

**A STUDENT IN
ARMS. SECOND
SERIES. [1917]**

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A Student in Arms. Second Series. [1917] by Donald Hankey

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DONALD HANKEY

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SOMETHING ABOUT
"A STUDENT IN ARMS"

By H. M. A. H.

"His life was a Romance of the most noble and beautiful kind." So says one who has known him from childhood, and into how many dull, hard and narrow lives has he not been the first to bring the element of Romance?

He carried it about with him; it breathes through his writings, and this inevitable expression of it gives the saying of one of his friends, that "it is as an artist that we shall miss him most," the more significance.

And does not the artist as well as the poet live forever in his works? Is not the breath of inspiration that such alone can breathe into the dull clods of their generation bound to be immortal?

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Meanwhile, his "Romance" is to be written, and his biographer will be one whose good fortune it has been to see much of the "Student" in Bermondsey, the place that was the forcing-house of his development. In the following pages it is proposed only to give an outline of his life, and particularly the earlier and therefore to the public unknown parts.

Donald Hankey was born at Brighton in 1884; he was the seventh child of his parents, and was welcomed with excitement and delight by a ready-made family of three brothers and two sisters living on his arrival amongst them. He was the youngest of them by seven years, and all had their plans for his education and future, and waited jealously for the time when he should be old enough to be removed from the loving shelter of his mother's arms and be "brought up."

His education did, as a matter of fact,

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begin at a very early age; for one day, when he was perhaps about three years old, dressed in a white woolly cap and coat, and out for his morning walk, a neighbouring baby stepped across from his nurse's side and with one well-directed blow felled Donald to the ground! Donald was too much astonished and hurt at the sheer injustice of the assault to dream of retaliation, but when they reached home and his indignant nurse told the story, he was taken aside by his brothers and made to understand that by his failure to resist the assault, and give the other fellow back as good as he gave, "the honour of the family" was impugned! He was then and there put through a systematic course of "the noble art of self-defence." "And I think," said one of his brothers only the other day, "that he was prepared to act upon his instructions should occasion arise." It will be seen from this incident that his bringing-up was of a decidedly strenuous

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character and likely to make Donald's outlook on life a serious one!

He was naturally a peace-loving and philosophical little boy, very lovable and attractive with his large clear eyes with their curious distribution of colour—the one entirely blue and the other three parts a decided brown—the big head set proudly on the slender little body, and the radiant illuminating smile, that no one who knew him well at any time of his life can ever forget. It spoke of a light within, "that mysterious light which is of course not physical," as was said by one who met him only once, but was quick to note this characteristic.

Donald's more strenuous times were in the boys' holidays—those tumultuous of seasons so well known to the members of all big families! His eldest brother, Hugh, was bent on making an all-round athlete of him; another brother saw in him an embryo county cricketer, while a third was most

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particular about his music, giving him lessons on the violoncello with clockwork regularity. The games were terribly thrilling and dangerous, especially when the schoolroom was turned into a miniature battlefield, with opposing armies of tiny lead soldiers. But Donald never turned a hair if Hugh were present, even at the most terrific explosions of gun-powder. His confidence in Hugh was complete. Nor did he mind personal injuries. When on one occasion he was hurled against the sharp edge of a chair, cutting his head open badly, and his mother came to the rescue with indignation, sympathy and bandages, whilst accepting the latter he deprecated the two former, explaining apologetically, "It's only because my head's so big."

He admitted in after years to having felt most terribly swamped by the personalities of two of his brothers. The third he had more in common with, for he was more peace-loving, and he seemed