

CHAPTER 18

When he awoke, for he seemed to have been asleep, he found himself in bed; and Merivale was there, stooping over him and smiling. "Well, you old ruffian – feeling all right? That was a fine shock you gave us!"

Chips murmured, after a pause, and in a voice that surprised him by its weakness: "Why – um – what – what has happened?"

"Merely that you threw a faint. Mrs. Wickett came in and found you – lucky she did. You're all right now. Take it easy. Sleep again if you feel inclined."

He was glad someone had suggested such a good idea. He felt so weak that he wasn't even puzzled by the details of the business – how they had got him upstairs, what Mrs. Wickett had said, and so on. But then, suddenly, at the other side of the bed, he saw Mrs. Wickett. She was smiling. He thought: God bless my soul, what's she doing up here? And then, in the shadows behind Merivale, he saw Cartwright, the new Head (he thought of him as "new," even though he had been at Brookfield since 1919), and old Buffles, commonly called "Roddy". Funny, the way they were all here. He felt: anyhow, I can't be bothered to wonder why about anything. I'm going to go to sleep.

But it wasn't sleep, and it wasn't quite wakefulness, either; it was a sort of in-between state, full of dreams and faces and voices. Old scenes and old scraps of tunes – a Mozart trio that Kathie had once played in – cheers and laughter and the sound of guns – and over it all, Brookfield bells, Brookfield bells. "So you see, if Miss Plebs wanted Mr. Patrician to marry her.... yes, you can, you liar...." Joke.... Meat to be abhorred.... Joke..... That you Max? Yes, come in. What's the news from the Fatherland?.... *O mibi praeteritos...* Ralston said I was slack and inefficient – but they couldn't manage without me.... *Obile heres ago fortibus es in aro.....* Can you translate that, any of you?.... It's a joke.....

Once he heard them talking about him in the room.

Cartwright was whispering to Merivale. "Poor old chap – must have lived a lonely sort of life, all by himself."

Merivale answered: "Not always by himself. He married, you know."

"Oh, did he? I never knew about that."

"She died. It must have been – oh, quite thirty years ago. More, more, possibly."

"Pity. Pity he never had any children."

And at that, Chips opened his eyes as wide as he could and sought to attract their attention. It was hard for him to speak out loud, but he managed to murmur something, and they all looked round and came nearer to him.

He struggled, slowly, with his words. "What – was that – um – you – were saying – about me – just now?"

Old Buffles smiled and said: "Nothing at all, old chap – nothing at all – we were just wondering when you were going to wake out of your beauty sleep."

"But – umph – I heard you – you were talking about me –"

"Absolutely nothing of any consequence, my dear fellow – really, I give you my word...."

"I thought I heard you – one of you – saying it was a pity – umph – a pity I never had – any children....eh? But I have, you know.... I have...."

The others smiled without answering, and after a pause Chips began a faint and palpitating chuckle.

"Yes – umph – I have," he added, with quavering merriment. "Thousands of 'em..... thousands of 'em.... And all boys....."

And then the chorus sang in his ears in final harmony, more grandly and sweetly than he had ever heard it before, and more comfortingly too..... Pettifer, Pollett, Porson, Potts, Pullman, Purvis, Pym-Wilson, Radlett, Rapson, Reade, Reaper, Reddy Primus.... come round me now, all of you, for a last word and a joke.... Harper, Haslett, Hatfield, Hatherley.... my last joke.... Did you hear it?.... did it make you laugh?..... Bone, Boston, Bovey, Bradford, Bradford, Bradley, Bramhall Anderson.... wherever you are, whatever you are, whatever has happened, give me this moment with you..... this last moment..... my boys.....

And soon Chips was asleep.

He seemed so peaceful that they did not disturb him to say good night; but in the morning, as the School bell sounded for breakfast, Brookfield had the news. "Brookfield will never forget his lovableness," said Cartwright, in a speech to the School. Which was absurd, because all things are forgotten in the end. But Linford, at any rate, will remember and tell the tale: I said good-bye to Chips the night before he died.....

NOTES ON GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS

I. Words, Expressions and Names, which may not be familiar to students at the intermediate stage, are given below in alphabetical order.

