way off."

"It is an awful' long way off."

"An' where do you sleep while—while you're here?"

"Anywhere they'll let me. To-night I shall sleep at some inn, I suppose, if I can find one, if not,—under a hedge, or hay-rick."

"Oh!—haven't you got any home of your own, then,—here?"

"No."

"And—you're not going home just yet,—I mean across the 'bounding billow?'"

"Not yet."

"Then—please—" the small boy's voice was suddenly tremulous and eager, and he laid a little, grimy hand upon Bellew's sleeve, "please—if it isn't too much trouble—would you mind coming with me—to—to help me to find the fortune?—you see, you are so very big, an'—Oh!—will you please?"

George Bellew sat up suddenly, and smiled; Bellew's smile was, at all times, wonderfully pleasant to see, at least, the boy thought so.

"Georgy Porgy," said he, "you can just bet your small life, I will,—and there's my hand on it, old chap." Bellew's lips were solemn now, but all the best of his smile seemed, somehow, to have got into his gray eyes. So the big hand clasped the small one, and as they looked at each other, there sprang up a certain understanding that was to be an enduring bond between them.

"I think," said Bellew, as he lay, and puffed at his pipe again, "I think I'll call you Porges, it's shorter, easier, and I think, altogether apt; I'll be Big Porges, and you shall be Small Porges,—what do you say?"

"Yes, it's lots better than Georgy Porgy," nodded the boy. And so Small Porges he became, thenceforth. "But," said he, after a thoughtful pause, "I think, if you don't mind, I'd rather call you—Uncle Porges. You see, Dick Bennet—the black-smith's boy, has three uncles an' I've only got a single aunt,—so, if you don't mind—"

"Uncle Porges it shall be, now and for ever, Amen!" murmured Bellew.

"An' when d'you s'pose we'd better start?"



enquired Small Porges, beginning to re-tie his bundle.

“ Start where, nephew? ”

“ To find the fortune.”

“ Hum! ” said Bellew.

“ If we could manage to find some, — even if it was only a very little, it would cheer her up so.”

“ To be sure it would,” said Bellew, and, sitting up, he pitched loaf, cheese, and clasp-knife back into the knap-sack, fastened it, slung it upon his shoulders, and rising, took up his stick.

“ Come on, my Porges,” said he, “ and, whatever you do — keep your ‘ weather eye ’ on your uncle.”

“ Where do you s’pose we’d better look first? ” enquired Small Porges, eagerly.

“ Why, first, I think we’d better find your Auntie Anthea.”

“ But, — ” began Porges, his face falling.

“ But me no buts, my Porges,” smiled Bellew, laying his hand upon his new-found nephew’s shoulder, “ but me no buts, boy, and, as I said before, — just keep your eye on your uncle.”

## CHAPTER V

### *How Bellew came to Arcadia*

So, they set out together, Big Porges and Small Porges, walking side by side over sun-kissed field and meadow, slowly and thoughtfully, to be sure, for Bellew disliked hurry; often pausing to listen to the music of running waters, or to stare away across the purple valley, for the sun was getting low. And, ever as they went, they talked to one another whole-heartedly as good friends should.

And, from the boy’s eager lips, Bellew heard much of “ Auntie Anthea,” and learned, little by little, something of the brave fight she had made, lonely and unaided, and burdened with ancient debt, to make the farm of Dapplemere pay. Likewise Small Porges spoke learnedly of the condition of the markets, and of the distressing fall in prices in regard to hay, and wheat.

“ Old Adam, — he’s our man, you know, he says that farming isn’t what it was in his young days, ’specially if you happen to be a woman, like my Auntie Anthea, an’ he told me



yesterday that if he were Auntie he'd give up trying, an' take Mr. Cassilis at his word."

"Cassilis, ah! — And who is Mr. Cassilis?"

"He lives at 'Brampton Court' — a great, big house 'bout a mile from Dapplemere; an' he's always asking my Auntie to marry him, but 'course she won't you know."

