

AFTER THE BREAKAGE

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By **Krikor Zohrab** * (1861 to 1915)

Translated by **Vahe H. Apelian**

Certainly the cup sitting in its saucer was made of superbly crafted crystal when he gave it to me as a gift. 

He was a friend to whom I had rendered a small service. He had said it wasn't much of a thing he had given. After he left, I glanced over it casually. He had picked the cup so I would remember him as I sipped my coffee.

The transparent crystal made it obvious that it was the finest of its kind. It had the logo of a famous producer of crystal goods. The logo, imprinted in a red ring, read 1844.

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For a long time the cup sat at a corner of my office gathering dust. As an appreciator of finer things, I had initially been content with the idea of having it in my office. After a while I had forgotten it. One day it occurred to me that it was ludicrous to have it sitting in my office without being used. I thought it was best that I took the cup home and drank my coffee from it.

There also the fortunes of the cup didn't improve. Things resemble people a bit. They have their own fate. No one paid any attention to the poor cup, although it was one of a kind.

We placed it somewhere as decoration. More than once it was shuffled from one place to another. I saw one of my children playing with it. One day it fell from her hands and broke into many shards.

The other day I came across its saucer. I scrutinized its delicate and intricate drawings. Indeed, they were wonders of art. Two intertwined letters with imperial markings caught my attention. Right across the ring I also noticed the same imperial coat-of-arms and the same letters.

The letters were L and P. I realized that the letters were the initials of Louis Philippe. The coffee

saucer had belonged to him. Next to the logo of the famous manufacturer said Fontainebleau
Palace. It is now that I was noticing.

☒ Yes, there was no doubt. It had belonged to King Louis Philippe of France. The masterful
decoration should have made it amply evident to a connoisseur that it could not have belonged
to an ordinary mortal.

Now its cup was broken into pieces. I had not recognized its value. It had stayed with me for years,
within easy reach. How much did I now regret what I had done to it. I reprimanded myself for not
having given the attention it had deserved and for not having taken better care of such a valuable
item.

The small incident gave way to thoughts. Those reading these sentences surely would have had
similar thoughts.

It is commonplace not to appreciate those who live with us for a long time. Death and loss trigger
the living to render an impartial and a just verdict of the deceased. The void that the cemetery brings
is necessary to discern the delicate and beautiful features of the faces of those who have passed
away. The impossibility of their return is required to have our blind eyes opened to the truth, and
humble ourselves to proclaim their virtues we could not bring ourselves to appreciate openly,
unknowingly maybe, while they were alive.

I think that friendships are like that too. Often no one gives the slightest consideration to the hearts
that eagerly and faithfully wait for the person. It is required that these hearts be broken to feel and
measure the depth and the magnitude of the loss.

That is what happened to my coffee cup as well. I recognized its value... after its breakage.

* Krikor Zohrab (1861 to 1915) was an influential Armenian writer, politician, and lawyer in
Constantinople. At the onset of the Armenian Genocide he was arrested, on April 24, 1915, by the
Turkish government and sent to a military court in Diyarbakir. En route, in Karaköprü or Seytanderesi
on the outskirts of Urfa, he was murdered by a band of known brigands led by Çerkez Ahmet, Halil
and Nazim between July 15 and July 20. (Wikipedia)

