

THE BOY

WHO WAS

TRAINED UP TO BE A CLERGYMAN.

BY

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"The boy is father to the man."—WORDSWORTH.

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TO

MRS. MARY S. HANNA,

WHOSE HEART AND HAND HAVE BEEN ALWAYS OPEN

FOR THE CHURCH'S GOOD,

~~This~~ *This* Little Work,

DESIGNED TO EXTEND THE INTERESTS AND ENFORCE THE

RULES

OF THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

P R E F A C E.

THE constant and increasing demand for clergymen in the church has led to the proposal of various plans for supplying the deficiency. Any arrangement, as it seems to the writer, must be merely *temporary* which does not begin aright. Parents must be taught the *duty* and the *privilege* of devoting their sons to the ministry, and be *shown* the *way* in which their influence for good may be brought to bear upon the purpose designed, before the number of labourers will compare at all with the greatness of the work.

The following story—in its main details a *true* one—is presented, not without misgivings, as an humble offering for their guidance.

May “the Lord of the harvest” bless it to this end.

Feast of the Epiphany, 1853.

WAS not our LORD a little child,
Taught by degrees to pray;
By father dear and mother mild
Instructed day by day?

And loved HE not of Heaven to talk,
With children in HIS sight—
To meet them in HIS daily walk,
And to HIS arms invite?—[KEBLE.]

"Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod."—1 *Sam.* ii. 18.

"From a child thou hast known the HOLY SCRIPTURES."
St. Paul to Timothy.

THE BOY

WHO WAS TRAINED TO BE A CLERGYMAN.

CHAPTER I.

"WHERE is Edward?" asked Mr. Mason, as he laid down the book which he had been reading aloud to his wife, and looked about for his little son. The mother said nothing, but pointing to a distant corner of the room, the question was answered at once.

There the little flaxen-haired, blue-eyed boy was seen, standing upon a chair, with a large silk apron hanging upon his neck. He was so intently engaged, that he did not notice that eyes of tender affection were gazing on him. The secret of his solemnity and silence was soon explained. *He was playing church.* The chair was his pulpit, the black silk apron his gown, and with a serious, earnest face he was looking around upon an imaginary congregation.

The hearts of the parents were too full to speak. Not a word was said to disturb the youthful preacher;

and when, at last, weary with his labours, he got down from the chair, and came to kiss his mother "good night," she blessed him in an unuttered prayer, and he went off, happy and contented, to his rest.

Mr. Mason was the first to speak:—"A beautiful picture, that, my dear, of innocence and love!"

"I have often wished," she said, "that Edward might become a clergyman, if God should spare him to us. Who knows but my earnest desires may yet be granted?"

"There can be no doubt," answered Mr. Mason, "that tastes and capacities for different trades and professions, are sometimes exhibited in early life: and it has always appeared to me that such intimations should not be disregarded."

"Would you think it right or prudent," interrupted Mrs. Mason, who seemed much interested in the thought which her husband had expressed, "would you think it right or prudent, from the little incident to-night, to take it for granted that Edward has latent qualities of mind and heart, which would fit him for usefulness in the ministry, and to begin, from his very infancy, to train him up with this sacred profession in view?"

"That would be my own opinion," replied her husband, "but in a matter so serious, and which involves such vast responsibilities, I should not like

to act unadvisedly. I must confess, however, it has all along been my wish and prayer, that our little boy might one day become a good and useful minister of God."

The parents having never exchanged a word upon the point before, were well pleased to find this agreement in opinion; and as the safest and wisest course, they determined to ask the advice of their friend and pastor, Mr. Palmer, who lived in the neighbouring town.

While waiting for the settlement of this important matter, I shall take the opportunity of introducing to the reader, in a more formal way, the persons with whom he has thus become partially acquainted.

Mr. Mason had once been a wholesale merchant in New York, and having been very successful in business, he had retired, with an ample fortune, to a country seat, which he owned, about a hundred miles from the city, on the banks of the Hudson. Having received an excellent education in youth, he devoted his time to literary pursuits, and to beautifying the grounds and gardens which surrounded his mansion.

The usual deplorable effect of prosperity had not been wrought upon him, and he was still the same conscientious, liberal man, that he was in earlier days, when his circumstances were humble and contracted.

Mr. and Mrs. Mason had long been devoted members of the church, showing the sincerity of their faith by blameless and useful lives.

Several promising children had been snatched away by death. Two alone remained. The eldest, Lucy, a sprightly and engaging girl, twelve years of age, was at boarding school, a few miles from home. The other, the little boy of five years old, whom we saw, at the opening of the chapter busying himself in so unusual a way.

The wide gap between the ages of the two served to remind the parents of losses which they had been called to bear, losses which, by God's kind providence, had all been turned to good.

The nearest church was in a little village, at the distance of four or five miles, but the weather must have been inclement, indeed, which could keep these devoted Christians from the public worship of God.

The day after the conversation took place which I have just recorded, Mr. Mason rode to town, intending to call upon the rector and ask his advice in regard to the question of interest which so small a circumstance had excited. He was disappointed to find that Mr. Palmer had been suddenly called from home by the illness of a brother who lived in the interior of the state, and as the disease of the sufferer was deceitful and lingering, the time of his return was doubtful. Indeed, the

good clergyman, being uncertain how long he might be detained, had persuaded a clerical friend, who happened to be disengaged, to come and look after the parish during his absence.

At first, Mr. Mason determined to wait patiently until he could converse with his pastor upon the subject which so often engaged his thoughts, but afterwards, becoming restless with the delay, he concluded to write.

The result of this correspondence I must reserve for the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

MORE than two weeks passed away, and still no letter from Mr. Palmer. At last his answer came. The state of his brother's health, and other unavoidable hinderances, had occasioned this delay. I cannot do better than transcribe that part of his epistle which relates to the subject of our story: "It may seem a trifling coincidence to notice, my dear friend, in connexion with a matter so solemn, but I could not help calling to mind a similar incident in the life of good Bishop White, when you spoke of little Edward's appearance in the pulpit. I do not think that parents need wait for any decided preference to be manifested by their sons before beginning to mould their minds with reference to their future career. Why should not Christian mothers dedicate them to the Lord, as Hannah did, and train them up from infancy with direct reference to the ministry? I would have no cant nor hypocrisy about it. Let the boy be taught, little by little, the great dignity and responsibility of the office to which his thoughts are turned. Let him be carefully instructed in all things calculated to improve his mind and heart, and trust to God to

work with you in all these efforts to promote His glory.

"I wonder that more parents do not think of educating their sons with a view to the ministry. It is a most laborious and responsible office, to be sure, and one but poorly requited in this world. But then they should think of the reward of the faithful clergyman in the next: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel xii. 3. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." St. James v. 20.

"There are very few parents who would not be proud to see their son, sent as an ambassador to a foreign court. Yet what is such a distinction compared with the privilege of being an ambassador for God? I would urge you, therefore, by all means, my dear friend, to persevere in the work which God has put into your hearts."

Mr. and Mrs. Mason read this letter with much satisfaction. They no longer hesitated as to what course they ought to pursue.

I must warn my readers, beforehand that I have no marvels to relate. If they wish to regale themselves with the pious and precocious remarks of

children who pass for prodigies in the world, they must seek for such excitement elsewhere. The little boy, whose history it is my privilege to relate, was brought up in the old-fashioned, quiet, unobtrusive ways which are pointed out in the Scriptures, and followed by the church. Edward was made "a member of Christ and a child of God" in early infancy by baptism, and taught from the beginning, that he was a *Christian* child, and must try to act accordingly.

Neither shall I be guilty of the partiality and unfairness of concealing his faults. This would be the surest way to defeat the main purpose which I have in view—to encourage parents to train up their sons for the ministry, and to convince the young that such a thing is reasonable and right.

Edward had been taught to kneel down and say his prayers, night and morning, long before he could understand the nature or the need of prayer. The forms and ceremonies of religion became a part of his daily life. He looked upon them as a thing of course—something which no person, who wished to be good, would neglect.

It was not until his sixth birth-day, that any direct reference was made, in conversation with him, to the course which his parents intended him to pursue. Lucy had come home from school to share in the little festivities with which these an-

niversaries were commonly observed. Mr. Palmer had dined with them. After his departure, something was said as to his influence with his people, and their affection for him, when Lucy, in her simplicity, asked: "Mother, why can't Edward be a minister, when he is a man? Mr. Palmer will be getting old then, and brother could help him." "So he might, my child," said Mrs. Mason, "and I should greatly rejoice to see the day when my boy could be thus employed. How would you like it, Edward?"

The little fellow's face brightened up as he answered, "O, mother, that is what I have been thinking about. Then, you know, I could carry nice things to sick people, and read out of the Prayer Book for them. And, mother, don't you think I might sing one of my pretty hymns? You know that aunt Mary liked to hear singing, when she was ill so long."

Thus the little group conversed—branching off into all directions as occasional remarks suggested new topics to their minds.

Tea-time came—family prayers were said. At 9 o'clock the children retired to rest. Edward dreaming of his little church, and his poor parishioners, and the many good things he would do when he became a man.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are many ups and downs in life. Sometimes the way is smooth and plain—sometimes rough and intricate. Sometimes we have strength to resist temptations—sometimes we grievously fall.

The morning after the birth-day scene, Lucy was sent back to school. Edward stood on the stile, with swimming eyes, watching the carriage as long as it remained in sight.

His mother, knowing that he would be more lonely than usual that day, offered to read him a pretty story after his lessons were done. So when the long line of spelling had been said without a mistake, and a row of quite respectable figures were made upon the slate, she gave him his choice what book she should read. He asked to hear more about his favourite, Robinson Crusoe, and his man Friday. Mrs. Mason kept his little eyes on the stretch for about half an hour with some of the stirring incidents in this redoubtable history, and then laid down the book.

"Please, mother," said Edward, "don't stop yet: I am not at all tired."

"I think, my son," answered Mrs. Mason, "that you have heard enough for to-day. It is not well to hear too much of a good thing at once. We should show some moderation in our enjoyments."

"When you read that part, mother, about Robinson's snug home in the cave, I thought," said Edward, "that I should like to live on an island, and have a parrot and a canoe, and make all those things that he did."

"That is the way that little boys are apt to talk," observed his mother, smiling, "and some foolish ones have got themselves into trouble by it. I heard of five or six boys, not many years ago, who had their heads so full of this story, that they ran away from school, and went to an island somewhere in the Sound, and there played Robinson Crusoe to their hearts' content. For the first day it did very well. They had some crackers in their pockets, and by the help of blackberries and walnuts were able to forget that they had lost their usual dinner and supper. But at night it began to thunder and rain, and there was no shelter to go to. They knew they had done very wrong, and felt too unhappy to say their prayers. Perhaps they thought that God would not hear such bad boys. The next morning, wet and cold, and

hungry, they set out, in good earnest, to find their homes, and relieve the minds of their distracted parents."

"O, mother," cried Edward, "I will not talk of being like Robinson Crusoe any more. How could they run off and leave their mothers in that way?"

"Can you think of no other reason, my son," continued Mrs. Mason, "why it would not be wise to go and live on an island by yourself? Would you lose nothing besides the care and attention of your parents?"

"To be sure, mother, a great deal more," said Edward, in a serious tone; "I could not go to church. Poor Robinson had nobody to preach to him, and tell him what he ought to do."

Mrs. Mason got up, and took a book from the shelf, saying, as she opened it, "This remark reminds me of some beautiful lines written by Mr. Cowper. He supposed them to be spoken by Alexander Selkirk, who, you remember, was the real Robinson Crusoe:—

"Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!

"My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth;
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

"Religion! what treasures untold
Reside in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver or gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.

"But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard—
Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appear'd."

When dinner was over Edward reminded his mother of a promise she had made, that he might go down to the mill-pond, on some pleasant afternoon, and sail his ship. Thomas, the gardener, who was a kind-hearted, obliging man, and withal quite ingenious, had cut a small vessel out of wood, and presented it to the little boy upon his birth-day. As Mr. Mason was too busy to go with him, and Mrs. Mason had been suffering with a headache, Sally, the nursery maid, was intrusted with the care of young master, upon the very important occasion of launching the "Lady of the Lake," as Lucy had insisted the ship should be called. When they reached the pond, a long string was fastened to it, and Edward manifested great delight at seeing his little schooner sail briskly along the shore.

Pretty soon Tom Hall, the miller's boy, spied them out, and came down to see what they were about.

He expressed much gratification at the fine appearance of the ship, and at last persuaded Edward to let him take a turn in sailing her. The owner, proud of his possession, very generously consented. Tom soon grew tired of the tame sport of pulling the ship by the line, and in one of his mischievous moods cut it loose, and the "Lady of the Lake" steered her course forthwith towards the middle of the pond.

Edward was very angry, as might well be supposed; and when the ragged miller boy shouted and jumped about with delight, the little fellow raised his puny hand to strike, and called Tom a fool, and various other naughty names which I should not like to repeat. In the midst of this mimic tempest, Mr. Mason appeared, riding along the road. At the sound of Edward's voice he stopped, and looked about in amazement. By this time Tom, thinking that his practical joke had gone far enough, very composedly rolled up his trowsers above his knees, and partly by wading in the pond and partly by crawling along the trunk of an old tree, which had obligingly fallen in the right direction, succeeded in reaching the little ship, which he brought safe to land.

Mr. Mason took up Edward behind him on the horse; and telling Sally to carry the harmless toy, which had occasioned so much difficulty, the little

party returned to the house. Not a word was spoken on the way. The commander of the vessel, however, was very much ashamed of his part in the performance.

Mr. Mason felt that whatever provocation Edward might have had, it was wrong for him to give way to his passions, and, therefore, ordered him to be sent supperless to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Edward had recited his lessons on the following morning, Mr. Mason called him into the library, and said, "My son, I was sorely grieved to hear you use such language yesterday, and to find you completely carried away by your temper."

Edward made no answer, but hung down his head with shame.

"If it had been some poor, ignorant child, with no father nor mother to instruct him," continued Mr. Mason, "I should have thought nothing of it. Such conduct is one of the natural fruits of our corrupt and sinful hearts. But you, Edward, are a child of God, and a member of his holy church. Instead, therefore, of setting such a bad example to Tom, who has never enjoyed your privileges, you ought to have kept down your anger, as much as possible, and not used such unbecoming and sinful words."

Edward could stand it no longer, but, bursting into tears, begged his father's pardon.

Mr. Mason said, with a sad and serious tone,

"There is a Father in heaven, my dear boy, whom you have offended much more than you have me. Go to your room, and ask his forgiveness on your bended knees."

No other circumstances worthy of record happened for some time. Edward had a little plot of ground in a corner of the garden, which he was allowed to call his own; and here he took great pleasure in digging, and planting, and weeding, when not otherwise employed. Besides this source of amusement, Thomas had fitted him up a work bench in the wood-house, where, in wet or cold weather, he could occupy himself with a little set of carpenter's tools which his uncle had sent him from New York.

His parents encouraged him in these bodily exercises, as conducive to health, and as a harmless way of passing off his leisure hours. They thought it unwise to keep him confined very long at his books. Without strength and vigour of body they knew that the faculties of the mind could never be properly developed.

But although Edward's time for study each day was short, great pains were taken, upon all proper occasions, to give him oral instruction about many things which would be useful to him in after life. Thus, his mother seldom walked out in summer, without directing his attention to the trees and

plants which came in their way; and Mrs. Mason not only answered with patience, but pleasure, the many curious questions which the little boy would ask, while turning over the pictures in Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*, and other books of the sort.

At the same time, while religious matters were never dragged in abruptly, Edward was trained up day by day in the way he should go, with respect to his duty both to God and man.

He could repeat the Catechism from beginning to end, and understood much more of it than we might suppose. This was not accomplished all at once, but little by little. His parents remembered and obeyed God's direction to *His* people of old: "Thou shalt teach my words diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 7.