"Why not?"

"Well, I think it's 'cause he's got such big, white teeth when he smiles, — an' he's always smiling, you know; but Old Adam says that if he'd been born a woman he'd marry a man all teeth, or no teeth at all, if he had as much money as Mr. Cassilis."

The sun was low in the West as, skirting a wood, they came out upon a grassy lane that presently led them into the great, broad highway.

Now, as they trudged along together, Small Porges with one hand clasped in Bellew's, and the other supporting the bundle on his shoulder, there appeared, galloping towards them a man on a fine black horse, at sight of whom, Porges' clasp tightened, and he drew nearer to Bellew's side.

When he was nearly abreast of them, the horse-man checked his career so sud-

denly that his animal was thrown back on his haunches.

"Why — Georgy!" he exclaimed.

"Good evening, Mr. Cassilis!" said Small Porges, lifting his cap.

Mr. Cassilis was tall, handsome, well built, and very particular as to dress. Bellew noticed that his teeth were, indeed, very large and white, beneath the small, carefully trained moustache; also his eyes seemed just a trifle too close together, perhaps.

"Why — what in the world have you been up to, boy?" he enquired, regarding Bellew with no very friendly eye. "Your Aunt is worrying herself ill on your account, — what have you been doing with yourself all day?"

Again Bellew felt the small fingers tighten round his, and the small figure shrink a little closer to him, as Small Porges answered,

"I've been with Uncle Porges, Mr. Cassilis."

"With whom?" demanded Mr. Cassilis, more sharply.

"With his Uncle Porges, sir," Bellew rejoined, "a trustworthy person, and very much at your service."

Mr. Cassilis stared, his hand began to stroke and caress his small, black moustache, and he



viewed Bellew from his dusty boots up to the crown of his dusty hat, and down again, with supercilious eyes.

"Uncle?" he repeated incredulously.

"Porges," nodded Bellew.

"I wasn't aware," began Mr. Cassilis, "that—er—George was so very fortunate—"

"Baptismal name—George," continued Bellew, "lately of New York, Newport, and—er—other places in America, U. S. A., at present of Nowhere-in-Particular."

"Ah!" said Mr. Cassilis, his eyes seeming to grow a trifle nearer together, "an American Uncle? Still, I was not aware of even that relationship."

"It is a singularly pleasing thought," smiled Bellew, "to know that we may learn something every day,—that one never knows what the day may bring forth; to-morrow, for instance, you also may find yourself a nephew—somewhere or other, though, personally, I—er doubt it, yes, I greatly doubt it; still, one never knows, you know, and while there's life, there's hope. A very good afternoon to you, sir. Come, nephew mine, the evening falls apace, and I grow weary,—let us on—Excelsior!"

Mr. Cassilis's cheek grew suddenly red, he twirled his moustache angrily, and seemed about to speak, then he smiled instead, and turning his horse, spurred him savagely, and galloped back down the road in a cloud of dust.

"Did you see his teeth, Uncle Porges?"

"I did."

"He only smiles like that when he's awful angry," said Small Porges shaking his head as the galloping hoof-strokes died away in the distance, "An' what do you s'pose he went back for?"

"Well, Porges, it's in my mind that he has gone back to warn our Auntie Anthea of our coming."

Small Porges sighed, and his feet dragged in the dust.

"Tired, my Porges?"

"Just a bit, you know,—but it isn't that. I was thinking that the day has almost gone, an' I haven't found a bit of the fortune yet."

"Why there's always to-morrow to live for, my Porges."

"Yes, 'course—there's always to-morrow; an' then,—I did find you, you know, Uncle Porges."

"To be sure you did, and an uncle is better than nothing at all, isn't he,—even if he is



rather dusty and disreputable of exterior. One doesn't find an uncle every day of one's life, my Porges, no sir!"

"An' you are so nice an' big, you know!" said Porges, viewing Bellew with a bright, approving eye.