- (1) Ablative Absolute: A construction of noun and participle in Latin grammar giving time or circumstances.
- (2) Acropolis: Citadel or elevated part of a Greek city especially of Athens.
- (3) Anno Domini: Advancing age
- (4) Bernard Shaw: British playwright who projected radical and socialist views during the late 19th and early 20th century.
- (5) Boers: Dutch or descendants of the Dutch living in South Africa.
- (6) Caractacus : A king of the Silmes in the West of Britain during the reign of Claudius. He was defeated by the Romans.
- (7) Cello: Abbreviated (short form of Violincello) Bass violin, 4 - stringed instrument held between player's knees.
- (8) Choir: Band of singers performing or leading in musical parts of Church service, band of dancers.
- (9) Cromwell: Lord Protector of England 1653 - 8
- (10) Cicero: A great Roman orator.
- (11) Eccentricity: Whimiscal, odd behaviour
- (12) Forum: Public place or market place at Rome, usually used for public discussions
- (13) Freemasonry : System and institutions of the freemasons, secret understanding between like characters, instinctive sympathy.
- (14) Hereward the Wake: An outlaw. A legendary account of wanderings of this outlaw is available. He belonged to the 11th century England.
- (15) Hexameter: A line having six metrical feet or parts.
- (16) Ibsen: Norwegian dramatist who presented through his plays radical views including those on the place of women in the society.

- (17) Livy: A Roman historian (59 B.C. – A.D. 17)
- (18) Lloyd George: A Prime Minister of England.
- (19) Mafeking Night: Night of riotous celebrations overdone in 1900.
- (20) Mozart: A well – known Western musician.
- (21) Mnemonics: System of improving memory.
- (22) Organ: Musical instrument of pipes supplied with wind by bellows, sounded by keys and distributed into sets or stops having special tone, which in turn form groups or partial groups.
- (23) Organ-loft: Gallery in church or concert room for an organ.
- (24) Soccer: Association football, form of football in which ball may not be touched with hand except by goalkeeper.
- (25) Stock Exchange: Place where stocks and shares are publicly bought and sold.
- (26) Trio: Composition for three vocal or instrumental parts; set of three performers; performed by trio of instruments; violin, violoncello and piano.
- (27) Virgil: A great Roman poet.
- (28) Volte – face: Turning round – complete change of front in argument in politics.
- (29) Waterloo: A village in the south of Brussels where on 18th June, 1815, a battle was fought in which Napoleon was finally defeated.
- (30) William Morris: British poet and socialist during the late nineteenth century.
- (31) To a man Without exception.

II. Introduction

Good-bye, Mr. Chips is James Hilton's famous and best loved novel. It is about Brookfield, an old grammar school, where Mr. Chips worked as a teacher for about forty-five years and ultimately rose to be its Head.

It is a biographical novel and deals with the life of Mr. Chips in retrospect. When the book opens, he is an old man of sixty-five. He is still healthy and fit, and what is more important, in perfect peace with life.

The novel is written interestingly and it grips the reader all along. The details are beautifully woven into the structure of the novel and they always throw interesting light on Mr. Chips and Brookfield. The descriptions are lively, with a sprinkling of humour on almost every page. Nowhere does it bore.

Mr. Chips was ultimately looked upon as an institution at Brookfield. He loved his boys and lived for them. The boys in turn were extremely fond of him. This institution is now no longer in existence; it has already died out, perhaps even in England. Mr. Chips was a pre-war (1914) man.

I believe that our students reading for their intermediate will like this book and may even come to love it. It is written in simple language, which is at the same time beautiful. It is a short novel, and I hope that they will like to read it more than once.

The Notes given below may serve as a key to the appreciation of the novel, particularly the character. A list of words and expressions as well as names of persons and places, with which the students may not be very familiar at this stage, together with their meanings, is also included.

III. Brookfield

Brookfield was situated in beautiful fenlands, and was surrounded by ancient elms. It was an open countryside and the school therefore had plenty of playing grounds.

It was, as Mr. Wetherby, one of its Heads observed, an old foundation; established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as a grammar school. It never gained the reputation of Eton or Harrow. It had a chequered career, and its reputation varied from time to time. Its main structure was rebuilt during the reign of King George I and it was during the mid nineties that Mr. Wetherby restored most of its glory. It was, nevertheless, a good school of the second rank.

Brookfield produced judges, professional men, Members of Parliament, colonial administrators, peers and bishops. Moreover it also turned out merchants, manufacturers and country squires and parsons.

When the First World war broke out in 1914, it also contributed to the war effort. Quite a few of the teachers and students joined the Armed Forces. Many of them died for England. Its grounds were also used for training purposes.

Both, during peace and war, Brookfield contributed to the glory of England, though most of the novel deals with the period of peace.

IV. Characters

(i) Mr. Chips

Mr. Chippings lovingly called Mr. Chips, joined Brookfield in 1870 at the age of 22. He was a handsome, impressive youth, fashionably dressed according

to the Victorian times. He was able to establish himself as a teacher without much difficulty.

Mr. Chips was a Cambridge graduate, but he was not very bright. He was a devoted and conscientious teacher. He lived and worked for his students and he had no other dreams and ambitions. At the very outset of his career he was happily able to realize his strong points as well as his shortcomings equally well. This made him stable and placid.