They thought him too young to read the Bible to advantage; and, therefore, instead of placing this blessed book in his hands, at an age when its most precious teachings might have proved irksome and unprofitable, they endeavoured to make him acquainted with the general outlines of sacred history, and the principal characters embraced therein, enforcing its practical teachings as occasions offered themselves.

One day, when the dinner-bell rang, Edward ran in from the garden, where he had been hard at work, bringing with him an appetite somewhat sharpened by his labour in the open air. Looking rather disappointed, as he surveyed the neatly arranged table, he said, in a tone which it ill became a little boy to use—"Mother, I am so hungry; I do wish we had some meat." His father was evidently displeased, and said, "If you are not satisfied with your dinner, Edward, you need not eat it." "I did not mean to offend you, father," Edward quickly answered; "but it always happens, when I am most hungry, there is least to eat." "Do you know no reason, my son," asked Mrs. Mason, "why we should deny ourselves some things that we like, on this day of the week more than another?" Edward reflected for a moment, but could not think what his mother meant. She then went on to explain to him, that as Friday was the day of our Saviour's crucifixion, it had always been observed by Christian people as a fast.

"And what good does it do, mother," he inquired, with some earnestness, "to go without eating, when we feel like it?" "A great deal, Edward," she mildly answered. "Even if we could see no reason for it, the fact that God commands us to fast, and that prophets and apostles, and even our blessed Saviour, fasted, shows that there must be some

good ground for the requirement. But those who fast in the right way, and from proper motives, derive much actual benefit from it. The body is thus kept under, and the soul made more free. We feel in a fitter frame to pray. We are made sensible of our weakness. We learn to deny ourselves, and to yield implicit obedience to God."

"I never thought of it before," interrupted Edward; "but is not this fasting on Friday a good way to remember about our Saviour's dying on the cross, and what day it was he suffered?" "Certainly, my boy," his mother answered; "and now that you know what fasting is, and why this duty is observed, I hope you will never make wry faces again, because the dinner does not quite suit your taste."

Mr. Mason had not spoken while the conversation was going on, but here he took occasion to say: "It may be well enough to explain to you, Edward, why we eat no meat on Fridays, as that was what first brought up the subject just now. There is no command to that effect in the Bible; neither is there any virtue in merely giving up this particular article of diet. Some Christians deny themselves one thing, and some another. Meat, however, is that upon which most persons depend for strength and sustenance. Take this away, and they will feel it more than if they gave up several

other things. So, then, in laying down a general rule, which should apply to the greatest number of individual cases, this is the very wisest which could be devised."

Children are usually very observing, and Edward was evidently puzzled about something. After some hesitation, he said: "Uncle Charles does not fast, I think. We always had meat when we visited at his house."

Mr. Mason was amused, and as he arose to leave the table, good-humouredly remarked: "I cannot answer for it, whether your uncle fasts or not. This, however, will not lessen our obligation to do so. But remember, Edward, fasting is not a thing to be boasted of, as though it made us meritorious in the sight of God. The whole design of it is beautifully expressed in the collect for the first Sunday in Lent: 'O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence, that our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.'"

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTMAS was approaching, and our little friend was anxiously looking forward to it, not only for the reasons which make children wish for this blessed festival to return, but because his sister was to have holiday for a week, and his aunt and two cousins were expected up from the city. The long wished-for day at last arrived. By Christmas-eve, the whole family party had got together. It was customary on that night to *illuminate* the church in the town, and all were anxious to attend. The distance being almost too great for Edward to go and return at night, it was agreed that Mr. Mason should take his sister and Lucy in the sleigh, while his wife remained at home with the boys.

Frank and Henry Parish were both older than Edward; but, I am sorry to say, they had not been so well brought up, and were somewhat ungovernable and rude. They were highly indignant that two young gentlemen of eight and ten years of age, who were big enough to wear boots, should not be allowed to take a ride with their elders. At

last, by way of compromise, Mrs. Parish begged that Frank might be allowed to go; and as the sleigh could not possibly hold more, Henry and Edward must content themselves at home.

Mrs. Mason did her best to entertain them, and succeeded very well. She read some pleasant extracts from Irving's Sketch-book and Bracebridge Hall, about Christmas times in England, and that pretty piece by good Dr. Clement More, "The Visit of St. Nicholas." The effect of this last was most potent. I believe both of the young gentlemen realized in their dreams the graphic description of the poet, and that

"Visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads."

Edward was anxious to sit up until the party returned, that he might hear Lucy's account of what they had seen. Bed-time however came, and at Mrs. Mason's suggestion, they both retired, and carefully arranged their stockings on a chair for the convenience of Santa Claus.

I shall not attempt to describe the joy which pervaded the house on the morning of Christmas. Suffice it to say, Kriskringle was extremely liberal of his favours, and had forgotten nobody.

Breakfast was hardly over, before Edward entreated his sister to tell them about the *illumination*. Those of the family who had not been able

to see for themselves, joined in the request, and she accordingly began :

"The church was crowded to overflowing when we got there. Some gentlemen very kindly gave their seats to aunt Emma and myself; but father and Frank had to stand in the aisle. O, the church was dressed so beautifully! Great festoons of green hung along the walls; the chancel rail was entwined with wreaths, and just above the altar was a large cross, covered with ivy. And then the lights! Why, mother, in every pane of glass there was a candle in full blaze, and the whole church was as light as day. When the bell stopped tolling, Mr. Palmer came out of the vestry-room, and began the service. Lizzy Scott had whispered to me just before, that Mr. Adams, who sometimes visits his relatives here, would preach, and I wondered where he was. But soon I forgot all about it. When they sang the Gloria in Excelsis, I could almost imagine that the angels had come back again, to herald the Saviour's birth. And then the chapter which Mr. Palmer read from the Old Testament was so appropriate; I wish I could remember it."

"There will be no trouble in finding it, my dear," said Mrs. Mason. "The Prayer-book directs the clergyman what lessons to read, and the same are used every where."

She then told Edward to bring her a Bible and Prayer-book from the stand; and turning to the table of lessons for the evening of December 24th, found that the chapter referred to was the 60th of Isaiah. The little boy read the verses aloud, which his mother pointed out :

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

"Stop a moment, Edward," said Mrs. Mason; "I wish to remind you that this chapter has been read in the church for hundreds of years; and in this country, especially, where our people were few and despised, on many a Christmas-eve, how cheering it must have been to listen to such promises as these." She then pointed to the 13th verse, and Edward read :

"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious."

"Why, mother," exclaimed Lucy, as though something very important had occurred to her, "I did not notice it last night; but it seems plain

enough from this, that it is right to dress the church with evergreens, although some people ridicule the practice."

Her mother gave an approving smile, and the little reader continued :

"The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee ; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet ; and they shall call thee, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

"This promise," remarked Mrs. Mason, "has been most wonderfully accomplished in the history of the church in America. Its most devoted members are the children of those who, but a few years ago, hated and persecuted her. But we have almost forgotten Lucy's story, which has suffered a sad interruption. Go on, my daughter, and let us hear the rest of it."

"I was just getting to a strange part," said Lucy, resuming the thread of her narrative. "You remember I told you that Mr. Adams was expected to preach. Well, just as they were singing the Psalm before sermon, the door opened, and who should come in but Mr. Adams, with his gown on. The people looked a little surprised ; but he whispered a few words to Mr. Palmer, as he passed the reading-desk, and went up into the pulpit. When the organ stopped, he arose, and gave out his text :

'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' It seemed as if he had come on purpose to tell us this joyful news. Every body listened with the greatest attention. You could hear a pin drop. As soon as the sermon was finished, Mr. Adams descended from the pulpit, and went out as he came. Somebody told father, afterwards, that he had been delayed by an accident on the road, and that, in order to be at his own church the next day, he was obliged to return the same night. But even his sudden departure did not have a bad effect. You might readily suppose that the messenger was going in haste to carry the tidings elsewhere."

"Did the people all follow him?" asked Harry, who had been listening with great attention. "Oh no!" said Lucy: "Mr. Palmer gave out the old hymn,—

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,'—

and the whole congregation joined in the tune of Bethlehem, which seems to have been made on purpose for the words."

"What a pleasant time," remarked Edward, who was always fond of going to church; "how I would like to have been there."

"You may still enjoy the Christmas services to-day, my son," said Mrs. Mason, "and it will soon be time to set out for church."

"Before we go, mother," said Lucy, "please show me those pretty lines about Christmas evergreens, which you repeated to me once."

"I suppose you refer to Mr. Croswell's gem, my dear." So saying, she turned to the place, and read,—

"The thickly woven boughs they wreath
Through every hallowed fane;
A soft reviving odour breathe
Of summer's gentle reign:
And rich the ray of mild green light,
Which, like an emerald's glow,
Comes struggling through the latticed height
Upon the crowd below."

CHAPTER VI.

I FEAR that the bright scenes of the last chapter will be obscured, at least in part, by some dark spots in this. The reader will please, however, to bear in mind, that I am not giving the history of an angelic being, but of a weak and erring child.

On the night of Christmas, a deep snow fell, which the next morning's sun began to melt. The extensive lawn in front of the house, afforded a most convenient place for one of the favourite amusements of boys, viz., that of rolling snow-balls. Edward and his cousins could not resist the temptation, and accordingly were soon actively engaged.

It happened, that among the books which Santa Claus had left, was a small volume containing the lives of various great men, and prominent in the list, was the Emperor Napoleon. Frank, into whose hands the treasure had fallen first, had been reading it aloud. Among other incidents of Bonaparte's school-boy days, was one, giving an account of a fortification which the young heroes made; to defend, and conquer which, two hostile parties waged a furious war. Our three little friends were

soon seized with a military fever, and the sight of the snow suggested the amusement in which they were now engaged.

The plan of a fort was marked out, ramparts were quickly raised, and war was at once proposed. It seemed hardly fair, however, that so unequal a division of the forces should be made, as two against one; and this difficulty might have saved me the trouble and mortification of recording what truth obliges me to state, had not an old acquaintance, Tom Hall, gone whistling along the road. Edward would have objected, under other circumstances, to allow such an unruly soldier to enlist; but in order that the play might not fall through, there seemed no other course but to forget the past. Frank and Edward accordingly took possession of the fort, and Henry and Tom began the assault. Both parties fought manfully. The excitement became intense. The besiegers boldly scaled the walls. The contest was now hand to hand. Each party, in turn, seemed certain to prevail.

I hinted once before, that Edward's cousins were not good boys. While in the presence of their uncle and aunt, they were under comparative restraint. But now, forgetful of every thing of the sort, and carried away by the interest of the scene, they gave full vent to profane and wicked words.

Tom, thus encouraged, did not fall behind. Edward, unmindful of what he said, began, at first, to display his valour too, by some of those smaller oaths which defile the tongues of men. His companions grew more blasphemous than before,—and at last, this child of so many hopes and prayers, invoked, with curses, the sacred name of God! He was shocked himself, as though stunned by a sudden blow. He took no further interest in the play, and upon the plea of weariness, soon sought refuge in the house. Edward's cousins were too much accustomed to use bad words themselves, to notice it in others. The little boy was so troubled that he could not rest content. Books and toys were resorted to in vain. The presence of his parents and sister only distressed him the more. He had a dreadful secret, which he was afraid to keep, and which, at the same time, he had not courage to reveal. His plate, at dinner, was untouched. When asked the reason, he seemed confused, and gave no answer. Thus things went on till the close of the day. But the darkness afforded poor Edward no relief. He knew that he had offended God, and His all-seeing eye seemed looking upon him with displeasure. As the evening wore away, he could contain himself no longer; and watching when his mother left the room, he quickly followed her. She

had gone to the chamber where she often retired when she wished to be alone. He gave a little tap at the door, and his heart smote him, when her gentle voice said, "Come in." The poor penitent waited for no questions to be asked, but, burying his head in his mother's lap, he sobbed aloud, and in half-choked words, told her all the truth. Mrs. Mason was greatly shocked. For some minutes she could not speak. When both were somewhat composed, she spoke to him most seriously of this grievous sin,—repeated the third commandment,—described the awful scene at Sinai, when that law was first proclaimed,—showed the ingratitude of treating profanely the name of the great and holy God,—and then knelt down, side by side, while the mother offered up a short and fervent prayer for the pardon of her son.

Edward now felt that a load had been taken from his mind. He remembered the gracious promise, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii. 13.

Mrs. Mason thought it right that her husband should know what had happened, and accordingly, when they were alone that night, she told him all.

Mr. Mason was, of course, distressed that his son should have been led to commit so great an offence; but it was no slight consolation to think that his

conduct afterwards had shown a tender conscience, and a well-disposed and honest purpose of heart.

The ruins of the fortification, as they glittered in the sun-light, were an eye-sore to the poor child; but, no doubt, this very source of unhappiness did him good. It reminded him of his fall, and seemed to keep under his natural self-conceit.

Frank and Henry had no idea that any thing out of the way had taken place, and amused themselves as usual. Edward, by degrees, recovered his cheerfulness, and joined in their sports; but he had lost all interest in warlike affairs. He seemed even to have taken a dislike to the Life of Napoleon, which had afforded him so much pleasure before. When his father inquired whether he had finished the book, he frankly told him the reason that he had laid it down. As no one else was present at the time, Mr. Mason told him that such a course was quite unnecessary, that the book was not to blame, and that he would do well to read it through.

"But, father," said Edward, with a solemnity of manner which seemed strange in one so young, "you know I hope to be a clergyman. Will it do me good to read such books?"

"A proper selection of them, my son," replied his father, "will be of decided advantage. Every intelligent person must, of necessity, be acquainted with the history of the world, and the great ones

who have figured on the theatre of life. Besides, can you think of no way in which the biographies of military heroes can be beneficial, even to a clergyman?"

"Yes, father," said Edward; "he can learn to be wide awake, and brave, and not to be easily discouraged, and to make the best of difficulties and troubles."

"Very true," remarked Mr. Mason; "and although the details of war and bloodshed must be painful to us, we should remember that every Christian who is baptized, enlists as a soldier of Christ, and engages in a warfare. Our ministers are the duly commissioned officers, who lead on the hosts of God. They must possess the courage and constancy of heroes, if they would do good service in his cause. One reason why the church makes such little progress in many places is, because the clergy do not regard the subject in this way. God's kingdom is to go on, conquering and to conquer. The whole world must yield to the Prince of peace."

Edward was about to ask his father a question, when the most piteous screams and cries were heard in the direction of the stables,—behind the house,—and Mr. Mason ran out in great alarm, followed by his son.

CHAPTER VII.

THE cause of the disturbance was soon explained. Henry was lying at full length upon the ground, with a deep cut across his forehead, and bruises not a few. His brother stood by wringing his hands in terror. Thomas came running from the garden, and several female servants from the house. Fortunately, Mrs. Parish had gone to town, that morning, or she would have been thrown into hysterics by the sight.

Mr. Mason promptly bound his handkerchief about Henry's head, and, by the aid of Thomas, carried him to the house.

The wound was by no means dangerous; and having applied such simple remedies as the case required, the young gentleman was told to remain quietly in his bed for the remainder of the day.

The safety of his patient being thus cared for, Mr. Mason began to inquire into the cause of the accident.

It turned out that the mischievous Tom Hall was at the bottom of the whole affair. Mr. Mason

kept several horses, and among them, a pretty pony, which the children were all allowed to ride. While Edward and his father had been engaged in the house, Tom had appeared again, and finding Frank and Henry swinging on the gate, persuaded them to go to the stable and look at the horses. The three congenial spirits had soon hatched up a fine scheme for a fox-hunt.

Tom, who was a year or two older than the rest, accordingly put a bridle upon the pony and one on the carriage horse, upon which he had sometimes stolen a ride, when the creature happened to be feeding in a pasture at a distance from the house. Every thing was soon arranged. Frank mounted the pony, and Henry got up behind the miller's boy upon the horse. The double weight by no means pleased the spirited creature, which began to plunge and kick, making every effort to shake off this unaccustomed load.

Tom easily kept his seat, and really enjoyed the sport, but poor Henry was too much frightened to know what to do, and was soon left prostrate upon the ground, in the way before described. The sight of the mischief he had done, put Tom to flight, and leaving the wounded boy to get on as best he might, he slunk off home.