"Long, would be a better word, perhaps," suggested Bellew, smiling down at him.

"An' wide, too!" nodded Small Porges. And, from these two facts he seemed to derive a deal of solid comfort, and satisfaction for he strode on manfully once more.

Leaving the high-road, he guided Bellew by divers winding paths, through corn-fields, and over stiles, until, at length, they were come to an orchard. Such an orchard as surely may only be found in Kent,—where great apple-trees, gnarled, and knotted, shot out huge branches that seemed to twist, and writhe; where were stately pear trees; where peaches, and apricots, ripened against time-worn walls whose red bricks still glowed rosily for all their years; where the air was sweet with the scent of fruit, and fragrant with thyme, and sage, and marjoram; and where the black-birds, bold marauders that they are, piped gloriously all day long. In the midst of this orchard they stopped, and Small Porges rested one hand

against the rugged bole of a great, old apple-tree.

"This," said he, "is my very own tree, because he's so very big, an' so very, very old,—Adam says he's the oldest tree in the orchard. I call him 'King Arthur' 'cause he is so big, an' strong,—just like a king should be, you know,—an' all the other trees are his Knights of the Round Table."

But Bellew was not looking at "King Arthur" just then; his eyes were turned to where one came towards them through the green,—one surely as tall, and gracious, as proud and beautiful, as Enid, or Guinevere, or any of those lovely ladies, for all her simple gown of blue, and the sunbonnet that shaded the beauty of her face. Yes, as he gazed, Bellew was sure and certain that she who, all unconscious of their presence, came slowly towards them with the red glow of the sunset about her, was handsomer, lovelier, statelier, and altogether more desirable than all the beautiful ladies of King Arthur's court,—or any other court soever.

But now Small Porges finding him so silent, and seeing where he looked, must needs behold her too, and gave a sudden, glad cry, and ran out from behind the great bulk of "King



Arthur," and she, hearing his voice, turned and ran to meet him, and sank upon her knees before him, and clasped him against her heart, and rejoiced, and wept, and scolded him, all in a breath. Wherefore Bellew, unobserved, as yet in "King Arthur's" shadow, watching the proud head with its wayward curls, (for the sunbonnet had been tossed back upon her shoulders), watching the quick, passionate caress of those slender, brown hands, and listening to the thrilling tenderness of that low, soft voice, felt, all at once, strangely lonely, and friendless, and out of place, very rough and awkward, and very much aware of his dusty person, — felt, indeed, as any other ordinary human might, who had tumbled unexpectedly into Arcadia; therefore he turned, thinking to steal quietly away.

"You see, Auntie, I went out to try an' find a fortune for you," Small Porges was explaining, "an' I looked, an' looked, but I didn't find a bit —"

"My dear, dear, brave Georgy!" said Anthea, and would have kissed him again, but he put her off:

"Wait a minute, please Auntie," he said excitedly, "'cause I did find — something, — just as I was growing very tired an' disap-

pointed, I found Uncle Porges — under a hedge, you know."

"Uncle Porges!" said Anthea, starting, "Oh! that must be the man Mr. Cassilis mentioned —"

"So I brought him with me," pursued Small Porges, "an' there he is!" and he pointed triumphantly towards "King Arthur."

Glancing thither, Anthea beheld a tall, dusty figure moving off among the trees.

"Oh, — wait, please!" she called, rising to her feet, and, with Small Porges' hand in hers, approached Bellew who had stopped with his dusty back to them.

"I — I want to thank you for — taking care of my nephew. If you will come up to the house cook shall give you a good meal, and, if you are in need of work, I — I —" her voice faltered uncertainly, and she stopped.

"Thank you!" said Bellew, turning and lifting his hat.

"Oh! — I beg your pardon!" said Anthea.

Now as their eyes met, it seemed to Bellew as though he had lived all his life in expectation of this moment, and he knew that all his life he should never forget this moment. But now, even while he looked at her, he saw her cheeks



flush painfully, and her dark eyes grow troubled.