Mr. Chips had no scholarly ambitions either. Even after long years of teaching, he was not a profound scholar of Greek and Latin, although he liked to use some expressions as tags in his conversation. Towards the end of his career he had a strong desire to write his memoirs and thus a history of the school during his times. But this he could never do although he had jotted down some desultory notes. Writing bored him.

Mr. Chips grew to be a disciplinarian and thus an effective teacher. He kept standards and helped students develop character. He came to be loved by his students. True to his salt he always looked upon his old students from his pedestal. We remember what he told Colley, one of the students "I remember your grandfather – umph – he could never grasp the "Ablative Absolute". A stupid fellow your grandfather". Similarly when Mr. Lloyd George came to the Brookfield as a guest of honour, this is what Mr. Chips told him: "Mr. Lloyd George, I am nearly old enough – umph – to remember you as a young man and – umph – I confess that you seem to me – umph – to have improved – umph – a great deal".

Mr. Chips endeared himself to the boys and the public for his humour which was quaint but without any malice. With the passage of time his eccentricities came to be loved. Towards the end of his career he stood out to be an odd person. Particularly because he failed to appreciate new developments. During the war, he was looked upon as a pre-war man. This oddity became another source of humour. People liked this grand old man whose remarks and observations were equally odd and thus interesting. People did not laugh at him, but with him at his remarks. The boys looked forward to the latest from Chips. This made him a very popular figure. Everybody came to look upon him as an institution.

Mr. Chips had only one romance in his life, an odd small incident. But it influenced him a good deal and left its permanent mark upon him.

Accidentally he met Miss Katherine Bridges in the Lake District. He wrenched his ankle in a useless effort to help her. She attended him during his illness and in spite of the fact that she had very advance ideas for Chips, they were soon in love, and married.

Mr. Chips had nearly two years of idyllic married life. She was a big, positive influence on him, which made a new man of him. His discipline

improved and his sense of humour "bloomed into a sudden richness to which years lent maturity". His outlook also broadened, and he became gentle and wise. He felt strong and also became more popular.

It was she who lovingly parted from him, on the eve of her wedding, with the words that became so popular later, "Good-bye, Mr. Chips," This she said, with mock gravity.

(ii) Katherine Bridges

Miss Bridges was twenty-five when she met Mr. Chips who was forty-eight. She was exceedingly beautiful. She must have looked upon him as a quiet, middle aged and serious looking man.

She was a governess out of job. She rode bicycle, not very much liked by the men of Victorian times. She had advanced and radical ideas which she learned from Ibsen, Bernard Shaw and William Morris. She read them and admired them. She could be called a radical socialist. Her views were even dramatically opposed to those of Mr. Chips. She liked Chips and his profession, as we know, she exercised a healthy influence upon him. She was more intelligent and brainy than him. She gave him advanced ideas on education, which he demonstrated in his educational practice.

This astonishing girl-wife became very popular at Brookfield. She contributed a good deal to all school activities, matches, and social and music concerts. She was herself a fine musician.

Her life was cut short by childbirth.

EXERCISES

1. Write a note on Brookfield.
2. What contribution did Brookfield make to England?
3. Draw a character sketch of Mr. Chips.
4. Write a note on Mr. Chips as a teacher.
5. Write an account of Mr. Chips' married life.
6. What influence did Katherine Bridges exercise on Mr. Chips?
7. Describe the first encounter between Mr. Chips and Katherine Bridges.
8. Describe the quarrel between Ralston and Chips.
9. Write a note on Mr. Chips' humour.
10. Can we look upon Mr. Chips as an institution of Brookfield?
11. Draw a character sketch of Katherine Bridges.
12. Write a short note on views and ideas of Katherine Bridges.
13. Write brief note on the following:
 - a) Mr. Wetherby
 - b) Mr. Meldrum
 - c) Mr. Ralston,
 - d) Mr. Chatteris
 - e) Mr. Merivale
 - f) Mrs. Wickett

**CORRUPTION
LEADS
TO
DESTRUCTION**

NAB
PUNJAB
Government of Pakistan
National Accountability Bureau Punjab
S-Club Road, GOR-I, Lahore

**JOIN HANDS
TO
ELIMINATE
CORRUPTION**

18062

NAB
PUNJAB
Government of Pakistan
National Accountability Bureau Punjab
S-Club Road, GOR-I, Lahore

Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board provides standard textbooks at low price according to the approved curricula. Suggestions are requested for improvement of these books by pointing out any error in spellings, contents, etc.

Fax No: 042-99230679

E-mail: chairman@ptb.gop.pk

Website: www.ptb.gop.pk



Managing Director
Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board
21-E-II, Gulberg-III, Lahore.



PUNJAB CURRICULUM AND
TEXTBOOK BOARD, LAHORE