When Mrs. Parish returned, the matter was broken to her in a manner not to cause alarm; and

after she had given way to her feelings, as weak mothers are apt to do, Mr. Mason took occasion to tell her plainly what he thought of the ruinous course she had hitherto pursued, in the management of her sons.

She begged her brother to remember the difficulty of keeping them under restraint in a large city—the many temptations to disobedience—the lazy disposition of her husband; urging these, and other excuses, as apologies for their conduct.

Mr. Mason was by no means satisfied. He insisted that children could be brought up properly anywhere, if parents tried sincerely and conscientiously to discharge their duty. He also, with brotherly affection and tenderness, portrayed the evils she was bringing upon herself by suffering her children to have the upper hand.

Mrs. Parish, with all her failings, was a good woman, and a most devoted parent, and she felt the truth of this. They talked over various plans, by which the evil, which had already spread so far, might now be checked. Mr. Mason advised that Frank should be placed at a school, which he named, kept by a clergyman, near New York. "As for Henry," he continued, "if you will leave him with me for a few months, we will see what can be done for him. When Edward is eight years old, (his birth-day is close at hand,) I intend to set him at

the Latin Grammar; and as Henry's education has been much neglected, they can start together."

The mother was distressed, at first, at the thought of parting with her sons, but her brother's arguments were so convincing that no reasonable objection could be raised. The only difficulty in the way was to obtain her husband's consent; and she wrote a letter that very day, explaining the plan proposed.

The next week brought an answer from Mr. Parish, acquiescing in this arrangement, and as his wife had finished her visit, and Henry had entirely recovered, Frank and his mother set out for home.

Mr. Mason had counted the cost before making the proposal he did. There would be advantages as well as disadvantages to Edward, in having a companion in his studies and amusements. Although Henry had fallen into many bad habits, and was unaccustomed to be controlled, he was naturally a kind-hearted and affectionate child; and his uncle had great hopes that he might be made a useful man.

The Monday after the visitors had left, the new arrangement for study began. The boys were to sit in the library, where Mr. Mason spent much of his time, and devote an hour to their lessons. At ten o'clock he was to call upon them to recite. If the lessons were well said, they were to be allowed

to play till dinner in the garden, or work-shop, as the weather might chance to be. In the afternoons they were to walk or ride; and at night, read for an hour or so, in some entertaining book; and, from that till bed-time, play at harmless games.

Mr. Mason bought a new Latin Grammar for each of the boys, and they both seemed not a little pleased. It was getting along on a grand scale, to be studying the classics.

Hitherto their lessons had been of the simplest sort; and Mr. Mason knew that grammar would at first be very dry. It is necessary, however, for all who wish to become scholars, to lay the foundation well.

Every hour spent in the rudiments is saving weeks of labour and vexation afterwards. Besides, although little boys may have no particular relish for grammar, it is much easier to master its rules while young, and then their way is made smooth for translating whatever books it is required of them to read.

And now, having set our students vigorously to work, I shall bring my chapter to a close.

CHAPTER VIII.

As Edward had before been accustomed to regular habits of study, (although the time thus actually employed was very short,) he, of course, felt the restraint to be less irksome than his cousin.

Mr. Mason sat at the table very busily writing, and only now and then raised his eyes, to look at his pupils. Once he gave Henry a gentle hint about gazing out of the window. Then he had to caution him not to cut the desk with his knife, which seemed open for the purpose. At last, seeing him quite busy with a pencil, scribbling upon the fly-leaves of his grammar, Mr. Mason spoke somewhat sternly, and desired him to improve his time.

When the little clock on the mantel-piece struck ten, the young students were called upon to recite.

Edward did very well; but it was plain enough, from Henry's blunders, that the nature of nouns and adjectives presented few charms for him.

As Mr. Mason held the grammar in his hand, listening with more patience than might be ex-

pected, to this lame attempt at a recitation, he accidentally glanced at the pencil marks upon the blank leaves at the end. He could scarcely suppress a smile, when he saw a caricature of himself sitting in his arm-chair, and the two students in attitudes of great apparent suffering, endeavouring to convey the contents of the books to their brains.

He made no remark upon the drawing; and as it was the first lesson, he let the mistakes pass pretty easily.

After dinner the boys were allowed to go to town with Thomas, in the "Democrat," as the little farm wagon was called. Both came home at supper-time quite full of a circus which was to be along in a few days. They had seen the flaring yellow hand-bills, with flying horses, and dancing men and women, posted up at every corner of the streets. Edward had never been at such an exhibition, and, supposing that his cousin's description of those he had attended to be quite correct, he was very urgent with his father to let them go.

Mr. Mason said "No!" most positively.

Henry expressed surprise; and his uncle then told him that he was willing that they should have all reasonable amusements, such as attending shows of wild beasts, concerts, &c.; but as for circuses, they were too low and debasing to be patronised by decent people.

Mr. Mason was so decided in his manner, that nothing more was said. But when the boys were by themselves, Henry's indignation boiled over. "I wonder what uncle will think wrong next?" he asked, in high displeasure. "A pretty thing, indeed, when we can't go to a circus!"

"I am sure my father always does right," answered Edward, sharply. "He never denies us any pleasure which it is proper for us to enjoy."

"It is well enough for you parsons to be whining about wickedness, and propriety, and all that," said Henry, whose ill temper had got a decided advantage over his usual good nature. "I won't stay here, to mope and pine away, I can assure you."

There is no telling what more he might have added, had not Thomas shouted to them from the lower part of the house, where he was propping up some bushes over-burdened with snow, "Come here, quick! I have caught a rabbit, which may be you would like to see, before I let him go!"

The boys both ran at once to claim the prize. After much coaxing, Thomas gave it to Edward, who shut it up in a cage, which at different periods had been the receptacle for divers kinds of beasts and birds. The timid creature hid itself, at first, in the straw, which had been placed in the corner for a bed; but by degrees it gained more confi-

dence, and ate greedily the leaves of lettuce and cabbage which the boys gave it.

At supper, the rabbit engaged the whole thoughts of our young friends, and would have formed the only topic of conversation, if they had consulted their own pleasure. Rules of politeness were too strictly observed at Mr. Mason's table, to allow children to disturb their betters by their talk, or to appear pert and forward. Edward's mother, however, introduced the subject briefly, and the opportunity being thus afforded, the little boys, with great earnestness, begged permission to have a rabbit warren. Mr. Mason laughed at the idea, and told them they had no conception how much trouble it would give them. They both insisted that they did not mind this. Mr. Mason, after some reflection, agreed that if the lessons were recited well the next day, he would go out with them, and choose a proper spot for the warren, and that Thomas should help them with the fence, and other necessary fixtures, when the weather moderated. "But you have forgotten one thing, Edward," said his father; "where will the rabbits come from? It will not answer to shut up this poor thing by itself; and it may be many a year before Thomas catches another."

"O, uncle!" exclaimed Henry, "we have thought

of all this. A man in town has got rabbits to sell, and we are going to buy a pair of him."

"Very well," said Mr. Mason; "I am the more willing to grant your request, because it may prove the source of some harmless enjoyment, and because I felt obliged to disappoint you about the circus this morning."

Edward seemed to wish to speak, but he hesitated. "What is it?" asked his father; "I see you have got something in your head."

"I was thinking, father," said the little boy, "of what Mr. Palmer told us in his sermon the other day about prayer. He remarked that God always answers our petitions in some way, if we really ask in faith. Like a kind parent, he does not always give the very thing the child asks for, but that which is most certain to promote its good. Your kindness to us just now, father, made me remember this."

By this time the tea things had been removed, and Mrs. Mason told Sally to bring her a roll of paper and some lead pencils which were lying on her dressing table. She then called the boys to her, and making them take their seat, gave each a pencil, and placed before them simple outline sketches from the drawing book to copy.

Mr. Mason had told his wife of the taste for this art which Henry had shown on the leaves of the

Latin grammar; and this little circumstance suggested a very pleasant and profitable way of passing off some of their leisure hours. They both seemed much gratified, and bed-time came while Edward was busy in finishing a well-curb, after the pattern in the drawing book; and Henry, in arranging the festoons of ivy about the tower of an old Gothic church. Their attempts were, of course, defective, but they bore a decided resemblance to the originals.

CHAPTER IX.

No possible fault could be found with the lessons the next day. The first declension of nouns was completely mastered. Mr. Mason was pleased with this marked improvement, and taking his hat, he told the boys to go with him, and select a spot for the rabbit warren, about which they had dreamed the night before.

"We must have it a safe distance from the garden," said he, as they went out of the gate. "Rabbits would prove very troublesome if they got loose from their pen; so we must keep this fact in view."

A few rods west of the house was a fine meadow, undulating in its surface, with clumps of fine old trees, growing here and there. Mr. Mason made choice of a little hillock, as affording a dry place for the rabbit house, and because it was partly in the shade. The weather being too cold to begin such work for some weeks to come, the boys had to content themselves with staking off the ground, and helping Thomas to cut the pickets for the fence.

The next day being Sunday, the whole family set off for church. The air was clear and bracing, and they had much pleasant conversation as they rode along. When within about a mile of the town the bell was distinctly heard.

"Uncle," inquired Henry, "why do you never go to any other church but ours?"

"What other could I go to?" asked Mr. Mason, in surprise.

"Why," said Henry, with a very knowing look, as though he had found his uncle in a mistake for once, "why there is the Methodist;"—and he was going on with a long string of names, expressive of the different shapes and shades in which the views of the so-called Christian world are bodied forth, when his uncle interrupted him.

"Not so fast, my boy. The Bible tells us of *one* HOLY, UNIVERSAL CHURCH, which God has established upon earth, and instead of saying that people are to join this society, or that, as suits their notions best, we are told in simple words, that 'The Lord adds to the CHURCH such as shall be saved.' Acts ii. 47."

"Are none of these denominations churches, then?" asked Henry, puzzled by this remark.

"You may judge for yourself, my boy," continued Mr. Mason; "if men can make churches, they are; if *God* alone can do it, they certainly are not. The

Methodists, whom you mentioned, claim John Wesley as their founder. He was an Episcopal clergyman who lived and died in the church. His course was not a wise one in many respects, but his honest purpose was to stir up life in the old church, which Christ had established, once for all. Finding that some of his followers began to prefer the noise and excitement of their meetings to the solemnity and proprieties of our services, he laid down this strict rule; "Let all our preachers go to church; let all the people go constantly; let them receive the sacrament at every opportunity; warn all against despising the prayers of the church; against calling our society a church; against calling our preachers ministers." "Whenever there is any church service, I do not approve of any appointment the same hour."

By this time they had entered the town, and were passing by a plain, square, homely-looking building, with a bell ringing away in great style, from a little contrivance on the roof.

"These Methodists pay great attention to Mr. Wesley's advice," said Edward, pointing to the people who were collecting about the door; "I should think they would be afraid to be thus disobeying his rule."

Mr. Mason paid no attention to the remark, perhaps did not hear it; but thus continued: "The

Methodists, Henry, have, as I conceive, a better claim to consider themselves a church than any other modern sect; and you see for yourself upon what a sandy foundation their whole fabric rests."

"Yes, indeed, uncle," said Henry, "sandy enough. Why, Mr. Wesley, who had the credit of having formed the church, declares himself that it is no church. What better authority could we ask?"

The driver now stopped before the church gate, and the little party went in.

The second service being at night, they always returned home to dinner, and spent the remainder of the day as profitably as they could.

Sometimes Mrs. Mason took the boys with her to see the poor people of the neighbourhood, or, if the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves in reading. After supper, on Sunday night, Mr. Mason always heard them say the Catechism, and explained some parts of it. Then the boys took turns in reading aloud, for the benefit of the family. The "Spirit of Missions" was generally laid by for these occasions, and several biographies interested them very much. Among these were the Lives of Henry Martyn and Bishop Heber, and the Early Years of Bishop Hobart. Mr. Mason made this selection with a view of keeping Edward's mind constantly directed towards that sacred calling, in which he fondly hoped his son

might spend his days. He thought it both impolitic and wrong to be constantly bringing the subject before him in conversation, and preferred such indirect influences as I have named.

At first, Henry looked forward to Sunday night as a very tiresome time; but soon he became as much interested as any of them, and took his turn in reading with real satisfaction. By way of impressing the outline of Bible history on the mind, and of keeping the events in proper order, they used a most agreeable and useful book, called "Sunday Evenings;" a series of conversations between a mother and her son.

When the boys showed the least sign of weariness, the reading was stopped, and they were encouraged to converse on any subject of interest which presented itself.

On the night of the Sunday of which I was speaking last, matters had reached this point, and Edward, in casting his eyes about the room, saw the small likeness of Bishop Hobart, which hung over the fire-place. "Did you ever see Bishop Hobart, mother?" he asked, still looking at the picture.

"Oh, yes, my son," Mrs. Mason answered; "I have often heard him preach, and he confirmed your father and myself."

"I knew he was a good man," said Edward,

"because he did so much for the church, and seemed to be always thinking about it. Did not every body love him?"

"You can be but little acquainted with the world, Edward," said his father, "if you imagine that good people will have no enemies. Popularity is by no means a sure proof of worth. Besides, our Saviour says, 'Wo unto you when all men speak well of you!' showing that we must expect opposition and reproach if we go straight forward in the way of duty. But many who found fault with Bishop Hobart, while living, have had cause to change their minds since his death."

"Do you remember, my dear," said Mrs. Mason, to her husband, "what a storm was raised, because he would not unite with what are called the 'evangelical denominations,' in circulating the Scriptures?"

"Yes, indeed!" replied Mr. Mason; "and it is a remarkable fact, Maria, that at the very time the good Bishop brought all that odium upon himself, by insisting that the Bible and Prayer-book should go together, and that the ministers of God's appointment should be sent to explain his Word, there were sectarian missionaries in some of their foreign stations, actually translating the Prayer book into the language of the natives, as the only

hope of making any favourable impression upon them."

Here Sally came in with a tray of cakes and apples; and as boys are seldom indisposed to partake of such things, we will leave them for the present to enjoy this treat.

CHAPTER X.

SPRING, with its buds and bloom, was hastening on, when the boys began to agitate the subject of the rabbit warren, with even greater interest than before. Edward was anxious to have the work completed before his sister returned from school. Accordingly, as soon as study hours were over, the labour began. Thomas had prepared the posts and pickets during the winter, so that nothing now remained but to put them up. But the fence, alone, would not be a sufficient security. He accordingly drove down long stakes into the ground, about an inch apart on every side of the pen. Meanwhile, Henry and Edward were busy in putting up a little house in the middle of the warren, which was to be a sort of homestead for the colony. Very likely the rabbits would have preferred their own burrows for the purpose, but they could now, at least, have a choice.

Of course it took much longer to do this work than to describe it. However, it was at last so nearly finished that the boys were setting off in high glee, to bring the little creatures from the

wood-house, to their new quarters, when the gardener, who was fastening a button on the gate, raised his head, and asked: "Master Edward, did you know that Tom Hall was mighty sick?"

"No," answered Edward, with evident concern. "How sick, Thomas? What is the matter with him? Has he had the doctor?"

"It was the doctor himself who told me," said the gardener. "I met him in the road this morning. He said that Tom had a fever, and that the little fellow stood a poor chance, because his parents could afford him so few comforts."

Edward staid to hear no more, but leaving his cousin to attend to the removal of the rabbits, ran to the house as fast as he could. The effect of his haste was soon apparent—when Mrs. Mason was seen going down the lane, accompanied by her son, who had a basket on one arm, and a bundle of clean linen under the other.

They found Tom lying on a miserable, uncomfortable bed, in a little leaky house, near the mill. His mother was busy in heating something over the fire, and a dirty, ragged girl sat by the sick boy, trying to fan him with a newspaper, which had been twisted up for the purpose. Tom was suffering with an intolerable thirst. Mrs. Mason, taking a lump of ice from the basket, and wrapping it in a clean towel, broke it up, and gave him a small

piece at a time, to melt in his mouth. He seemed greatly refreshed, and ceased his moaning, which it had been distressing to hear. Edward busied himself in trying to make things more comfortable about the bed.