“ I beg your pardon! ” said she again, “ I — I thought — Mr. Cassilis gave me to understand that you were — ”

“ A very dusty, hungry-looking fellow, perhaps,” smiled Bellew, “ and he was quite right, you know; the dust you can see for yourself, but the hunger you must take my word for. As for the work, I assure you exercise is precisely what I am looking for.”

“ But — ” said Anthea, and stopped, and tapped the grass nervously with her foot, and twisted one of her bonnet-strings, and meeting Bellew’s steady gaze, flushed again, “ but you — you are — ”

“ My Uncle Porges,” her nephew chimed in, “ an’ I brought him home with me ’cause he’s going to help me to find a fortune, an’ he hasn’t got any place to go to ’cause his home’s far, far beyond the ‘ bounding billow,’ — so you will let him stay, won’t you, Auntie Anthea? ”

“ Why — Georgy — ” she began, but seeing her distressed look, Bellew came to her rescue.

“ Pray do, Miss Anthea,” said he in his quiet, easy manner. “ My name is Bellew,” he went on to explain, “ I am an American, with-

out family or friends, here, there or anywhere, and with nothing in the world to do but follow the path of the winds. Indeed, I am rather a solitary fellow, at least — I was, until I met my nephew Porges here. Since then, I’ve been wondering if there would be — er — room for such as I, at Dapplemere? ”

“ Oh, there would be plenty of room,” said Anthea, hesitating, and wrinkling her white brow, for a lodger was something entirely new in her experience.

“ As to my character,” pursued Bellew, “ though something of a vagabond, I am not a rogue, — at least, I hope not, and I could pay — er — four or five pounds a week — ”

“ Oh! ” exclaimed Anthea, with a little gasp.

“ If that would be sufficient — ”

“ It is — a great deal too much! ” said Anthea who would have scarcely dared to ask three.

“ Pardon me! — but I think not,” said Bellew, shaking his head, “ you see, I am — er — rather extravagant in my eating, — eggs, you know, lots of ’em, and ham, and beef, and — er — (a duck quacked loudly from the vicinity of a neighbouring pond), — certainly, — an occasional duck! Indeed, five pounds a week would scarcely — ”



"Three would be ample!" said Anthea with a little nod of finality.

"Very well," said Bellew, "we'll make it four, and have done with it."

Anthea Devine, being absolute mistress of Dapplemere, was in the habit of exerting her authority, and having her own way in most things; therefore, she glanced up, in some surprise, at this tall, dusty, rather lazy looking personage; and she noticed, even as had Small Porges, that he was indeed very big and wide; she noticed also that, despite the easy courtesy of his manner, and the quizzical light of his gray eyes, his chin was very square, and that, despite his gentle voice, he had the air of one who meant exactly what he said. Nevertheless she was much inclined to take issue with him upon the matter; plainly observing which, Bellew smiled, and shook his head.

"Pray be reasonable," he said in his gentle voice, "if you send me away to some horrible inn or other, it will cost me — being an American, — more than that every week, in tips and things, — so let's shake hands on it, and call it settled," and he held out his hand to her.

"Four pounds a week! It would be a veritable God-send just at present, while she was so hard put to it to make both ends meet. Four

pounds a week!" So Anthea stood, lost in frowning thought until meeting his frank smile, she laughed.

"You are dreadfully persistent!" she said, "and I know it is too much, — but — we'll try to make you as comfortable as we can," and she laid her hand in his.

And thus it was that George Bellew came to Dapplemere in the glory of the after-glow of an August afternoon, breathing the magic air of Arcadia which is, and always has been, of that rare quality warranted to go to the head, sooner, or later.

And thus it was that Small Porges with his bundle on his shoulder, viewed this tall, dusty Uncle with the eye of possession which is oft-times an eye of rapture.

And Anthea? She was busy calculating to a scrupulous nicety the very vexed question as to exactly how far four pounds per week might be made to go to the best possible advantage of all concerned.