The sick boy could scarcely believe his eyes, when he saw who were thus kindly ministering to his wants. He thought of his own badness. He remembered the unkind things he had done to Edward, and the many trespasses he had committed upon Mr. Mason's property. At length his feelings of shame and self-reproach quite overcame him, and covering his head with the bed-clothes, he began to sob bitterly. It was some time before he became composed enough to tell the cause of his distress.

Mrs. Mason spoke soothingly to him, and asked if they should pray to God to help him.

Although the poor fellow had, perhaps, never tried to pray in his life, he knew that there was an Almighty Being, who had power to bless, or to punish, and, accordingly, he accepted of the offer with thankfulness.

They all knelt down, and Mrs. Mason repeated the Lord's prayer, (Edward joining with her in this,) and the prayer for a sick child.

Promising to send in the evening to inquire after her patient, and telling Mrs. Hall to come to the

house for any thing they needed, she returned home.

I have gone on so slowly with my history, thus far, that it will be necessary for me to make more speed. Let me say, therefore, in few words, that Tom's sickness, though painful and lingering, did not prove fatal. By God's blessing upon the physician's skill, and the kindness of Mr. Mason's family, he was about again in a few weeks.

I am happy to add, that he arose from his sick bed a wiser and a better boy. He seemed, now, resolutely determined to try to do right.

When the excitement attending Lucy's return from school, and the arrival of Henry's mother, had somewhat subsided, Mrs. Mason broached a plan, one evening, which, she said, had long occupied her thoughts. Several families in humble circumstances were living within a mile of the house, and as they enjoyed no church privileges, she proposed to organize a Sunday school, for the benefit of the children who were thus growing up in ignorance.

The young people warmly seconded the proposal. Mrs. Parish, although she had no personal concern in it, was very considerate for the convenience of others, and, therefore, said to Mrs. Mason, in some amazement, "Really, Maria, you can't be serious in proposing to bring all those unmannerly children here, to worry your life out of you!"

"No," answered Mrs. Mason, amused at the other's warmth, "that, certainly is not my object! But I mean to ask them to come, and learn something which will be likely to benefit them."

"But," resumed Mrs. Parish, "consider how much trouble it will give you. Sunday is the only breathing spell that one has; and to lose that, for the sake of those poor, ignorant creatures, who will not even thank you for your pains, is asking too much."

"If we only do the *pleasant* parts of our duty," said Mrs. Mason, "and leave the rest to take care of itself, the world will be the worse; and, I am sure, we shall not be in the way to deserve happiness or prosperity."

"You see, sister," interposed Mr. Mason, who knew that her easy, self-indulgent disposition, could not understand, in its full extent, the obligation which rests upon every follower of the Saviour, to carry his cross with patience. "You see, sister, that Maria is just as resolute as ever, in whatever she undertakes. There will be no use in trying to *oppose* the scheme; so let us see what can be done to *help it along*."

The family then entered into a friendly conversation on the subject, each one making any suggestion he thought best.

It was finally determined that the children's play-

room should be fitted up with benches, which could be set out of the way during the week, and that Mr. Mason should send for the necessary books.

All entered into the measure with such hearty good will, that in the course of two weeks, the school had been organized, much to the satisfaction of the scholars and the encouragement of the teachers.

The rule was, to meet at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, when Mr. Mason began the exercises with the appropriate little service in the "office of devotions."

Mrs. Mason and Lucy each had a fine class of girls, of different ages and capacities.

Henry and Edward were required to recite a lesson in "Beavin's Help to Catechising," and afterwards were allowed to teach some of the smaller boys their alphabet.

Our friend Frank, whom we have not heard from so long, had been taught to sing at school; and his skill, in this department, was now turned to some account.

The children began with plain psalm tunes, and afterwards learned several chants.

It was a pleasant spectacle to see their happy faces while thus engaged. The once unruly Tom, had become diligent and teachable, and was making quite rapid improvement, considering how long his mind had lain uncultivated like a barren waste.

I would not have you suppose that every thing went on smoothly without discouragements and drawbacks. Some of the children would occasionally be rather unmanageable. Now and then they had a quarrel among themselves. Once, several stopped coming for a Sunday or two, and when Mrs. Mason inquired the cause, it turned out that the Baptist parents had been alarmed at some notions which their children had brought home about "*baby sprinkling*," as they called it.

These difficulties, and others, which I shall not stop to enumerate, were all overcome by the energetic, prudent course pursued by the directors of the school.

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs. Parish had intended to take her two sons home with her for a few weeks; but Mr. Mason urged so strongly that they should remain where they were, that at last she consented, upon condition that the whole family would make her a visit at Christmas.

It is something of an undertaking to travel so far in cold weather, but as the time was yet at a distance, and the difficulties, on this account, seemed less insuperable, he promised accordingly.

The boys were now all large enough to manage a horse, and Mr. Mason encouraged them to ride daily. He considered it a great disadvantage for any man, and especially a minister, not to be able to ride and drive with confidence.

Occasions will sometimes arise, when it will be *absolutely necessary* that he should do so.

Frank had a decided turn for field sports. His uncle did not actually *forbid* his use of a gun, but always insisted that he should go by himself, in order not to risk the lives of others.

He *advised*, however, that fishing should be sub-

stituted, if amusements of the sort must be had; and as it was much pleasanter to have company in his sports, this soon became the order of the day.

I am unable to say what influence Isaac Walton's "Complete Angler" may have had, in determining his choice. I only know that he pored over the book for some days, and fishing took the place of gunning.

It is but justice to Frank to state that he had derived great benefit from the discipline of school, and intercourse with other boys.

Sometimes his old infirmities would manifest themselves, but always in a modified form.

He had received no little credit for his deportment at Mr. Mason's, during this visit, and his partial mother had, probably, given vent to her satisfaction somewhat too often for his good.

If this were the case, his self-satisfaction had a damper put upon it; for, one day, being crossed in some purpose, passion got the better of his judgment, and he used some highly offensive words.

His uncle mildly reproved him, and watching an opportunity when he had recovered his good temper, he said to him, "I am afraid, my dear boy, that you trust too much to yourself, and do not think to ask God's help to enable you to speak and to do those things that are right."

Frank made no reply, and his uncle continued,

"I once heard a story of an inn-keeper who had for his sign a great red lion, painted in the grotesque style of early times.

"His successor in business determined to improve upon this, and employed an artist to furnish a more appropriate device. He soon spread a covering of white paint over the king of beasts, and ornamented the board with a fine brick house, having trees and shrubbery about it, and every thing else in keeping.

"The improvement called forth universal approbation. In course of time, the effect of heat, and cold, and storm, began to be manifest. The colours of the picture became less bright. In some places it was quite indistinct. At last, the coat of white paint, which had served as the ground-work, began to peel off; and then, once more, the face of the old red lion was seen, looking out as fiercely as before.

"This has always seemed to me an excellent illustration of the impossibility of getting rid of those deeply imprinted marks of sin which have been made in the soul, unless something more than outward reformation, a *white-washing* of the character, as I may call it, be resorted to."

Frank was interested in what his uncle said, and although he discovered that the remarks had reference to his own case, so far from being offended, he desired Mr. Mason to proceed.

"Any change, to be permanent, Francis, must reach the heart. This can only be effected by the help of God's grace."

The conversation had glided on, imperceptibly, until that which began as a gentle reprimand for faults, assumed the form of a pleasant discourse, in which the *reproved*, as well as the *reprover*, felt interested.

"I suppose, uncle," remarked Frank, "that with the views you have just expressed, you cannot place much dependence in the system of pledges upon which the temperance movement is grounded."

"None at all," answered Mr. Mason; "the whole thing proceeds upon wrong principles. It is as much as saying, that the gospel having failed to reform the world, some other machinery, better adapted for the purpose, must be devised. But until you can inspire a person's conscience with a sense of right and wrong, all the pledging in the world will not keep him sober, or enable him to do any thing else."

"Do you think temperance societies altogether unnecessary?" asked Frank.

"Most assuredly," said his uncle. "To be temperate in *all things*, in *eating* as well as in *drinking*, is a very important part of religion. If the *gospel* is preached, as a matter of course, *temperance* is not lost sight of. You may as well or-

ganize anti-swearing, or anti-smoking societies, and any others you please, as those which are promising to do such great things now."

Here Lucy came in to say that Mr. Palmer had arrived, according to appointment, to baptize Mr. Wilson's children.

Mr. Mason went out at once to welcome the rector, whose visits were always highly prized.

The good man seemed to enjoy the country air and quiet. He had a kind word for every body, and took an interest in the progress of the children; making special inquiries as to what Edward had been reading, and offering some suggestion which would have the effect of keeping his thoughts in a proper channel.

Sometimes he brought a book for him to read; sometimes he referred to encouraging reports from the missionary field, sometimes he spoke of changes for the better, in their own parish.

There was always an opening for a happy and profitable reference to the subject of the ministry, and he never failed to use it to the best advantage.

The baptism, of which Lucy spoke, was one of the first fruits of the Sunday School.

The children were all taught the Catechism, and Mr. Mason had provided a good selection of books and tracts, which they were allowed to take home with them.

Mrs. Wilson, in reading one of these, had be-

come convinced that she was wrong in suffering her children to grow up like heathen, and she spoke to her husband about having them christened.

He objected very stoutly; not that he had any reasons to urge; but he had been saturated with the spirit of indifference, which is one of the effects of the mournful divisions among Christians, and insisted that the children should be allowed to grow up, and choose for themselves.

Mrs. Wilson was too much in earnest to be put off in this way, and at last he consented, very prudently, however, throwing all the responsibility upon her.

The children were brought to Mr. Mason's, and the family assembled in the dining room.

Mrs. Mason and Lucy were the sponsors. It was really an impressive scene. Two boys and three girls, were thus enrolled as soldiers of Christ, and signed with the cross, in token of their allegiance to Him.

When the service was over, Mr. Palmer took the basin of water which had been used, and emptied it out of doors. He had no superstitious notions on the subject; but he felt that every thing which has a tendency to encourage a proper reverence for sacred things, ought to be attended to.

The neglect of small matters is apt to make us indifferent about greater ones.

The baptism soon became the subject of conversation about the neighbourhood, and other parents began to think it might be well to give their children the same privilege. Mr. Hall, the miller, was one of these.

Tom was now too old to be baptized as a child, and Mr. Mason had been taking him through a course of instruction, for some time past, with a view of his receiving this sacrament as an adult.

Mr. Palmer would have preferred to have had the baptism in the church; but as this, for several reasons, seemed quite impracticable, he made another appointment to visit the country.

"And why not have service when he comes?" inquired Mrs. Mason, as soon as she heard of it.

"So we can, my dear," answered her husband, "if you will find a suitable place for the purpose."

"I am sure," she observed, with her usual promptness, when a matter of interest engaged her thoughts, "I am sure Mr. Hall will let us have the big room in the mill, where the political meeting was held last year."

"A good thought," replied her husband; and upon this suggestion, the application was made, and a cheerful consent given.

But as I have already spun out my chapter too long, I must leave the carrying out of this plan till my next.

CHAPTER XII.

To accommodate the labouring people, the service was held at night.

A small stand, with a writing desk on the top, formed a pulpit. The room was tolerably lighted, by candles placed here and there.

The larger children of the Sunday School had learned to respond, from using the "Office of Devotion" which I mentioned before.

At the hour appointed, about fifty persons, large and small, had assembled; and Mr. Palmer, arrayed in his gown, took his place at the desk.

He began by explaining, in a few simple remarks, the nature of the service which was to follow; telling the people, that however new it might seem to them, time had been, when the whole Christian church was one, and that their forefathers, for generations, had worshipped God according to the rules of the Prayer-book.

He then began with that glorious vision of the final triumph of Christ's kingdom in the earth: "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense shall be offered unto my name," &c.

The chants were very well sustained, and at the close of the second lesson, the candidates were requested to present themselves for baptism.

Tom Hall and his mother, and several small children came forward.

Mr. and Mrs. Mason were witnesses for the adults.

Who could have believed that the tongue of the once lawless Tom, which had been "full of cursing and bitterness," would so soon be heard, solemnly promising, by God's help, to "keep His holy will and commandments, and walk in the same, all the days of his life?"

When the psalm had been sung, Mr. Palmer announced as his text our Saviour's promise to His people: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them."—St. Matthew xviii. 20.

He used no notes on this occasion, as a written sermon would have seemed strange to most of those present. Besides, he designed to discourse to them in a familiar style, suited to their capacities and tastes.

The preacher began by reminding his hearers *Who* it was that thus addressed them in the text; none other than the Great Head of the church, the Eternal Son of God.

He then mentioned the various ways in which

Christ Jesus was present with His people. He is in the midst of them to hear their prayers. He speaks to them in the lessons from the Bible. He blesses the sacraments of the church, to the good of such as rightly receive them. He makes the instructions of His ministers profitable to the humble-minded and the teachable.

He enlarged upon each of these points, but I have no room to give his remarks.

In conclusion, he urged upon all to improve the privileges vouchsafed, and never, by indifference or unbelief, to provoke the Saviour to withdraw His presence from them.

A solemn silence reigned for some moments after the benediction had been pronounced; and then all quietly retired to their homes.

"The church has been too backward in availing herself of such opportunities of doing good," said the rector, when the family had reached Mr. Mason's house. "I often think of a remark which I heard from good old Bishop Chase, when pleading the claims of the west. He insisted that the regular established parishes, in our cities and towns, regarded the church as a fine lady, whose lawn and linen and silk, could not be expected to go forth into the highways and hedges."

"A most absurd idea," said Mr. Mason, "but entertained, no doubt, by many good people. If

the high claims of the church are not all mere moon-shine, she *must* be adapted to the wants of *all* people, whether rude or refined."

"Certainly," returned Mr. Palmer, "and we lose ground daily, by leaving the *bush-fighting*, as it is called, to be done by others. We are bound to 'preach the gospel to *every creature*,' and we cannot hope for God's blessing, while we neglect the poor and the ignorant."

The evening was wearing away, and Mrs. Mason very considerably observed, that as Mr. Palmer must be weary after the labours of the day, probably he would like to retire early to rest.

He thanked her, saying, "I should be glad to do so. Let us first, however, sing a hymn, and unite in a short prayer. As we have been engaged in missionary work to-night, suppose we sing Bishop Heber's hymn."

All, therefore, joined in singing, "From Greenland's icy mountains;" and the little company dispersed.

Since the great improvement in Tom Hall's character, Mr. Mason had been desirous to see him engaged in regular business. His first idea was to take him into his own employ, as assistant to the gardener; but, upon farther reflection, he determined to let him learn a trade in town.

Mr. Mason had some influence with a thrifty,

enterprising book-binder, who, upon his recommendation, agreed to receive Tom into his establishment.

It is true, the lad would be more exposed to evil examples and temptations, than in the country; but his kind friend thought that these objections would be overbalanced by the social and religious privileges he could there enjoy.

About this time, Frank and Lucy went back to school, and having thus got some of our friends into active employment, it will be needful for me to pass over a long space of time, in which nothing unusual occurred.

Henry and Edward continued to improve in their studies, and the Sunday School prospered.

Mr. Palmer had been so encouraged by his services at the mill, that he came out for the purpose once a month.

Edward had just passed his fourteenth birth-day. Although naturally of a frail constitution, the wise course adopted by his father, in obliging him to take plenty of exercise in the open air, had made him comparatively stout and vigorous.

The habit of reading aloud had strengthened his lungs, and given him a good command of his voice.

Mr. Mason having now carried him through his preparatory studies, was casting about, to know what college would suit him best.

He consulted with friends, and gleaned information from every available source.

As the result of these inquiries, he concluded that he ought to patronise a church institution.

The larger universities can boast of their libraries and full corps of professors; but, after all, Mr. Mason knew, from his own experience, that their books were seldom of much benefit to the students, and that the long list of titled dignitaries, was no evidence that the instruction would be more thorough than in schools of less pretension.

Because church colleges are in their *infancy*, and consequently *weak*, is no reason why they should be neglected. Nay, it is a strong argument why our people should stand by and sustain them.

Mr. Mason acted upon this principle, and arrangements were accordingly made for Edward's departure to college, at the opening of the next session.

As Henry was to be a merchant, his father thought it unnecessary that his classical education should be carried on further. He, therefore, returned to the city, with a view of attending to book-keeping. Edward's mother was very busy in preparing clothes, and every thing necessary for his comfort.

He never had been absent from home for any long time before; and it was with a heavy heart, that she thought of his going now.

A new trunk was got for him, with his name on a brass plate, and in this his clothes and books were packed.

The morning for his departure arrived much sooner than any body wished.

His father was to go and see him safely through with his examinations.

The carriage drove to the door, to take them to the town, from which the boat would start.

The luggage was strapped on behind. Edward lingered as long as possible, arranging some little matters which were to be attended to during his absence.

He shook each member of the household affectionately by the hand, unable to give utterance to a word; and when his mother tenderly embraced him, saying, in faltering accents, "God bless you, my son," he hastened to the carriage, that he might give vent to his feelings in a flood of tears.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE college examination passed off as such things usually do, the *reality* proving not half so terrible as the *anticipation*.

Although Edward was thoroughly prepared, so far as scholarship was concerned, his mind was kept in a state of feverish excitement and apprehension until it had been officially announced that the thirty young gentlemen who had presented themselves, were received as members of the freshman class.

Mr. Mason requested that his son might be allowed a room-mate somewhat older than himself, that he might sooner become acquainted with the ways of the world, into which he was thus suddenly brought.

He knew that Edward, having hitherto enjoyed the peaceful retirement of home, might otherwise be bewildered; although he felt great confidence in the stability of his moral principles, resting, as they did, upon a sure trust in the Almighty.

A room was accordingly assigned to him, which was occupied by Charles Porter, a member of the junior class.

He had not returned, at the opening of the session, so that I cannot present him to the reader just now.

Our young collegian soon provided himself with the necessary furniture and books, and you may imagine him, if you please, sitting down on the first night of the term, to begin his lessons.

His father having already left town, the last link which bound him to his much loved home seemed rudely broken, and his heart began to fail.

He felt, however, that he had a work to do, and that despondency would only hinder him in the attempt to prosecute it with success.

Brushing a tear from his cheek, he trimmed his lamp; and arranging his Xenophon and Lexicon, began in good earnest.

The bell for study hours had rung, and Edward took it for granted, that all, for whose benefit the signal was given, would be as prompt to heed it as himself.

He was, therefore, surprised to hear the most outlandish noises, and merry peals of laughter from various parts of the hall; and, in the course of an hour or so, the trampling of many feet seemed coming towards his door.

A violent thump was given, and before the host could invite his guests to enter, a boisterous set of youths, from fourteen to twenty, marched in without ceremony, each puffing away at a cigar, and

apparently quite satisfied with themselves, and with every body else.

"Well, Mason," said one of the party, with a fancy smoking cap on one side of his head and a large stick in his hand, with whom Edward remembered to have exchanged a few words in the morning, "Well, Mason, we thought we'd come and make you a sociable visit to-night, knowing that you must be rather lonely and low-spirited."

Edward, uncertain whether to take him in jest or earnest, invited them to be seated, regretting that he had not chairs enough for the company.

"Oh, never mind," said the knight of the smoking cap, "we'll make ourselves perfectly at home."

With this, he set the example, by plumping down in the middle of the bed, while those who could not find chairs, took possession of the trunks and table.

"And now that we are all comfortable," shouted a scrubby little fellow, with a fiery red head, "Joe Spencer, give us a song."

"With all my heart," answered the worthy thus addressed, clearing his pipes for the purpose, "and you must all join in the chorus with vim."

"Wait a moment, till I give you the pitch," said the hero with the big walking stick; so saying, he thumped the floor most vigorously, and the song began.

Spencer led off in very respectable style, and the

rest assisted in the chorus, in the manner he had requested.

Poor Edward looked on in mute astonishment.

"Russell," cried a wiry-looking youngster, who had perched himself on the window sill, and was adding his share to the noise by kicking the wall with his heels, "Russell, let's have a Latin chant now. Maybe, as Mason is a student who consumes the midnight oil, he may prefer it to plain Queen's English."

The new chorister waited for no second invitation, but began, with a familiar air, an ode of Horace, probably the only scrap of learning he could muster for the purpose.

*"Mæcenâs ataris edite regibus,
O, et præsidium et dulce decus meum,
Sunt, quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum," &c.*

"Bravo! bravo! encore!" screamed the delighted crowd, at the same time stamping their feet and clapping their hands till Edward was nearly deafened by the noise, and suffocated with the dust thus raised from every crevice in the floor.

"I declare, Russell," said Spencer, with mock modesty of manner, "you throw me into dim obscurity."

"Yes, indeed," cried the red-haired freshman, "he can chant mass better than Cardinal Wolsey himself."

But din and uproar at last become tiresome to those who enjoy them most, and somebody proposed that Mason should furnish a cold collation for the company, in return for their musical entertainment.

This was like adding insult to injury; but the motion was carried unanimously, with increased noise and confusion, when the door suddenly opened, and a college tutor requested the rioters to retire to their rooms.

The assembly immediately dissolved, some one saying, in a jocular way, as they hurried along the hall, "Who'd have thought it was so late? I declare, I did not observe the study bell!"

Edward, thus delivered from his tormentors, tried to arrange his bewildered thoughts. Having, at length, finished his task, he read the Psalter for the evening, and, in addition to his usual devotions, besought God to bless his absent friends, and to carry him safely through the trials and temptations of his new state of life.

With a quiet conscience, he retired to rest; his dreams of home being strangely mixed up with visions of smoking caps and canes, and a noisy company of unbidden guests.

And now, having carried our young freshman safely through his first day at college, we will leave him to enjoy his repose.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next morning Edward was roused from bed by the prayer bell. He had resolved always to be up in season to attend to his private devotions before going to recitation. This time, however, it was impossible. It amused him, somewhat, to see the sleepy-looking figures hurrying to the chapel, dressed in tattered morning gowns, or shabby overcoats, each with a bundle of books under his arm. He was, however, shocked to observe that many spent the time of prayer in conning over their lessons, doing their best, in this way, to make up for the hours wasted in the sports of the night before.

Edward in the course of a few days began to feel more settled and contented. He had formed some pleasant acquaintances among the students, and was glad to find that the persecution he had suffered was not owing to any personal dislike, but a sort of ordeal through which every freshman was expected to pass. Indeed he afterwards discovered that his own experience had been light compared with that of others. The plugging up of key-

holes, and the squibbing and ducking, and a hundred other tricks which had been practised upon his classmates, made him thankful that he had suffered no worse.

Edward was so accustomed from his early religious training to look upon evil with abhorrence, that it would not be easy to entice him into the ordinary dissipations of college life. He had, however, other, and to him more dangerous temptations to resist.

Those who are familiar with the internal working of our college systems, need not be told of the interest felt by the students for their literary and secret societies. They make themselves acquainted beforehand, so far as may be, with the character and standing of the new freshman who will enter, and are prepared to spread their nets accordingly.

It was soon noised abroad that Edward Mason's father was wealthy, and the acquisition of a member with moneyed qualifications is considered a point of some interest. The societies had therefore appointed their electioneering agents to bring the various influences to bear upon him, which students understand so well. Edward became a lion at once. He was courted and caressed, and what pleased him much better, had no more practical jokes played upon him. Every body's effort seemed to be to win his favour. Edward was puzzled to account

for the change. He knew too little of the world to unravel its devices. Nothing, however, was allowed to relax his attention to study, or interfere with the discharge of his religious duties.

About ten days after the beginning of the term, Charles Porter made his appearance. He was, at least, three years older than Edward, and possessed a fine, open countenance, and a gentlemanly bearing. It would, very likely, have suited him better to have a room by himself, but as this could not be, he was evidently pleased to have a companion who promised to be so agreeable. The president had assured Mr. Mason that Porter, though not religious, was steady, and well-disposed, and, on this account, a safe companion for his son. This description was true, as far as it went. Charles Porter had reached that age when flattery and other causes lead the young to pride themselves upon their acquirements, and to delight in startling the serious-minded by bold and unqualified statements in regard to politics and religion. The sneers and sarcasms of Paine, and the gilded poison of Gibbon, had exerted a most unwholesome influence upon him. But of this fact the president of the college knew nothing.

On the first night after his return, Edward was surprised to see him go to bed without any devotional exercise whatever; and it made him feel

rather awkwardly as to what course he should pursue. Conscience told him that there was but one way to act. He, accordingly, kneeled down as usual, and although Porter was probably quite as much astonished to observe what Edward was about, as the latter had been to discover his neglect, he was too well bred to laugh outright while the boy was upon his knees. When he had said his prayers and was preparing to undress, Porter said, in a trifling way, "Mason, when you get done with your orisons, please blow out the light. It takes you a long time to tell your beads, and it is hardly fair to add to the number of your invocations, but I would be glad if you would remember to speak a good word for me!"

Edward made no reply, but silently asked help of God to withstand the shafts of ridicule.

No allusion was made the next day to what had passed the night before, and Porter, who really took a fancy to Edward, did all he could to help him through his difficulties in his studies, and to make the hours of recreation pass pleasantly.

Every thing had been going on quietly for a month, when one night there seemed to be some mysterious plot on hand. Several of the most unruly students were seen dodging from room to room, whispering to this one and that one, and, among others, asking Porter's advice about something, in regard to

which he gave no satisfactory answer. Long before day-break, Edward heard an unusual noise in the opposite room, where Turner, the bell-ringer, lodged. He seemed to be trying to burst open the door, which he finally succeeded in doing. Edward lost himself in sleep, and did not learn the cause till afterwards. It appears that several of the sophomores, who thought more of fun and frolic than any thing else, had frightened two or three freshmen into giving them an oyster supper, and in order that they might not be disturbed at their feast by the tutor, or called up from bed too early in the morning by the bell-ringer, had fastened the doors of these functionaries, with some contrivance of their own. The first part of the plan was most successfully carried out; but Turner got the better of them in the second, and at the proper hour the old bell sounded its usual warning.

Besides the office already mentioned, Turner was required by the faculty to act as monitor, reporting absentees from prayer, and those who were tardy. Such duties, of course, rendered him exceedingly unpopular.

Poor fellow! He was one of those praiseworthy, excellent young men who have raised themselves by incredible efforts from some humble station, and are struggling hard with poverty and opposition

to gain a good education and prepare themselves for usefulness in life.

Turner must have been at this time twenty-five years of age, and his pale, wasted face, and languid eye, told a tale of sorrow and privation which could not be mistaken. In order to meet the expenses of his college course, he was obliged to perform the drudgery just referred to.

All considerate, well-disposed students treated him with respect and kindness. Some, however, were thoughtless and wicked enough to give him all the trouble they could.

Edward felt drawn towards him as soon as he heard his story, and used often to go in to visit him. Although Turner was a Presbyterian, and rather set in his way, they had enough in common to render such intercourse agreeable to both parties.

This familiarity, as might be supposed, brought upon Edward a share of the ridicule which had formerly been showered upon the bell-ringer alone.

"Have you had your prayer meeting this morning with brother Richard?" one would solemnly inquire. "Well, Parson Mason," another would say, "what do you think of the doctrine of original sin? You will have to help Turner in his devotions a long time, before the bells of the *horses*, which Old Bald-Pate read about the other day in chapel,

will have holiness written on them, much less *college bells!*"

Edward managed to preserve his good temper; and although his pride was often deeply wounded, and his refined sense of politeness shocked, he pursued the even tenor of his way, turning aside neither to the right hand nor to the left.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE morning, during the earlier part of the second season, a notice, to this effect, was seen pasted upon the front door of the college:—"The Freshman class will meet at number 20, this morning, at 8 o'clock."

At the hour appointed, the members of the class were all in attendance.

A chairman was elected, and some one stated the object of the meeting. It was to request the faculty to excuse them from recitation that morning, in order that they might hear a speech which Mr. Clay was expected to make in the public square.

A committee was accordingly appointed for the purpose, and an adjourned meeting agreed upon two hours later, to which a report of their proceedings would be made.

The reckless students, for the most part, trifled away the time in various sports, taking it for granted that their request would be acceded to.

A good deal of indignation was accordingly expressed, when a flat refusal was returned. The faculty informed the committee that the recitations

would be over in ample time for the class to attend the political gathering, if they wished; but that it would be highly improper, and a most dangerous precedent, to break in upon the order of the college exercises, because Mr. Clay, or Mr. any body else was to speak.

"Very well," shouted a dozen voices at once; "if we can't have leave, we'll go without it. I move for a bolt!"

The response was one loud burst of applause. No negative was called for.

When the tumult had somewhat subsided, a grave, sensible-looking youth, arose and said, "I, for one, am opposed to any such course!"

Hisses and groans silenced him at once. Cries were heard from every quarter, "Down with the coward! Out upon the bootlick!"

At this moment, who should attempt to speak, but our friend Edward. "I am just as anxious to hear Mr. Clay as any of you," he began, "but I will not go without permission."

"Another white-livered coward," shouted the mob.

"Mason, don't make a fool of yourself," said somebody, in a coaxing tone.

"As for being a coward," replied Edward, with spirit, "you know I can't rightly be charged with that. I dislike to do any thing against the wishes

of the majority; but if every other member of the class votes for the bolt, I must oppose it."

A more deafening clamour than ever prevented his saying any more; and, in the desperation of the moment, the crowd rushed from the room, shouting, "Let the bootlicks go to recitation if they dare! we'll fix 'em out in style if they do!"

The bell rang at eleven o'clock, and Edward and the other youth, who had opposed the rebellion, were the only freshmen found in their places.

The recitation went on as if nothing had happened. Of course, the faculty were obliged to reprimand the absentees very severely; but, as it would hardly answer to dismiss so large a portion of a class, they escaped without further trouble.

Now came fresh trials for Edward. Hitherto, what persecution he suffered, had been from those in the upper classes. His own class-mates were now so provoked, that they scarcely noticed him. He was greeted as a coward and a toady to the faculty. Every possible scheme of mischief was thought of, in order to render him uncomfortable.

Edward's faith and patience were sorely tried. But he looked above for help, and went about his business as before; never forgetting that he had a character to sustain, the character of a gentleman and a Christian.

This undeserved odium at last began to die away,

and the circumstance which had called it forth was well nigh forgotten.

The mild spring weather tempted many of the students to wander off farther than usual, one Saturday afternoon, when it was proposed that they should go in the water to bathe. It proved to be colder than they thought, and some, who had ventured out a good distance, were seized with cramps in their arms and legs.

Joe Spencer, of the concert memory, was one of these. I mention him, in particular, because, though being a sophomore, he had gone out of his way to show contempt for Edward, when he refused to join with his class in a bolt.

The hair-brained youth was now in a desperate strait. Unable to do any thing for himself, he cried in piteous tones for help.

None seemed able or willing to afford it. In the midst of the general consternation and dismay, Spencer disappeared. At this moment, Edward, who had already come out of the water, and was dressing himself upon the shore, plunged in, and, by a desperate effort, brought up the half drowned lad. The other swimmers lent their assistance, and he was brought safe to land. Rubbing, and the use of simple remedies, soon restored the circulation. Edward was well nigh exhausted by the efforts he had made, and as soon as he saw Spencer out of

danger, returned to his room. He was never called a coward afterwards.

It was mortifying to Spencer, to feel that he owed his life to one whom he had so unmercifully abused; but he had manliness enough to come and apologize for his wrongs, and thank his deliverer most heartily for the disinterested kindness he had manifested.

Besides his regular studies, Edward, by his father's advice, began a course of reading. The histories of Greece, Rome, and England, kept him busy for some time. There were books in abundance at his command, and he felt convinced that one who expects to lead an active life, ought to lay in a good stock of information upon every subject, while the opportunity is afforded him.

No professional man can turn such a treasure to better account than a clergyman. He must mix with every class, and it is a great thing for him to be able to meet all upon their own ground.

Edward paid particular attention to composition and declamation; and remembering how well it happened for Mr. Palmer that he could speak extemporaneously at the mill, he practised this art in the debating societies of the college.

About a month before Commencement, Edward received a letter from this kind friend, urging him to be confirmed at a visitation which the Bishop

proposed shortly to make to the church in the neighbourhood of the college. Edward had been looking forward to this holy rite for two years or more, but did not feel himself prepared to receive it. Moreover, it would be very trying to take such a step while at college. Perhaps he did not acknowledge to himself that this consideration had any weight with him; but it undoubtedly had.

There is no telling what conclusion he might have come to, had it not been for a sermon preached by the clergyman of the parish, on the Sunday before the expected visit of the Bishop.

A larger number of students than common were present, and the subject, which was most happily chosen, seemed to interest them very much. It was an enumeration of *the benefits and blessings of early piety*. Among these, he mentioned the great advantage of beginning in season with a work so long and difficult; the barrier thus raised against the encroachments of vice; the promotion of happiness in the domestic circle; the heavenly influence exerted upon companions and friends; the indescribable satisfaction afforded to parents; the ready access afforded to a throne of grace; the preparation thus made to meet the storms of adversity; and the exceeding great reward laid up in the world of glory.

"I have certainly furnished reasons enough, my friends," said the preacher, looking upwards to the

gallery, where the students sat in a body, with their eyes riveted upon him, "I have certainly furnished reasons enough why you should desire God's favour, and why you should seek it *now*.

"He does not expect, when you first engage in his service, that you should have attained *perfection*. As well might the soldier refuse to enlist, until he had fully acquired the art of war.

"As new and inexperienced recruits, you will, of course, have much to learn; but this knowledge can only be gained by casting in your lot among God's people; going with them on their heavenward march; and by struggling, side by side, in the deadly contest with our foes.

"The season when confirmation is administered, is the time when this enlistment should be made. It is true, every one at baptism becomes a *soldier* of Christ. This is to be his ultimate destiny. Until the years of discretion have been reached, he has, however, merely been going through with the *preparatory* training, which is to fit him to bear the hardships of the camp.

"God is now inviting *you* to enlist! To-day, He sits upon a throne of mercy; stretches out the hand of friendship; smiles upon you with a Father's affection, and says, (oh, irresolute, half-determined, backward, procrastinating child, accept this offer of His love,) 'Those that *seek* ME early shall *find* ME.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

EDWARD and his room-mate were both busily engaged on Sunday night, the one in getting a chapter of the Greek Testament, and the other in Paley's Evidences, for the next morning's recitation, when Porter laid down his book, and after musing for some time, said, "I suppose, Mason, you, of course, will be confirmed next Sunday."

"The sermon to-day determined me," answered Edward. "Porter, why won't you go too?"

The young man seemed fairly startled by the proposal.

Edward had observed a great change in him for some months past. He was seldom irreverent now in speaking of sacred things, more regular at church, and often read his Bible.

"I am afraid I should be a most unfit subject," said Porter, after reflecting upon his friend's proposal, for a few minutes.

"If you go upon the ground of fitness or unfitness," replied Edward, "there would be an end of the matter with all of us. God calls sinners to His service, and promises to help us to do right, if

we only show a willingness to help ourselves. I often think of a verse, which I learned when a child:

"God will support our hearts
With might before unknown;
The work to be perform'd is ours,
The strength is all His own."

"I must confess," said Porter, looking very earnest as he spoke, "the sermon to-day set me to thinking seriously of the duty of being confirmed. Until I knew you, Mason, I regarded religion as all well enough for school-girls and old people, but quite beneath the notice of men. Your character and conduct have taught me better."

"Don't speak of me, or of what I do," interrupted Edward, with confusion, "but, Porter, do go with me to see our minister."

After some hesitation, the young man consented. Looking at his watch, and finding it only eight o'clock, Edward insisted that this was the best time they could have.

Mr. Palmer had taken pains to write to the clergyman, whom they proposed to visit, and put Edward under his particular charge, when he first entered college; so that he felt no hesitation in calling upon him.

Porter's courage began to sink, when Edward rang the bell at the rectory, and the servant announced the visitors.

They were shown into the study, where they found the clergyman. He seemed glad to see them, and so encouraged the young men by the cheerful light which he threw upon the Christian life, that they felt glad that they had come.

"You must not hope to do every thing at once," he remarked to Porter, who was expressing fear that he might disgrace his profession in some way. "Only try, by God's help, to get the mastery over your evil tempers, and to obey His will more perfectly, day by day."

As they rose to take their leave, he gave them each a neat copy of Bishop Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, and begged them to make it the companion of their lives.

Although the two friends were silent about the matter themselves, and endeavoured, by retirement, reading and prayer, to be better prepared for the confirmation, it was soon noised abroad that Porter had "got religion," and that Mason had reached perfection.

The students were not surprised to hear *any thing* of the sort about Edward, but they could scarcely believe it possible that the flippant and scoffing Porter had been induced to take such a stand. He was tried and tormented in various ways, but he continued steadfast in his purpose.

"I think I should certainly fail, Mason," he

said, one day, when a laugh had been raised at his expense, "if I did not remember how manfully you stood it, when we were all against you. Many a time my conscience has stung me for making sport of you at your prayers."

"Oh, never mind that now," answered Edward; "God will carry you safely through."

The Sunday came. The church was thronged. The students nearly all turned out to witness the ceremony.

The sermon of the Bishop was eloquent and stirring; and if any had felt disposed to turn back, their fears and misgivings were banished by the encouragement he gave.

While the choir sang the hymn,

"Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,"

the candidates came forward. A silence, like the grave, pervaded the vast assemblage.

The answer to the important question which was to determine the choice of so many immortal beings for eternity, came forth, clear and decided, "I do." When the Bishop, "after the example of the holy apostles," laid his hands upon the head of each, and repeated the solemn invocation, "Defend, O Lord, this Thy servant, with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until he

come unto Thy everlasting kingdom," it was felt by all that the PRESENCE of the UNSEEN ONE was there.

As Porter and Edward took their seats at the supper table that night, some irreverent witling spoke up and said, "Well, Porter, have you got any more piety on board than you had this morning?" The young man coloured, bit his lips, but made no reply.

Edward watched him with interest, and felt thankful that he showed so much self-command.

Notwithstanding occasional outbursts of this sort, it was evident enough that the stand taken by our friends, and the solemn confirmation service, had made a decided impression for good upon the minds of many. Oaths and vulgar language became less common, and more outward respect was shown for religion. Turner had always felt an interest in Porter, and now he often came in to chat with him.

On the Sunday after the confirmation, he was speaking of having been present on the occasion, and of the effect which the service had upon him, when, turning to Edward, he said, "Suppose, Mason, that you and Porter go with me to church to-night?"

"I did not know," answered Edward, "that the church was open."

"O, none of your joking," rejoined Turner,

taking it all in good humour; "you know very well what I mean."

"I am not joking," said Edward; "I spoke what I believe to be true."

Turner looked rather astonished, and asked him how he could be so illiberal.

"It is *not* illiberal," he answered. "We should not be charged with unkindness and bigotry because we speak the truth."

"But why won't you go with me?" inquired Turner, not knowing what to make of Edward.

"Because," replied he, "I feel that I am committing a sin whenever I go to hear a man undertake to preach, who has no right to do it."

"How! no right?" asked Turner, a little nettled, but still not seriously angry.

"Why," resumed Edward, "suppose that our clergyman had been taken sick last Sunday, and it was found after the congregation had assembled that there was no person to officiate, would any man or any set of men, however good, be authorized to appoint one to preach and administer the sacraments?"

Turner looked horrified at the idea, and answered "No," without hesitation.

"Well, then," continued Edward, "suppose that, although they had *no right*, they *did* call upon somebody who could read respectably, and bore a

good character, to act as their minister, would this *make* him one?"

"By no means," said Turner, not yet discovering the drift of the argument.

"Suppose, again," remarked Edward, "that the man thus suddenly elevated to the pulpit, should happen to take a liking to his new business, and should continue to preach for several Sundays longer, would he be any more a valid minister than at first?"

"No," answered Turner, as unreservedly as before.

"If, then," said Edward, becoming animated as he spoke, "If, then, such a state of things should go on *for years*, the congregation tolerating these irregular proceedings, and the man-made preacher continuing to hold forth for their edification, would *lapse of time* make him a regular minister of God?"

"Of course not," replied Turner, with great frankness.

"Then," continued Edward, drawing the conclusion from what had been said before, "Then you have pronounced sentence against your own preachers! They were appointed in the days of Luther and Calvin, to meet a supposed necessity, and the unlawful proceedings have been continued under different forms until now."

"It has always seemed to me," observed Porter, "although I know but little of theology, that a man

would have a much better right to present himself as an ambassador from the United States to the court of St. James or St. Cloud, without having been appointed by the proper authority, than for one to claim to be an ambassador for God without having been called and ordained."

Turner was not altogether pleased with the conclusion to which the discussion had been brought, but he said, with noble frankness, "I did not know before, Mason, what the views of your church were on this subject. As plausible as your argument appears, it would be hard for me to believe that so many good people may be wrong."

"You must not reason in that way," answered Edward. "Good people may be mistaken sometimes as well as others. I have talked more, now, than I intended to. Arguments of this sort do little good. But I would like to lend you a book, if you will promise to read it."

"With all my heart," said Turner, taking a volume of *Chapman's Sermons*, which the other handed him. And now, with this finger board in sight, pointing to the "old paths," we leave him, for a time, to determine, for himself, which road he ought to take.

CHAPTER XVII.

PORTER's parents died in his infancy, and having no nearer relative than a cousin of his father's, who acted as his guardian, he gladly accepted Mr. Mason's invitation to spend, at least a part, of the long vacation with his son.

Being the heir to property enough to make him independent in his circumstances, he had already travelled a good deal, so that it was really a treat for him to have an opportunity of throwing off all care, and settling down in quietness and peace.

Although I have been too much occupied in tracing the course of events at college, to look after the affairs of our friends elsewhere, most of them had been enjoying a reasonable share of health and prosperity.

When the young collegians reached Mr. Mason's they found the family expecting them; indeed so exactly had they been able to calculate the time of their arrival, that dinner was on the table when they drove up.

Lucy had now finished her education, according to the ordinary notions of society. Her parents,

however, had their own opinions on the subject. Instead of looking upon herself as fully accomplished in every thing, she was taught to consider the *foundation* as laid upon which the superstructure must be raised. Accordingly, a certain portion of time, each day, was devoted to study and to general reading.

Edward, who had actually known but little of his sister since his childhood, owing to her absence at school, was astonished to find how readily she adapted her conversation to the tastes of her company, and that even the favourite topics of learned collegians were not altogether beyond her depth.

The weeks of the holidays seemed fairly to fly. What with riding, and walking, and visiting, and reading, and the pleasant chat after tea, the time slipped away before they were aware of it.

Before the vacation was quite over, who should make his appearance but Henry Parish?

He had been hoping, all summer, that Edward would come down to the city, but finding that he had no such intention, the young merchant took a play-spell, himself.

"You would hardly know Frank, now," he said to Mrs. Mason, as they sat at the dinner table. "He has got to be quite a staid, dignified, old gentleman, and sticks to business bravely."

"One would think that Edward and yourself

were becoming advanced, too," replied his aunt, with a smile. "When you left us, you were both engrossed with that very important affair, the rabbit warren. I don't think that either of you have referred to the subject since you came."

"O, yes, mother," said Edward, "it was one of the first places I visited, and it reminded me somewhat of the remains of the ancient Roman walls in Britain, so completely had our work gone to ruin. That was enough, of itself, to show me that I was growing older."

"A very venerable old man, truly," remarked Lucy, who was helping the company to strawberries, "almost *sixteen*!"

"By the way, uncle," asked Henry, "where is Tom Hall now?"

"He still continues at the bindery," answered Mr. Mason. "I think I never saw a greater change in any one, for the better, than in him. He has certainly tried, faithfully, to keep his baptismal vow."

"Has he been confirmed?" inquired Edward, who wondered at himself that he had not thought to ask the question before.

"Yes," returned his mother, "I thought I mentioned it in one of my letters. He was confirmed in July, at the same time with your sister, and Mr. Wilson's eldest daughter, whom you saw baptized at the mill."

"How strangely things turn out!" said Lucy. "Who could have believed that the little Sunday School would do so much good?"

"I think I was as much benefited as any body," interrupted Henry, who was as good-humoured as ever. "I was first knocked into my senses by that fall from Tom's horse, and then the school sobered me down still more."

"A very profitable fall, indeed," said Lucy, laughing, "and it is a great pity that every wild blade could not have a ride behind a miller's boy."

And thus they talked on, raking up reminiscences from the past, and forming plans for the future.

Mr. Palmer came out and passed a day with them. He had been prepared to expect a decided growth in Edward's mind, from the occasional letters received from him, and the reports he had heard from others. It was a gratification to find that mixing with the world, (for a *college* is a *world* in miniature,) had not robbed him of his gentle manners, nor impaired at all his religious sensibilities and tastes.

The good man took occasion to speak to Edward in private, in regard to the ministry, and mentioned a course of reading which it would be best for him to pursue, in order that he might begin the study of theology, at the proper time, to the best advantage.

The young people were looking forward to the next Sunday, with no little interest and thoughtfulness, as they expected then to have their first communion.

No opportunity had been afforded before the close of the college term, and, as Mr. Palmer observed, "There is nothing lost, as a general rule, in allowing a short interval between the different ordinances of the church." He disapproved of the plan of hurrying through with baptism, and confirmation, and the Lord's supper, all within a day's time, or even of several days. Our three daily meals for the sustenance of the *body* are not taken at once, but after proper seasons of labour and rest.

As the sacraments of the church are means of grace for the *soul*, their benefits will be much greater if proper preparation be made, before the reception of each.

Nearly all the persons in the congregation had been to the altar, and still our friends lingered. One seemed to be waiting for the other. Porter would not think of going without Edward, and he, perhaps, thought that his sister should set the example.

"Oh! agony of wavering thought,
When sinners first so near are brought!
'It is my MAKER—dare I stay?
My SAVIOUR—dare I turn away?'"*

* Keble's Christian Year.

Mrs. Mason whispered a word of encouragement to Lucy, when she rose at once, and Porter and Edward followed.

"Sweet, awful hour! the only sound,
One gentle footstep gliding round,
Offering by turns, on Jesus' part,
The cross to every hand and heart."

CHAPTER XVIII.

COLLEGE life is, upon the whole, so uniform and monotonous that it would not be necessary for me to follow Edward through his course, even if the time and space were allowed me.

I must, therefore, crowd the remaining years into a comparatively small compass.

This being his last year in college, he became more studious than before; and most of his leisure time was spent in reading.

Edward thought it a pity that a young man of such decided abilities should enter the over-stocked professions of law or medicine, while the church stood so much in need of clergymen.

He did not, however, make any abrupt proposals to him, but contented himself with lending him some biographies, and other works, which had left their impress upon his own mind.

The mention of books reminds me of Turner—he brought back the volume of sermons, at the beginning of the session, and professed to be greatly pleased with Dr. Chapman's candour, and the skill

and ability which he brought to bear upon his subject.

"There is a question, now, which I wish to look into," said he, "and I would be glad, Mason, if you would borrow the necessary books for the purpose."

"What question is that?" inquired Edward.

"It is," answered Turner, "whether Dr. Miller really published garbled extracts from the fathers, in the way he is accused of doing. If this could be proved, it would be a pretty convincing argument that the *cause* must be a desperate one which is obliged to resort to such dishonourable *means*."

"I will get the books with pleasure," said Edward; "and, although I cannot answer from my own examination, I have often heard others say, who certainly had the best opportunities for knowing, that the charge is not at all exaggerated."

"I must see for myself," remarked Turner. "Dr. Miller is a great man with us; and nothing but indisputable proof, presented to my own eyes, will convince me. Besides, since I studied logic, I have learned to be more wide awake, and not to take mere *assertions* for *arguments*, even though the author does refer you to a long string of scriptural texts at the bottom of the page. He might make as much show of proof in this way as he chose, inasmuch as few would take the pains to look into the Bible to verify the passages."

Edward made it his business to ask the loan of the books from the rector. What effect a further investigation had upon Turner's mind, I may have occasion hereafter to state.

In the mean time, every thing about the college was going on as usual, some wasting their opportunities in idleness and dissipation, while others were usefully employed. I must not forget to mention an occasion in which Edward was rather unjustly accused of meanness and parsimony.

The literary society to which he belonged determined to fit up the room in which their meetings were held, in a style of greater luxuriance.

When they came to Edward, expecting, as usual, that he would subscribe liberally, he declined giving any thing for the purpose. They could not account for this "economical fit," as they called it; and some even ventured to charge him with being miserly. He told them plainly that for all useful purposes the old society room was all that could be desired; and that the lavish expense which they proposed to bestow upon it, seemed to him a sin.

The committee went off dissatisfied, and looked sour at him for weeks afterwards.

It was nearly a year before it was accidentally discovered that it was Mason who had, all this time, been paying the largest share towards the support of Mrs. Phillips, the janitor's widow. She

had been left in utter destitution, with a crippled boy to add to her anxieties, and lessen her ability to work.

No doubt our young friend had his own satisfaction in the consciousness of having done his duty.

As the Commencement approached when Porter was to graduate, Edward, who had watched him most anxiously during the year, and never forgotten him in his prayers, spoke to him one day upon the subject which was so near to his heart.

"You, of course, agree with me in the opinion," said he, "that a man ought to turn his abilities to the best account?"

"Certainly," answered Porter, wondering what was to follow so sage a remark.

"To the best account," continued Edward, "with reference to *this* world and the *next*."

"There can be no question of it," said Porter, still uncertain what the other was driving at.

"Which profession, then," asked Edward, "do you think most likely to accomplish this end?"

"That depends entirely upon what a man is cut out for," said Porter, parrying the subject, of which he now began to get an inkling.

"But I mean," answered Edward, becoming more earnest, "other things being equal, and a person morally and intellectually qualified."

"The ministry, I suppose," said Porter, half reluctant to own it.

"Then, Porter," continued Edward—his soul speaking in every line of his countenance, "why won't you devote your energies to this work?"

Porter hesitated—began to say something, and then checked himself.

"It would be wrong in me, Mason," he said, recovering his self-possession, "to lead you to suppose that I never thought of this subject before. While reading the life of Henry Martyn, I not only wished a hundred times that I was a *good man*, but that I might be a *minister*."

"And what is to prevent?" asked Edward, too anxious to carry his point to waste many words. "You are your own master, so far as one *can* be. Why not *resolve* to be a minister?"

"It is too great a responsibility to assume without much more reflection than I can give to it now," answered Porter. "Moreover, you know, Mason, that I have a scheme on foot for visiting Europe. I can do this without inconvenience; and tutor Davies has agreed to go with me."

Edward was well aware that such a tour, to a mind so thoroughly prepared, would be of decided advantage to his friend, even should he conclude to study theology.

He therefore used no arguments to dissuade him, but made one request, to which Porter cheerfully acceded: this was, that he would continue to

think of the ministry as a profession in which he might, very likely, be more useful than in any other; and that he would pray daily for instruction and guidance, as to what he ought to do.

Commencement day arrived. Porter acquitted himself with great credit.

Then came the usual bustle of packing up, and preparing to leave town.

I must draw a veil over much of this. Porter was to remain for a few days longer, waiting for his travelling companion, the tutor.

Edward took his place in the stage. "Don't forget me, Mason," said his friend, shaking his hand again and again, and trying to hide his emotions.

Edward was unable to speak. His swimming eyes told the depth of his affection. He returned the warm pressure of the hand; and continued to look back at Porter till, the stage passing into another street, he was hidden from his sight.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Edward returned to college at the beginning of the junior year, it seemed strange enough not to find Porter in his accustomed place. The room was hardly like the same place. Something was lacking.

Edward was not, however, left in solitude. The new freshman class being large, he was obliged to have a room-mate.

This choice of chums is a *lottery*; but Edward was extremely fortunate. David Patterson, from Mississippi, a boy of about fourteen, was placed under his wing. The little Southerner was so homesick for a few days that Edward exerted himself to make him feel more at his ease, and form a favourable impression of college life. David, in turn, soon became much attached to him, and would do any thing in the world, that he thought would please him.

The freshman class was, if possible, more wild

and ungovernable than usual; and every effort was made to entice David into mischief.

He had, however, too much respect for Edward to do what he knew would grieve him; and our young friend took advantage of this good feeling on David's part, to try to teach him to act rightly from a better motive—*love to God*.

He had brought a Bible and Prayer-book with him, which his good mother had placed in his trunk with her own hand. These, Edward encouraged him to use; and whenever he found him forgetful, gently reminded him of his neglect.

He always took care that David should go with him to church. As there was no stated service very near Mrs. Patterson's, her son had very little more than a *traditional* acquaintance with the church of his fathers.

He did not, therefore, feel that warm attachment for it which is peculiar to those who have been carefully trained up in her holy ways.

Besides, David was rather absent-minded and dilatory. It was really diverting, while the last bell was ringing for service, and Edward standing with his hand on the door latch, to see the little freshman, with one boot on, looking for the other in every nook and corner of the room, or ransacking a large bag of dirty linen to find a collar or handkerchief, which would answer to use.

Upon the whole, the new friends got on admirably; and it would have gladdened the widow's heart (David's father was dead,) to have seen her son following the guidance of one whose character was so worthy of imitation.

Edward occasionally received a letter from Porter. At the last account he was preparing to leave France for Italy. He appeared much delighted with his tour; but it was plain, from his manner of writing, that his old friends were by no means forgotten.

When the Christmas holyday came, Edward took David home with him. It was very considerate in him to do so; for the youth was poorly calculated by disposition or habit to make the best of quietness and solitude.

During this week of happiness, a very important event took place. Tom Hall, who had grown up to be an industrious and thriving young man, was married to Eliza Wilson, one of our early acquaintances at the mill. Mrs. Mason, who felt an interest in both of the parties, gave the bride her wedding dress.

But the vacation was not altogether a happy one to Edward. His sister's altered appearance alarmed him. She had a hollow cough and a sunken eye, which betokened no good.

He did not like to mention his fears to his pa-

rents, lest it might distress them. They did not seem to observe the change, and Lucy herself was as cheerful as usual.

It was with a heavy heart that Edward went back to college.

He feared something which he did not venture to dwell upon, even in his own mind.

Now and then, during the winter, his mother would mention in her letters that Lucy had a bad cold, or had been quite unwell for a few days; but still there was nothing alarming.

Towards the close of the session a message came, in haste, for Edward to return home. He made all speed; and as he rode up the lane, the gloomy appearance of every thing about the house prepared him for the worst.

Lucy had died that morning! Mr. Palmer met him at the door, and remained with the afflicted family during the day.

Happy for them they had learned long ago where to look for help in trouble; nor did they look in vain. Lucy's disease had developed itself very rapidly; and, before her parents were aware of her danger, she was far gone with consumption.

It was a sad and crushing blow: but there was *mercy mingled with judgment*—a cheering light shone through the open portals of the grave. She had fallen asleep in Jesus.

Her remains were deposited in a little graveyard not far from the house.

The tomb-stone may be seen there now—somewhat stained and weather-beaten, indeed, but bearing still the simple inscription—

LUCY MASON.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Troubles seldom come single-handed.

Mr. Mason had others yet in store. His wife had observed for some time past that he appeared restless and gloomy; but she attributed it altogether to the state of their daughter's health.

The truth came at last. Mr. Parish had failed, and involved his brother-in-law, who had been his endorser, to a large amount.

I have often thought how much practical wisdom St. Paul has shown in that magnificent chapter which is read in the burial service. Even while speaking of death and the resurrection—lifting the mind above the cares and sorrows of life, by revealing the blessedness of immortality—he still remembers that we have something to do on *earth*, and calls upon us, while weeping over the graves of the loved and the lost, to be "*steadfast, unmovable—always abounding in the work of the Lord.*"

Though nearly stunned and stupefied by the suddenness and greatness of these afflictions, Mr. Mason placed all his trust in God.

He called to mind the gracious words: "As a father chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Sustained by these assurances, and feeling that it was his duty as an honest man to meet his pecuniary embarrassments with resolution, he prepared himself for the worst.

He at once placed all his property in the hands of the creditors, and prepared to return to the city in order to begin business anew.

His course was so high-minded and upright, that generous friends stepped forward, and offered to relieve him from his difficulties. He felt grateful for their kindness, but thought it best to decline.

Mr. Mason could have borne his loss of property with less difficulty had it not been for anxiety upon his wife's account, and his regret that Edward's education must be seriously interrupted.

In the course of a month they had taken leave of their home, and engaged private boarding in the city.

Mr. Mason found no difficulty in re-establishing himself in business, and proposed that his son should

go back to college. Edward, however, could not think of being a tax upon his father, in the present crippled state of his affairs; and, unknown to either of his parents, had written to Mr. Palmer to find him a place in a school.

A situation was fortunately obtained; and the boy who had never known the meaning of want, went forth to buffet with the world.

CHAPTER XX.

It is comparatively easy to trust in God, and to love him, when all is sunshine. Blessed is the man who, amidst the dark and dismal night of adversity, is enabled, like holy Job, to "hold fast his integrity."

Edward became assistant teacher in an academy, where a salary was allowed him which would defray his necessary expenses, and enable him to lay by something for future use. His intention was, to keep up with the college classes by studying at night and on Saturdays; and thus be prepared to go back and spend the last term, and graduate.

It was no easy matter, when wearied with the day's labour, to sit down to pursue his own studies at night; but resolution will enable one to do almost any thing.

Edward did not consider it lost time, by any means, to take his regular exercise, and accordingly he walked several miles a day, be the weather what it might. In this way he was able to endure an amount of mental exertion which would otherwise have broken him down in a few months, or shattered his constitution for life.

David Patterson wrote to him, every few weeks, and kept him fully acquainted with the state of affairs at college. Porter was also quite thoughtful in the way of letters.

Sometimes Edward feared, from the interest he expressed in worldly vanities, that his spiritual being must be at a low ebb. At others, his hopes were raised by indirect but unmistakable evidences that his heart was right with God.

Although Edward had no particular fancy for teaching, he entered into the spirit of his new vocation, and soon began to take a real pleasure in it. The boys were won by the kindness of his manner; and even those who had been looked upon as dolts and dunces, woke up surprisingly.

Without compromising his dignity, in the least, their young teacher encouraged their sports, and often appeared upon the play-ground, to watch a game of ball or cricket.

One day, a package, directed to Edward, was left at the academy. Upon opening it, he found a book, accompanied by a note to this effect:—

"Mr. Mason will please accept this specimen of book-binding from Thomas Hall."

Edward was surprised to find that the volume consisted of a series of church magazines, which had once belonged to his father. He learned afterwards, by inquiry, that when the family library was

sold at auction, in town, Tom had bought these loose numbers,—probably the largest investment his means would permit him to make—with a view of presenting them to one of the best friends of his youth.

Such little attentions, paid to those in adversity, are always gratifying. The world is so apt to look coldly upon the unfortunate, that any thing which exhibits true sympathy and affection, is worthy of note.

The six months which Edward proposed to devote to teaching, had now worn away. During this time, he had saved enough to enable him to resume his place at college, and finish his course. Accordingly, at the beginning of the spring term of the senior year, he was reinstated in his old room.

Many kind greetings awaited him upon his return; and David was too glad to contain himself. He had sadly missed Edward's brotherly care; and sundry difficulties, in which he had been involved, were owing to this cause.

While our young friend was busy in preparing his speech for Commencement, a letter arrived from Porter. He had seen most of the prominent objects of interest on the continent, and had got as far as London on his way home.

"I long, once more," he writes, "to behold my

native land. The old world has much to be proud of—much which ought to please. I have not gone about with green spectacles on my eyes, grumbling at every thing I saw. Whenever praise was due, I have been free to award it, no matter where, or to whom. But I can now enter more fully than before into the spirit of the old song,

“‘Home, home, sweet home.’

“I have attended all forms of worship, Mason, from the glittering, tawdry doll-worship, which disgusts one in Italy, to the dry, hum-drum crudities of long-faced Geneva; but give me the time-honoured, dignified, imposing services of our old church—the church of the Redeemer.”

A few days after, another letter was received, stating that he would sail from Liverpool in the packet; and what pleased Edward better than all, Porter referred to the ministry in such a way, that little doubt was left of his intention to begin his theological course as soon as he reached New York.

There had been much in college life to make Edward attached to it; but he could hardly be said to be sorry when he had taken his degree. He felt, as most young men in this country are wont to do, that there was a great work before him in the world; and that, as the day would not last long, the task should be begun early.

There was one serious obstacle in the way of his entering the Theological Seminary the next autumn—the *want of means*. The money he had earned by teaching was barely enough to enable him to pay off his liabilities at college. He could, indeed, resort to the same honourable mode of raising funds as before; and this he had resolved, in his own mind, to do.

Mr. Mason had made a good start in business; but with the debts which remained unpaid, and the expenses of living, he had really nothing to spare for his son, just now, even if Edward would have accepted it.

Mr. Palmer did not like the idea of his losing more time in teaching, and urged him to accept a scholarship, which he could secure for him at the seminary.

Edward's natural independence revolted at the idea.

Mr. Palmer told him, frankly, that it was only false pride to take such a view of the matter.

"Are the young men who are educated at West Point, at the expense of the nation, degraded at all," he asked, "in the *public* estimation, or *their own*, because the government feels the need of raising up competent officers for the army, and furnishes the necessary means? And why is it at all more unbecoming, that candidates for the minis-

try, who are to be leaders in the host of God's chosen ones, should be educated at the expense of the church, in whose service their lives are to be spent?"

Edward could not resist the force of the reasoning, and, after a little more reflection, gladly accepted the offer.

"But there is one thing more which troubles me," said Edward. "I hope you will not think me foolish."

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Palmer, with some anxiety of manner.

"Although I have been trained up from my childhood," answered Edward, "with a view to the ministry, I feel strange misgivings whenever I read that solemn question in the ordination service: 'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration?'"

"It is not at all surprising," observed Mr. Palmer, "that a sense of unworthiness should oppress you. For no man that considers what a clergyman ought *to be*, and *do*, can help crying out with the apostle, 'Who is sufficient for these things?'"

"I have heard dissenting preachers," said Edward, "speak so confidently of having been called of God to the work, that it has made me doubt whether I should be doing right in pursuing the course which is proposed."

"Such prating, my young friend," answered Mr. Palmer, "is not worth listening to. As such persons have no *outward commission* to entitle them to preach, they fall back upon an *inward call*. I might seem harsh in saying what I really think of their conduct."

"How do you understand that question, then," asked Edward, "which has troubled me so much?"

"Good Bishop White," said Mr. Palmer, "who was one of the most prudent and conscientious men that the church has ever had, gives a very satisfactory and encouraging explanation of it. As the extract is short, I will read it: 'If a man, desirous of the ministry, should believe, on an honest inquiry into his heart, that, in sincerity—although, doubtless, mixed with imperfection—he is desirous of discharging his duty to God and man; if he should not be sensible of any known sin, that cuts him off from the benefits of the Christian covenant, and ought therefore to bar him from the Christian ministry; if he do not feel himself prompted, either by the love of gain, or by the love of honour—although, under the former head, he may lawfully look, with moderation, to the supply of the wants of himself and of his family; and under the latter, he may enjoy any reputation which may be brought to him by his talents, giving the glory to God, and not bearing himself with arrogance to men;—and,

finally, if he should be sensible of a direction of mind interesting him in whatever extends the kingdom of grace, and fits men for the better kingdom of glory; such an inward character, satisfactorily perceived by those to whom the church has committed the right of judging of the sufficiency for the undertaking generally, may be counted as an evidence of that moving by the Holy Ghost, which the service holds out as so important.' "*

"Thank you, sir," said Edward, as Mr. Palmer laid down the book. "That opinion of Bishop White relieves my mind of a heavy weight. He was such an extremely cautious man, that he would give no advice which was not well worthy of consideration."

"I am glad to hear you say so," answered his friend. "It is certainly the only true view of a call to the ministry, in the ordinary dealings of Providence. In any other sense, *angels*, and not *men*, must be appointed for this work."

* Bishop White's Commentaries on Ordination Offices, vii. 16.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was ten o'clock, on a bright October day, that the bell of the General Theological Seminary, at Chelsea Square, New York city, summoned the students to prayers, on the first morning of the term.

Dr. Turner, (the Dean for that year,) who, for nearly a quarter of a century, had drawn from his varied stores of learning for the instruction of hundreds, since called to do their Master's work, came from the vestry, and began the service.

A sweet-toned organ lent its aid in the chants and psalms, and the responses were made with a heartiness and emphasis which could only proceed from a lively interest in the worship of Almighty God.

The whole body of students had not as yet returned; but among those present we notice three well-known friends—Mason, Porter, and Turner. There they stand, or kneel, in response and prayer, "with one heart, and one voice, glorifying God."

Among the supplications, one strikes the ear with peculiar force—a supplication applicable to the place:

"We implore Thy blessing on this Seminary, instituted with a view to the same ministry of the Gospel. May the hearts and hands of Thy people be open with supplies for carrying the design into effect; may the trustees and professors be endued with fidelity and wisdom, and sustained by Thy providence in the discharge of the duties respectively committed to them. May the pupils be favoured with health for the prosecution of their studies, and preserved by Thy grace from all temptation to relaxation of industry in the pursuit of knowledge. Strengthen in them the good desires which have been excited in them by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, and impress on their minds a sense of the high origin, the salutary tendency, the awful duties and responsibilities, and the rich rewards of the Gospel Ministry. Endue them with humility in the pursuit of truth, and with zeal and steadfastness in the profession of it. Preserve them from prejudice, and from whatever else that may betray their understandings into error, or their hearts into sin. May they be useful in their generation, to the increase of Thy glory, and the edification of Thy Church; and may they at last receive the commendation of faithful servants from the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, Thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name, and through whose prevailing merits, we offer up these our imperfect prayers."

The preliminary examinations were soon over, and our friends settled down to hard study.

A theological course—aside from the interest which the sacred ministry must always excite in those who are looking forward to its responsibilities—is most pleasing and profitable.

A large and valuable library was open for the use of the students, and many of them seemed fully to appreciate the privilege.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that Turner's investigations, before he left college, had not fully satisfied him, in the point of controversy which had disturbed his mind; but now, with such ample resources at command, he was able to go to the fountain head, and examine to his heart's content.

Mr. Palmer had advised Edward to connect himself with some parish in the city, and to take a class in the Sunday School.

We have so many churches in New York, that a person who should make it a practice of yielding to curiosity, and go around from place to place, could only attend at each church about twice a year.

This constant change has a bad effect upon the mind; besides depriving one of that *positive* and *particular* interest in the growth and prosperity of the church, which is secured by attending, as a general thing, the services in the same parish.

Edward accordingly made choice of St. Peter's,

as being the most convenient, and took an early opportunity to call upon the rector, and offer his services in the Sunday School. This offer was gladly accepted.

Although the prayers of the church were offered daily in the chapel, morning and evening, Edward did not alter his plan for private devotions. A systematic reading of the Scriptures, and certain fixed times for prayer, were continued as before.

A few days after Christmas, an unexpected visitor arrived. This was none other than David Patterson.

He had availed himself of the holidays to run down and take a look at the great city. The first person he ferreted out was Edward, with whom he had continued to correspond.

His old friend was delighted to see him, and put himself to considerable inconvenience, in order to show David the lions of the metropolis.

The collegian still had many hours of leisure, which he spent with members of the society to which he belonged, who are always glad to recognise a brother from another branch.

This intercourse, besides the pleasure it afforded David, was the means of putting Edward in the way of doing good.

It happened, that in conversation one day, David was asked whether he had known Joe Spencer in

college. He answered that he had not, inasmuch as he left before his time; but that the memory of that young gentleman was quite fragrant there, even now.

One thing led to another, till the whole story leaked out.

Spencer had been sent off in disgrace; and, much to the distress of his friends, had gone to sea.

They traced him as far as Nantucket; and from thence, it appeared, that he shipped in a whaler.

Nothing more was heard of him for a long time, until very recently, one of his old college acquaintances, passing by the "Sailor's Home," saw a poor, forlorn-looking object, sunning himself upon the steps. The countenance seemed familiar, and the young man stopped. It was Spencer!

Wasted and weakened by disease, he had just been able to reach the port, and seek admission to this place.

Poor fellow! His folly and wickedness had cost him health, and friends, and all!

His broken-hearted, widowed mother, had been laid in the grave.

A pale-faced, frail, affectionate sister, who used to welcome his return from college, had gone insane, and was an inmate of the asylum.

David no sooner told this sad tale to Edward,

than they both set off, in haste, to look after the poor, shipwrecked one.

They found him in bed, evidently near his end. Spencer felt that this renewed kindness from one whom he had once so shamefully used, was indeed having "coals of fire" heaped "upon his head."

Edward would not allow him to dwell upon the past, but did all he could to alleviate his sufferings, and prepare him for his great and awful change.

Mrs. Mason interested herself in the matter, and by going about among her friends, collected money enough to defray the expenses of the sick-room.

Dr. Smith, the Rector of St. Peter's, though in feeble health himself, went with Edward several times; and before Spencer died—being fully convinced of his faith and repentance—baptized him.

How mysterious are the ways of God! The apparently accidental visit of David to his friend was the means, in His hands, of saving a soul from death!

CHAPTER XXII.

DURING his second year in the seminary, Edward began to read service on Sundays in the Blind Asylum.

Some of the children had been accustomed to the Prayer-book before; and most of them soon showed a decided preference for our mode of worship.

The chants delighted them greatly, and a very respectable choir was formed; the organ being played by a blind boy.

By using the "Selections of Psalms," instead of the Psalter for the day, in a few weeks they had learned enough of the service by heart to respond as well as any ordinary congregation.

A short, practical sermon was read at the close of the prayers; and Edward continued to discharge this pleasant duty for many months.

I ought to have mentioned, perhaps, that the service was held at such an hour as not to interfere with his attendance at church. His class in Sunday School was, of necessity, given up when this

arrangement at the Asylum was proposed; and it was too important a field of labour to be lost.

Although younger than Porter, Edward continued to exercise a wholesome influence over him.

No situation in life is without its dangers. Porter, had he consulted his own inclinations, would have wandered about, Sunday after Sunday, hunting for the finest music, and the most eloquent preacher.

His friend convinced him of the impropriety of such a course.

Indeed, so entirely did he change in this respect, that he at once became a Sunday School teacher in a little mission church which had been lately organized, and did every thing in his power to strengthen the hands of the self-denying pastor.

Porter, with all his cheerfulness, was subject to occasional fits of despondency.

At such times, Edward's conversation was a great comfort to him.

He had been reading one day in a Missionary Journal a report from some distant out-post, where a single-handed labourer was wrestling manfully with overwhelming opposition and discouragements.

"I fear, Mason," he said—his tone of voice showing the sincerity of what he uttered—"I fear that I shall never school myself to display such heroism as this."

"Practice," answered Edward, "and faith in Him who sends us, will enable even the faint-hearted to do valiantly. I have often been struck with something in my favourite book, 'Sacra Privata,' which I will read if you have no objection."

"With all my heart," said Porter. "I should be glad to hear any thing which will help me to gain more confidence. I feel, sometimes, so wholly unqualified for the ministry that it seems worse than folly to go on."

Edward, having found the place, began:

"It is happy for a minister of God that the life he is to lead, and the very outward acts he has vowed to perform, will help to change his heart, and create in him those dispositions which will make him like his great Master. * * * If his sermons be plain and practical, they will affect his own heart, as well as the hearts of those to whom he preaches.

"Every child he baptizes puts him in mind of the vows that are upon himself. And he cannot administer the other sacrament as he ought to do, but it must needs fill his soul with a thousand holy ideas and devout thoughts. * * * In visiting sick and dying persons, he will be put in mind of his own mortality. * * * When he exhorts, reproves, admonishes others, it will bring to his mind the words of the apostle: 'Thou that teach-

est another, teachest thou not thyself?" In short, if he has an ardent desire to save souls, and really strives to do it as effectually as he can, he will be beloved of God, assisted by his Spirit; he will see the fruit of his labour; he will secure his own peace and hope, and give an account with joy when his Lord calls for him."

"Those words are worth their weight in gold," said Porter, when his friend had finished the extract. "They really make me ashamed of myself. Common sense should teach us that if we try our best to do God's work, he will not withhold his blessing."

"Have you ever thought," asked Edward, "where you would like to have your lot cast—if such a thing be left to your choice?"

"I should feel bound, of course," answered Porter, "to go wherever the bishop desired to have me; but, of late, I have thought seriously of offering myself as a missionary for one of the feebler dioceses in the South or West."

"That is just my idea, Porter," said Edward. "There will always be enough to supply the wants in the older cities and towns; and some *must* go into the by-ways if the gospel is ever to spread."

"Not only would this consideration influence me," interrupted Porter, "but I think it must be a great satisfaction for one to enter upon a fresh

field, and break up the ground, and plant the seed, and watch and water it, and wait in patience for the fruits of his labours."

"Great, indeed," said Edward; "and you remember the blessedness of St. Paul, who built on no other man's foundation?"

"It may be uncharitable and wrong in me," remarked Porter; "but I can never look without feelings of dislike and pity upon a clergyman, whom I may chance to see resting, as it were, upon his oars, and apparently waiting for a desirable parish to become vacant. To think of the amount of work to be done, and any to remain idle!"

"I am sorry to interrupt you," said Edward, as the clock of St. Peter's struck five: "but mother will be expecting us to tea; and, as it is something of a walk, we had better start."

Mr. Mason had now so far recovered from his pecuniary losses that he was able to keep house, and enjoy again many of the privileges which he had been obliged to give up; not the least of which was the exercise of a generous hospitality.

Edward had resigned his scholarship in favour of a poor student at the end of the first year, and was now living with his parents.

The blessings of home only seemed the sweeter, because they had been for a season deprived of them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DURING all this time Mr. Palmer had not forgotten his young friend.

He was too busy with his church and parochial school to write often or much, but he never failed to send a friendly letter of advice and encouragement once in three or four months.

The reader will thank me for inserting a part of one of them.

After speaking of deaths, and other changes among Edward's acquaintances in the parish, he says:—"Tom Hall continues to be what you left him—a most respectable, deserving young man. He takes an active part in the Sunday School. By the way, perhaps you have not heard of your little name-sake, EDWARD MASON HALL. He is a fine boy, and I hope he may grow up for usefulness.

"The families about the mill continue much as usual. The workmen seem very busy in putting your father's place to rights. I am truly thankful that he was able to recover this property again; and hope, in a few years, or even less time, that I may have him for a parishioner again.

"I forgot to give you a caution about buying books for your library. Don't be too eager to have a large collection at first. Make choice of good standard works. The lighter ephemeral literature it is very well to dip into, for recreation; but I would not lumber my shelves with it. I make one exception, in favour of the Waverley Novels. It will be worth your while to own a good copy.

"You will find it an unprofitable investment to lay out much in volumes of sermons. The English sermons, especially, are very often an indifferent assortment, plucked from the barrel of a deceased curate, for the benefit of his widow. You had better fill your head with the good, solid matter which will come in the way of your studies; and draw from this treasury, when you want materials for the pulpit. I am sure my old friend, Dr. Wilson, would give you the same advice.

"There is another thing which I wish to speak about. If it should seem presumptuous, you must excuse the liberty, upon the ground of the deep interest which I feel in your welfare.

"I am persuaded that no young clergyman should think of marriage until he is fairly settled in a parish, with sure prospect of a decent support, without overburdening the church.

"You will certainly never suspect *me* of any leaning towards the Roman doctrine of clerical

celibacy. It has neither reason nor scripture on its side. But I must say, that the practice, so common among young men, of forming matrimonial engagements before they have finished their studies, or have any idea where duty will require them to labour, seems the height of folly. I have not heard any thing which leads me to suppose that *you* have such intentions, so that I have spoken with the less reserve."

Any advice which Mr. Palmer gave was always regarded by Edward as worthy of notice.

From his infancy, the good man had watched over him, with all the interest of a careful shepherd, and his attention had not been thrown away.

During the winter and spring of Edward's last year at the seminary, there was much excitement throughout the union, in regard to the supposed Romish tendencies of that institution.

The papers, religious and secular, were filled with the subject.

The House of Bishops, as a board of visitors, made a special and thorough examination, with a view to discover the truth.

It really seemed too bad that the excellent and devoted men who filled the several professorships with such universal satisfaction, and whose characters were above reproach, should be obliged to vindicate the soundness of their doctrinal teachings;

and all, because a few weak-minded young men thought it clever to ape the manner of Rome; and, like spoiled children, play with the fire until they had paid the penalty of being scorched!

As matters stood, the bishops did their duty; and the faculty, by their magnanimous, honourable course, increased the debt of obligation which the church owed them.

In the midst of these disagreeable disturbances it was generally announced that on a certain Sunday three new Roman bishops elect would be consecrated at St. Patrick's cathedral.

The usual attractions of music and pageantry, &c., were promised; and some of the students were very anxious to go. Among these, strange to say, was the staid and steady Turner!

It is true he had not the slightest sympathy with Romanism, and was only excited by curiosity.

In vain did Porter tell him that he had attended the finest ceremonies in St. Peter's itself, and had come away sadly disappointed.

Turner wished to see for himself. Edward then used his influence.

"I once refused to go with you to *meeting*," he said, "during our college days, because I thought it wrong. You are now convinced that I was right in that."

"But you will not deny, I suppose," interrupted

Turner, with more sharpness than was common to him—"You will not deny that the Roman catholic is a church?"

"By no means," answered Edward. "She is, indeed, a branch of the church,—an *erring sister*."

"We'll not dispute about that, Mason," said Turner—his slight irritation having passed,—"I only wish to go to gratify my curiosity."

"I should attend for the same reason," observed Edward; "but I think it would be wrong thus to turn my back on our dear old church, for the sake of sight-seeing! Above all, even in these excited times, it is better to avoid even the 'appearance of evil.'"

It was getting late, and Turner, bidding his friend good-night, retired to his own room without further remark.

The next morning, at church time, he knocked at Edward's door, and making no allusion to the conversation of the preceding night, proposed to accompany him to church.

The seminary commencement was celebrated towards the last of June. The services were held in St. John's chapel. A large congregation, consisting of the clergy, students, trustees, and the friends of the institution, was in attendance. * *

A few Sundays after, an ordination was held in

the church of which Mr. Palmer was rector. There were several candidates for the diaconate.

We are sure that one of them at least felt the awful responsibility which he assumed when the bishop laid his hands upon his head, saying,—
“*Take thou authority to execute the office of a deacon, in the church of GOD, committed unto thee,—In the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.*”

When Edward returned to the parsonage at noon, he found a small hand-trunk directed to himself, which had been brought by the boat. The following note was found lying on the top, as he raised the lid:—

“*The Reverend Edward Mason will please accept the gown and surplice which are contained in this box, as a small token of affection from his cousins, Frank and Henry.*”

* * * * *

In the afternoon our young friend preached. But the mention of the pulpit reminds me that my task is done.

Perhaps, at some future day, if life and health are afforded, the writer may resume his pen, and give a *Sequel* to the history of *The Boy who was trained up to be a Clergyman.*